

UTAH STATE BAR COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

Friday, January 27, 2023

Utah Law and Justice Center

In Attendance: President Kristin “Katie” Woods, President-Elect Erik Christiansen, and Commissioners Tom Bayles, J. Brett Chambers, Traci Gunderson, Rick Hoffman, Beth Kennedy, Chrystal Mancuso-Smith, Mark Morris, Shawn Newell, Cara Tangaro, and Tyler Young.

Ex-Officio Members: Nate Alder, Kim Cordova, Scotti Hill, Dean Elizabeth Kronk-Warner, Shalise McKinlay, Gabriela Mena, Brittany, J. Merrill, and Margaret Plane.

Not in Attendance: Commissioners Matt Hansen, Greg Hoole, and Andrew Morse. Ex-Officio members Past-President Heather Thuet, Anaya Gayle, Camila Moreno, and Dean Gordon Smith.

Also in Attendance: Executive Director Elizabeth A. Wright, General Counsel Nancy J. Sylvester, Utah Court Representative Nick Stiles.

1. President's Report: Katie Woods.

1.1 Present Jennifer Huntsman the 2022 Paul Moxley Mentoring Award.

The Commission presented Ms. Huntsman with the 2022 Paul Moxley Mentoring Award. She expressed her appreciation and offered comments on the importance of mentoring and the Bar’s role in ensuring that new attorneys are trained.

1.2 Review Legislative Phone Conference Calendar

Ms. Wright covered the legislative phone conference calendar and also discussed several bills of interest to Bar members, including HJR2 (1st Sub), which the Bar is opposing, and SB129 (judiciary amendments), and HB 216 (business and chancery court amendments).

1.3 Spring Convention Report: Erik Christiansen

Mr. Christiansen reported that the opening speaker at the Spring Convention will be a musician who was once an addict but has now created a comprehensive well-being program in the music community.

1.4 St. George Room Reservations Reminder

Ms. Woods and Ms. Wright reminded commissioners to book their rooms in St. George.

1.5 1st and 3rd Division Bar Elections Reminder

Ms. Wright noted that February 1st is the deadline for notices of election.

1.6 TAVA and Unmind Roll Out Update

Ms. Wright reported that the Bar's new well-being initiatives are rolling out on February 1, 2023, with a kickoff CLE event that day. She noted that Martha Knudson has been kicking off efforts throughout Utah and has been pleasantly surprised to find many well-being efforts already in play.

1.7 Judicial Council Report: Margaret Plane

Ms. Plane reported that the governor recommended funding all of the judiciary's budget items. She also reported that there will be a legislative task force on justice court reform, and she mentioned a justice court bill, which will change geographic restrictions to match district courts. The bill will require that all new justice court judges have a juris doctor and salaries for justice court judges will be increased to 90% of the district court salaries. Ms. Plane reported that retired Judge Kate Appleby is working on water law curriculum. Judge Appleby is considered a national expert in this area. Ms. Plane said JPEC reported that Utah's judicial performance evaluation system is considered to be very good statistically and by and large judges think it is fair, though some have expressed concerns about low response rates and potential bias in the process.

1.8 Diversity Outreach: Beth Kennedy

Ms. Kennedy reported that 500 lawyers signed up to do early diversity outreach. The idea behind this program is to get lawyers into high schools and middle schools in under-served communities so that youth can see positive role models of lawyers and view the legal profession as a possible career choice. Ms. Kennedy reported that Bar employee Christy Abad has been an incredible resource in helping coordinate this. Dean Kronk-Warner said she would connect Ms. Kennedy with the University of Utah's DEI coordinator. Mr. Alder observed it would be important to promote these efforts by video. Ms. McKinley noted that paralegals should also be included in these presentations and said next time there is a call for volunteers, the paralegal division would put a notice in its newsletter.

2. Action Items

2.1 Nominate Bar President-elect Candidate

Ms. Kennedy moved to nominate Cara Tangaro as the President-elect. Ms. Mancuso-Smith seconded. The Commission discussed Ms. Tangaro's interest in the leadership position and her experience in the community. The motion passed unanimously.

2.2 Select Dorathy Merrill Brothers Award Recipient

Ms. Woods noted that the Dorathy Merrill Brothers Award recognizes those who help advance women in the profession. After discussion, Ms. Tangaro moved to give the award to Ashley Peck. Mr. Christiansen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2.3 Select Raymond Uno Award Recipient

Ms. Woods noted that the Raymond S. Uno Award is given to those who help advance minorities in the legal profession. After discussion, Mr. Christiansen moved to award Sade Turner. Ms. Gunderson and Mr. Newell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2.4 Creation of the Utah State Bar Well-Being Award

The Commission discussed the creation of a well-being award, which would recognize and honor outstanding contributions to the mental, physical, and emotional health and well-being of members of Utah's legal community, and may be awarded to individuals, sections, committees, or organizations. Following discussion, the Commission decided to make the first award at the Spring Convention. Ms. Tangaro moved to create the award and to give the first award to Martha Knudsen. Mr. Christiansen seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Information Items.

3.1 Bar Member Survey Report: James Roberts and Emily Young

The surveyors covered the topics outlined in the Bar's recent member survey. The survey covered collaboration and the virtual workplace, how often lawyers are working in the office versus remotely, which hearings are best done remotely versus in-person, member feelings on the Sandbox, whether the member works with a Sandbox entity, paying for the Sandbox, feelings on the new Bar's website, how often they visited the Bar's website, how well the Bar communicates on certain topics, satisfaction with Bar services, and what kind of services the Bar should provide. The surveyors offered to put together statistical reports on several topics of interest to the Commission.

4. Adjournment.

The Commission adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

5. Consent Agenda.

The Commission approved by consent the minutes of the December 16, 2022 Commission meeting.