

WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
Board of Directors Meeting
January 26, 2019
Columbia Law School
New York, New York

A quorum being present, the Board of Directors' meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Alicia Lendon, seconded by Carrie Anne Cavallo, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2018 Board of Directors meeting. The motion passed.

President's Report

President Kolcon welcomed everyone to New York and noted our record attendance for a Board Meeting - 160+ people! She also thanked Virginia LoPreto and the New York Chapter for hosting last night's dinner and CLE. It was a lovely and informative event that provided all who attended with a primer on the new sexual harassment training law as well as an opportunity to network with other chapters.

Since January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, President Kolcon advised that we will be hearing from a speaker later in the agenda to bring us up to date on this critical topic. She also announced that earlier this week, she was proud to be present on behalf of WBASNY when the Governor signed into law the codification of Roe v Wade. President Kolcon thanked our Health Law & Reproductive Rights and our Legislation committee co-chairs for all of their efforts in assisting to make this law a reality.

Our members and committees have been hard at work since our last meeting. Thanks to our members, the Promotion Project has resulted in a record number of WBASNY awards nominations and officer candidates this year. President Kolcon also recognized and congratulated Deborah Scalise on her receipt of the Ruth B Schapiro award and thanked Westchester and WBASNY for putting forth that nomination. Through the assistance of our Amicus committee, WBASNY signed onto two (2) reproductive rights briefs (in Pennsylvania and California), and will soon be presented with two (2) additional amicus opportunities involving the rights of transgender students. The Equal Opportunity in the Profession and Women Judge's Committees' proposed model rule (which was approved by WBASNY last fall) has received positive feedback from Chief Judge DiFiore and administrative judges across the state who plan to incorporate many of the concepts into the materials for judicial training.

President Kolcon reminded all that WBASNY Online CLE is here with seven (7) programs currently available. We are looking to expand our library in a further effort to highlight members and generate revenue to recoup our investment, but in order to do so, we need to get the word out. Please distribute the flyer and encourage people to use our site for their CLE credits. Additionally, if a committee or chapter wants to record a CLE to be put on the website, they should contact Recording Secretary Nickson, the officer liaison to the CLE committee, for information on how to do so. We are specifically looking for topics that people want, e.g., diversity and inclusion, ethics, etc.

President Kolcon thanked those who have already responded to the Board Appeal and requested that we please give if we have not already done so. Since it is an investment in WBASNY and its mission, 100% participation is being sought and is very much appreciated.

Attendees also were encouraged to support and attend our upcoming events, such as the International Women's Rights committee's United Nations presentation in March and the Judge Ellerin birthday celebration event in April.

As a reminder, Leadership Training materials already being printed, and attendance is mandatory for chapter presidents and treasurers. Please tell them now to save the dates: July 12 -13, 2019.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Rosenthal reviewed various items in the budgets, highlighting the fundraising income from WBASNY Gives and Board Appeal and advised that "misc expense" represents the deposit for the Judge Ellerin birthday celebration event.

Treasurer Rosenthal also advised that JP Morgan Securities required additional resolutions (which specifically identify who is authorized to open and sign for the accounts) in order to effectuate the resolution approved at the last meeting to place funds into CDs. A motion was made by Beth Bryson, seconded by Diane Dwyer, to approve the proposed resolutions. The motion passed with the usual abstentions.

AXA Advisors

Deborah Walker and James Licata advised that they are making strides to work with our chapters in accord with our similar synergies and goals of empowering women. In the three (3) years since our relationship started, they have been working with the Bronx chapter to develop bi-monthly educational programs for members at the courthouse. They also are speaking with Suffolk and hoping to expand beyond the New York Metro area. They invited all chapters to speak with an AXA team member to develop a program that will work for their particular chapter and its members.

Guest Speaker

Dorchen Leidholdt, from the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, introduced herself and her organization and gave us an overview of the current statistics on human trafficking. She discussed the Coalition's legislative advocacy in this human rights crisis and described the efforts being undertaken to ensure that those charged with prostitution (who are victims of human trafficking and most often female) are provided with services and not tagged with a criminal record. She generally discussed the tactics and techniques used by traffickers to identify, locate and groom the victims, as well as the advances being made in anti-trafficking laws which have raised the offenses to felony level for traffickers and provided safe harbors and resources for victims. Currently, some of their legislative priorities are seeking to: have a law that trafficking survivors can vacate prostitution convictions along with related charges (e.g., trespassing, theft, etc.); eliminate the marital rape exemption for traffickers; and to ensure better accountability and training for police officers. If anyone is interested in assisting with these efforts, she can be reached at dorchen@sffny.org

Press & Public Relations Committee

Co-Chair Anne Joynt instructed attendees on how to like WBASNY's FaceBook page and asked them to encourage others to like our page. She advised that WBASNY is also sharing chapter page updates on FaceBook and Twitter (@WBASNY). We need to promote our members and our organization, and social media is one of the easiest and most effective tools for doing so.

Equal Opportunity in the Profession Committee

Co-Chairs Elizabeth Kraengel and Ravi Cattry, together with the Hon. Joanne Quinones, Co-Chair of the Women Judge's Committee, presented a resolution seeking to expand the model rule approved in September to the federal courts in order to broaden the audience. A motion was made by Carrie Anne Cavallo, seconded by Vice-President Pressler, to expand the model rule to federal courts. The motion passed with the usual abstentions.

In addition, they reminded all chapter presidents that the committee is seeking information on mentorship programs and requested that we please respond by Feb 15th so they can assist other chapters in creating mentoring programs.

JCOPE Training

WBASNY lobbyist Sandra Rivera led a presentation and discussion about the new requirements under JCOPE. As part of its efforts to better monitor lobbying activities, JCOPE created a lot of new regulations seeking to provide more detail about who is a lobbyist and draw a line between direct lobbying and grass-roots lobbying. In that regard, social media has raised concerns because that type of lobbying was not being captured. The intent is to provide more transparency to the public as to who is lobbying whom and for what. WBASNY, together with Sandra, is still working through how the changes will be implemented and what impact they may have on Lobby Day and social media activity. There are no FAQ's on the JCOPE website, but there are some information sheets available.

As we are sorting out the impact of the new JCOPE regulations, chapters need to be aware that we may need to change how we do business with regard to lobbying. It is important that we be in compliance with the rules because the fines for non-compliance and reporting are more significant and frequent than in the past. If chapters are sending messages on social media that are directed to an elected official about a particular bill or executive order or regulation, it could be reportable (i.e., who is saying it and to whom if it is considered as lobbying). However, a general press release regarding legislative priorities is not regulated because it is not directed at anyone or any particular piece of legislation. Sandra is compiling a "dos" and "don'ts" list, but it is not ready yet. It was agreed that a task force should be created and participants were asked to email President Kolcon if they are interested in participating on the task force.

Legislation Committee

Co-Chairs Jennifer Echevarria, Marea Wachsman and Christine Weinberg, together with WBASNY lobbyist Sandra Rivera, announced that the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), the Dream Act and the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) were all recently passed.

The committee is currently looking at the Governor's budget for issues important to WBASNY and to see if it is the same as last year. Included in the budget is a proposed increase in the attorney registration fee to \$425 from \$375. WBASNY has opposed that increase in the past and the New York State Bar Association has asked us to object again, but also to stress that the indigent legal fees fund must be addressed in some other way, not an increase on attorneys. A motion was made by Deborah Scalise, seconded by Carrie Anne Cavallo, to draft and circulate a proposed statement opposing the attorney registration fee increase. The motion passed with the usual abstentions.

Judge Sunshine asked WBASNY to review and comment on legislation mandating e-filing for matrimonial cases. Family & Matrimonial committee co-chairs Amy Salzman and Dolores Gebhardt spoke in support of mandatory e-filing. A motion was made by Jennifer Brown, seconded by John

Coffey, to support mandatory e-filing in contested matrimonial cases (with 4 opportunities for improvement). The motion passed with the usual abstentions.

International Women's Rights Committee

Co-Chairs Fay Parris and Maria Cortese reminded attendees of the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women being held March 11-22, 2019. WBASNY is co-sponsoring a parallel event with the United Nations Executive Foundation on March 19, 2019 at 10:30 am. WBASNY also is co-sponsoring an International Women's Day event at Fordham Law School on March 11, 2019 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

WBASNY has been asked to join an international appeal against the SriLankan's government's appointment of an alleged war criminal to the chief of staff of the SriLankan army which is pending before the United Nation's Human Rights Council. A proposed memo is forthcoming, together with list of other organizations signing on.

Convention 2019

Co-Chair Beth Solek reminded that convention will be held from Thursday, May 30, 2019 to Sunday, June 2, 2019 at the Savannah Westin. Excursion planning is underway and includes a Thursday night event – "Smart Cookies – how women have changed the world with food" (tour of Juliette Low house and tasting); a food tour; a ghost trolley tour; and more. We are seeking journal ads, names of firms to sponsor, and booster lines. Please remember the chapter basket raffle (small bags or photos of baskets to be shipped later due to travel constraints) and journal ads.

Awards Committee

Co-Chairs Robin Abramowitz, Hon. Andrea Phoenix and Hon. Joanne Quinones announced the following award winners: Hon Sandra Sciortino – Joan L. Ellenbogen Founder's Award; Fay Parris – Marilyn R. Menge Award; Nicole Komin – Doris S. Hoffman Outstanding New Lawyer Award; Patricia Taylor – Judith S. Kaye Access to Justice Award; Claire Rush – Hannah S. Kohn Pro Bono Award; and Carla Schuman Wise – Stephanie E. Kupferman Juvenile Justice Award.

Nominations Committee

Co-Chairs Elaine Avery and Alexandra Zervopoulos advised that the original application deadline was extended and resulted in 10 interviews/applicants. The committee is trying to be communicative and transparent. All committee members take their work very seriously and they have a lot of work ahead of them. The voting meeting will be held in March and will then report back.

President Kolcon advised that the Nominations Task Force recommendations are expected in March.

Women's Wellness Committee

Co-Chair Madison Porzio shared the committee's mission statement (which is on the website) and informed the attendees of 2 upcoming events: GRAWA's Mindful Lawyer Meditation and Queens' Fighting Stigma program. The committee will be meeting in Albany in March and chapters were encouraged to please send representatives.

Diversity Committee

Co-Chairs Yacine Barry-Wun and John Coffey advised of some upcoming events: a program presenting early results of the survey on women in the courts being held on April 9, 2019; a CLE program on “Eliminating Gender Bias in Commercial Litigation” (which is being recorded and will have credits in diversity and ethics); and a program presented by Matthew Skinner and Janine Distagna on diverse adoptions and how courts/agencies handle them.

New Business

The NYSTLA Women’s Caucus will be presenting the Lenore Kramer Award for Excellence to the Hon. Doris M. Gonzalez on February 13, 2019.

Old Business

None.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made by Treasurer Rosenthal, seconded by Hon. Andrea Phoenix, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa H. Nickson
Recording Secretary