

# UTAH STATE BAR COMMISSION MEETING

## MINUTES

**Friday, June 13, 2025**

**In Attendance:** President Cara Tangaro, Kim Cordova, Brett Chambers, Christian Clinger, Matt Hansen, Rick Hoffman, Mark Morris, Shawn Newell, Olivia Shaughnessy, Jess Couser, and Tyler Young.

**Ex-Officio Members:** Nate Alder, Jennifer Carver, Erik Christiansen, Nick Stiles, Jennifer Carver, and Katie Woods.

**Not in Attendance:** Miriam Alred, Tom Bayles, Chrystal Mancuso-Smith and Ex-Officio members Andy Gonzalez, Dean Kronk Warner, Eli McCann, Brit Merrill, Dean Moore, Tiffany Shimada, and Ezzy Khaosanga.

**Also in Attendance:** Executive Director Elizabeth A. Wright, Assistant Executive Director Aubrey Schade, General Counsel Maribeth LeHoux, Finance Director Nathan Severin.

### **1. President's Welcome and Reports**

#### **1.1 Report on Budget Meeting with Court**

Ms. Tangaro explained that the budget approval meeting had been postponed by the Court and that the Court would not be able to approve the 2025-2026 budget until after July 1<sup>st</sup> when the fiscal year begins. Cara asked the Commission to vote to operate on the proposed budget beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> subject to Court approval.

Ms. Tangaro made the motion. Mr. Young seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **1.2 Annual Meeting and Swearing-In**

Ms. Tangaro discussed the Annual Meeting, which will be held at This Is the Place on June 26<sup>th</sup>. AG Derek Brown would be speaking, and the new commissioners and President and President-elect would be sworn in.

#### **1.3 Save the Date: Commission Retreat**

Ms. Cordova discussed the Commission Retreat, which will be held August 22-23<sup>rd</sup> at Homestead. It will feature a presenter on crisis management.

#### **1.4 Jackrabbit Bar**

Ms. Woods presented on the Jackrabbit Bar conference, which includes eight other western states that take turns hosting the conference each year. It was the Utah State Bar's turn to host this year and the event was hosted at the Black Desert Resort in St. George. The conference takes place in rural or outlying areas of the host state and topics discussed should focus on legal issues facing rural and outlying areas. Roger Hoole presented on polygamy and his efforts to assist individuals who wish to leave polygamous communities. . Wendy Crowler spoke about water rights and the Colorado River Compact.

#### **1.5 Judicial Council Report**

Ms. Woods has finished her first year on the Judicial Council. She discussed the intersection with the Bar, including joining with the courts during legislative session. She informed the Commission that the Council had approved fee changes on xchange for attorneys doing 500 searches a month.

## **2. Action Items**

### **2.1 Approve Transferring Designated Reserves to Pay for New OPC Database**

Mr. Severin asked the Commission to undesignate \$30,000 in reserve funds to pay for the new OPC Database. The money had been set aside to pay for the new database that is now complete. He stated that we were right on budget for the 2025 fiscal year.

Ms. Cordova made a motion to approve undesignation of the funds. Ms. Couser seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **2.2 Approve Annual Meeting Awards**

Mr. Clinger presented the nominees from the Awards Committee:

- Judge of the Year – Michelle Christiansen Forster
- Lawyer of the Year – Jonathan Hafen
- Section of the Year – Elder Law and Estate Planning
- Committee of the Year – Fund for Client Protection
- Special/Distinguished Service – Kate Conyers

The Commission discussed other retirees, and decided to present lifetime achievement awards to Prof. Jensie Anderson, Judge Noel Hyde, and Associate Dean Reyes Aguilar.

The also discussed doing a memorium for Judge Brady in Bar Journal

Ms. Tangaro made a motion to accept the Committee recommendations for awards. Ms. Cordova seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Tangaro made a motion to do three lifetime achievement awards. Ms. Cordova seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission decided to move the Section, Committee, and Special Services Awards presentation to the Fall Forum because there would not be enough time at the annual meeting to present all the awards.

### **2.3 Appoint Ezzy Khaosanga to Fill Kim Cordova's Commission Seat**

Ms. Cordova noted that her Third Division commission seat is open since she is now President. Ms. Cordova proposed appointing Ezzy to fill the remainder of her term. Ezzy has been serving on the Commission as the YLD Representative and ABA Delegate. Both of those roles are ending, and it will be beneficial to continue having her serve on the Commission.

Ms. Tangaro made a motion to appoint Ms. Khaosanga to fill the open Commission seat. Ms. Shaughnessy seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **2.4 Extend Bar's ABA Delegate Term Limit from 4 two-year terms to 5 two-year terms**

Ms. Tangaro discussed how currently, ABA delegates are limited to 4 two-year terms. Because of the work that goes into developing the reputation and connections to be successful at the ABA, we would like our delegates to be able to serve an additional 2-year term.

Ms. Tangaro made a motion to extend terms. Mr. Chambers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **2.5 Appoint Erik Christiansen as 2025-2027 Utah State Bar ABA Delegate**

Mr. Christiansen left the meeting for this portion of the discussion. Mr. Christiansen's term as ABA Delegate ends in 2025. Ms. Tangaro discussed all the work he is doing to help ABA and represent Utah within the ABA.

Mr. Clinger made a motion to appoint Mr. Christiansen for another 2-year term. Ms. Tangaro seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **2.6 Approve 2025-2026 Executive Committee**

Kim Cordova discussed who she would like on her executive committee: Cara Tangaro, Tyler Young, Ezzy Khaosanga and also Shawn Newell as public member. She is also going to ask Tom Bayles as well.

Mr. Hansen made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Executive Committee. Ms. Couser seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **2.7 Adopt a Resolution on Bank Signatures**

Ms. Wright discussed how the executive committee is authorized to sign/approve payments over \$1000. Due to the turn over the of the Executive Committee, the Commission must approve the new Committee as authorized signatories.

Mr. Hoffman made a motion to adopt the new Executive Committee members as signatories. Mr. Morris seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

# **3. Information and Discussion Items**

## **3.1 Presentation of Court Strategic Plan**

Hon. Michele Christiansen Forster and Jonathan Puente, Director of the Court Office of Fairness and Accountability presented on the Court's strategic plan. Thirty two other states have strategic plans, and the court spoke to them for guidance. They held 15 focus groups throughout the judiciary. They had six areas of focus and wanted to come up with values. The group wanted to include more than just judges, in order to get buy-in from people who would be implementing the plan.

The commitments are: promoting public trust and confidence; increasing access to justice; and ensuring constitutional openness. The strategic plan has been approved by the Judicial Council.

The judiciary values are: upholding the rule of law; independent; open; fair; inclusive; and efficient. The plan focuses on ensuring constitutional openness and allowing equal access

and opportunities for all court employees.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Tangaro thanked Judge Christiansen Forster and Mr. Puente. She talked about presentations that the Montana Bar is giving to the public about constitutional issues as a possible idea going forward.

### **3.2 Tyler's Commission Outreach**

Mr. Young is going to be visiting regional bar associations to strengthen Bar connections to rural areas. The first one is in Vernal. Ms. Woods suggested partnering with SUBA for their December day-long CLE.

### **4. Commission Thank You's and Recognition**

Ms. Tangaro thanked Mr. Hansen for his service to the Bar, as he was now leaving the Commission due to his appointment as a judge.

### **Adjournment.**

The Commission adjourned at 10:52 am.

### **Consent Agenda.**

The Commission approved by consent the following items:

- Minutes of the March 13, 2025 Commission Meeting