

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

A quorum being present, the Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

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

President's Report

President Kolcon announced that this is a record day for a WBASNY board meeting, with over 160 members in attendance. She also advised that January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, so we have a speaker to address this topic at the Board meeting.

February is Black History month and "Go Red for Women" (heart health) month and many chapters have programs and events scheduled to highlight both topics. As a reminder, March is Women's History Month, which provides us with great opportunities to get our WBASNY messaging out.

President Kolcon reported on exciting successes and positive feedback for the work WBASNY has been engaged in, especially the Legislation and Health Law & Reproductive Rights committees. The Health and Reproductive Rights Law was signed on the Roe vs. Wade anniversary and President Kolcon was honored to be present at the bill signing on behalf of WBASNY.

President Kolcon requested that special effort be made to attend and participate in a number of upcoming events, including WBASNY's parallel program to the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women conference, the Judge Ellerin birthday celebration event and the WBASNY Convention.

Chapters were encouraged to use and distribute the Online CLE flyer attached to today's meeting materials. In order to maximize the benefits of the online platform and CLE programs, we need to advertise and get the word out. The Online CLE platform can become a profit mechanism for WBASNY and its chapters, but first we need to pay off the initial investment which requires more website traffic.

As many are aware, WBASNY has recently been presented with two upcoming Amicus opportunities involving the rights of transgender students to be able to use whichever bathroom/locker room corresponds with the student's gender identity, so please be prepared to respond to an EC call as we are awaiting the briefs in both cases.

President Kolcon briefly highlighted the Board Appeal and requested 100% participation of the Board to show support for our organization. In an effort to acknowledge our sponsors in a more personal way, we are sending around blank paper for all chapters to write thank you messages to our sponsors and to let them know what their support means to us.

Leadership training has been set for July 12 and 13, 2019 at the Kaatskill Mountain Club in Hunter, New York. We will no longer be at the Emerson due to a significant price hike. It is requested that current presidents please let their chapter President-elects and Treasurers know the dates in advance so they can plan accordingly.

The Nominations Task Force is still working on its recommendations, so this year's nomination process is being handled under our current by-laws and no changes have been made. President Kolcon advised that the current nominations committee and the nominations task force are looking at the interview questions to see if changes are appropriate. She also reminded that all members are welcome to provide feedback to the task force. Anyone wishing to do so can find their contact info on our website. Once the task force recommendations are made, we need to create a plan of action to address improvements to make it a better process.

President Kolcon reminded that the membership deadline is quickly approaching and encouraged all chapter presidents to be attentive, make calls, and check their numbers along the way. She also advised that the membership committee is working on revamping the website which should assist in attracting/retaining members.

Finally, our taxes have not been filed due to outstanding information, so please speak with your chapter treasurers and encourage them to provide all required items as soon as possible.

Security & Fraud Issues

President Kolcon advised that there have been multiple reports of strangers attempting to get access to chapter and WBASNY bank accounts. She reminded that we need to have two signatories who can deal with banking issues and encouraged chapter presidents to speak with their treasurers and boards about the issue. She also noted that Lifelock is a great sponsor who can assist with some of these issues (and WBASNY obtains royalties from it).

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Rosenthal advised that "fundraising" income represents WBASNY Cares and the Board Appeal to date and "misc expense" is the deposit for the Judge Ellerin birthday celebration event. She also reviewed a number of outstanding reports and payments and requested that the information be provided as soon as possible. Treasurer Rosenthal reminded all of the importance of completing financial and year end reports on a timely basis and requested that everyone please be sure chapter treasurers are up to date with reconciliations. Treasurer Rosenthal also noted that with regard to fraud and "phishing" attempts, the treasurers should always look at where the email is coming from (e.g., "chairman of the board" is not President Kolcon).

Sponsors/Fundraising

President Kolcon noted that we are always looking for all types of sponsors. WBASNY has year-round sponsors which are reflected under "royalties" in the budget. Solutions Plus tries to find sponsors for us, and has done a great job (especially for convention), but we need more participation on fundraising and PR at both the chapter and state levels

The fundraising committee is looking into ways to increase all of our outside income, at both chapter and state levels, but we need help connecting with sponsors. WBASNY is not trying to “steal” a chapter sponsor, but some of them may like a broader audience as well, so we are really asking sponsors to participate at both levels. For ease of reference, our sponsorship package is on the website.

Our social media/PR committee also is working on assisting with this effort. For example, we can sell spots on our email blasts which go to all members, and we can highlight sponsors who underwrite food, room fees, etc. for our meetings. For new CLEs, we could have sponsors for the program and give credit when it pops up on the website and/or social media. Please remember to tag people on FaceBook when they sponsor us.

AXA Advisors

James Licata and Deborah Walker provided us with an update. They recently proposed and sponsored bi-monthly meetings with the Bronx Chapter addressing “raise the age” and “medical marijuana. They currently are expanding to work with Suffolk and Nassau and now would like to expand to upstate. In addition to financial competency, AXA wants to focus on content that chapters are interested in. They would like an opportunity to discuss what AXA can do for both individual members and for chapters and they encouraged all chapters to come to the table and set up a program.

JCOPE Education

President Kolcon advised that there is a memo on the EC portal which gives chapters an outline of the changes to JCOPE. Most significantly, it will change the way lobbying is done by instituting onerous reporting requirements. The changes were intended to be good for public policy and avoiding kickbacks and other issues. Sandra Rivera will be addressing the impact of the changes at the Board Meeting.

Guerrilla Networking

President-Elect Hay presented an informative talk about how to improve networking skills. She discussed the importance of developing a “little black book” of contacts and keeping in touch with those individuals. She also touched upon ways to cultivate those relationships and demonstrate competency through actions (e.g., create and coordinate speaking opportunities for others, preparing for interview questions, presenting at CLE’s, developing a business plan, and putting yourself out there to meet people instead of sitting at your desk).

The Promotion Project: Part II - Promoting WBASNY

Anne Joynt requested that everyone please nominate WBASNY members and to let us know so we can tally the results. There has been an uptick in postings on FaceBook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., but we really need content. So, please let Anne know when you have an event, when a member does something interesting, receives an award or commendation, etc. While she is trying to catch everything, it would be very helpful if you would please email her at aejoynt@gmail.com. Likewise, if you have an event with a sponsor, please let her know so we can post that on social media as well.

Collaboration with Other Organizations

There have recently been a lot of inquiries and discussion regarding co-sponsoring events with other organizations (e.g., NYSBA's Women in the Law Section, local bar associations, etc.). As with most things, there are pros/cons and concerns and tensions regarding the decision of whether to collaborate. When presented with these inquiries, we need to analyze whether it is best for the chapters and/or the other organizations, whether it would dilute WBANY's impact, lead to loss of members, or impact our effectiveness. President Kolcon suggested possibly sending a letter to the NYSBA's Women in the Law Section to let them know that WBASNY is open to collaboration.

Following discussion, it was agreed that thoughtful collaboration would be a good thing, but we need to be cautious that we are not giving away our membership lists and/or being "steamrolled." Many chapters described positive working relationships with the NYSBA and some requested a template letter to ensure consistency among the chapters/WBASNY and their interactions with the NYSBA.

New Business

On February 9, 2019, the Western New York chapter is sponsoring a Political Training event, featuring 25 speakers, including past candidates, elected officials, political operatives, party chairs, campaign treasurers, etc.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made by Maureen Crush, seconded by Dawn Reid Green, to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa H. Nickson
Recording Secretary