

UTAH STATE BAR COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

Thursday, May 25, 2022

ZOOM AND IN-PERSON MEETING

AGENDA

In Attendance: President Heather Thuet, President-Elect Kristin “Katie” Woods, and Commissioners Traci Gunderson, Rick Hoffman, Greg Hoole, Chrystal Mancuso-Smith, Marty Moore, Mark Morris, Andrew Morse, Shawn Newell, Michelle Quist, and Tyler Young.

Ex-Officio Members: Past-President Heather Farnsworth, Erik Christiansen, Kim Cordova, Brandon J. Mark, Grant Miller, Nick Stiles, and Tonya Wright.

Not in Attendance: **John Bradley** Ex Officio members Nate Alder, Dean Elizabeth Kronk-Warner, Margaret Plane, Dean Gordon Smith, J. Ramzi Hamady, and Camila Moreno.

Also in Attendance: Executive Director Elizabeth A. Wright, General Counsel Nancy J. Sylvester, Utah Court Representative Nick Stiles, Judge Clem Landau, and Jennifer Tomchak.

1. President’s Report: Heather Thuet

1.1 Summer Convention Update.

Ms. Thuet reported that summer convention reservations should be made as soon as possible.

1.2 Bar Review Talent Show May 26 and June 30.

Ms. Thuet reported on the prior and upcoming talent shows.

2. Action Items:

2.1 Approve Proposed 2022-2023 Budget.

Mr. Hoffman reported that the Budget and Finance Committee recommended approving the budget. He noted that the Bar is in a healthy position. Ms. Woods then explained her budget

request. She said her goal as Bar President in the coming year is to illuminate Bar services and perks to Bar licensees. For example, what should a licensee do if they want to put on a CLE that interests them, or how does a licensee arrange building facilities for business use. Ms. Woods also explained that she would like to have real discussion about Sandbox issues with Bar and showcase service providers to explain what benefits they provide. She noted that this will go hand in hand with the Bar's new website. Ms. Woods said her request is for a fund called Commission Outreach.

Ms. Stout then explained what appeared in the budget. She noted that the budget assumes a 2% increase in revenue and a 5% increase in salaries and benefits with cost of living. The Bar's health and dental insurance premiums also increased by 5%. She said that the Social Security Administration cost of living adjustment this year was 5.9%. Computer maintenance and security also increased and the Bar saw a 3% increase in cost to operate the building. Ms. Stout highlighted additional increases in travel and in-person meetings following the pandemic shut down.

Ms. Woods noted that the budget includes a salary study. She observed that salary compression has occurred and the Bar is seeing valuable employees wanting to leave because they can make more money elsewhere. Ms. Wright noted that the last salary study was done 7 years ago, and the recommendation is to complete one every 5 years.

Ms. Woods stated that she will task the Budget and Finance Committee with studying how Bar reserves are allocated. She observed that one value in attending conferences with other state bars is learning what other like organizations do on foundational items like reserves. For example, the Utah State Bar should be creating more line items in its reserves as other states do. Ms. Wright noted that reserves are up at all Bars because expenses went down with COVID. Arizona, for example, designated special projects as a line item in its reserve.

The Commission had a discussion about the budgeting process. Ms. Woods noted that her priorities to better reach and connect with Bar licensees will be a two-year process. She will be working with Mr. Christiansen to take the results of the upcoming survey and move those efforts forward.

Mr. Morse moved to approve the 2022-2023 budget. Ms. Quist seconded the motion. The motion carried with an abstention by Ms. Thuet.

2.2 Heather Thuet Request for WSBC Reimbursement.

Ms. Thuet presented on her request for reimbursement for the Western States Bar Conference. Ms. Wright noted that the body should decide what minimum attendance looks like at conferences and whether there should be a policy on it. She also noted that conferences are an opportunity, not a requirement for Board members. Mr. Hoole observed that there may be a difference between the Bar's summer convention and the regional conferences for Bar leadership. He posited that the purpose of regional conferences for Bar leaders is to benefit the Bar itself, whereas the Bar's continuing education conventions are to benefit Bar leaders as practitioners. The Commission had a discussion about minimum attendance when the Bar pays for its leadership to attend regional conferences. Ms. Quist moved to reimburse Ms. Thuet for her

Western States Bar Conference expenses. Mr. Moore seconded. The motion carried with opposition by Ms. Woods, Mr. Morse, and Ms. Mancuso-Smith.

2.3 Select Lawyer of the Year Award Recipient.

Ms. Woods said the Awards Committee recommended that Laura Gray be named the Utah State Bar Lawyer of the Year, with Debra Nelson and Noella Sudbury receiving special service awards. The Commission approved the recommendation by acclamation.

2.4 Select Judge of the Year Award Recipient.

Ms. Woods said the Awards Committee recommended that Judge Laura Scott be named the Utah State Bar Judge of the Year. The Commission approved the recommendation by acclamation.

2.5 Select Section of the Year Award Recipient.

Ms. Woods said the Awards Committee recommended that the Business Law Section be named the Utah State Bar Section of the Year. The Commission approved the recommendation by acclamation.

2.6 Select Committee of the Year Award Recipient.

Ms. Woods said the Awards Committee recommended that the Licensed Paralegal Practitioner Committee be named the Utah State Bar Committee of the Year. The Commission approved the recommendation by acclamation.

2.7 Select Special/Distinguished Award Recipient.

The Commission selected Debra Nelson and Noella Sudbury to receive special service awards.

3. Information Items:

3.1 Innovation Office Task Force: Erik Christiansen.

Mr. Christiansen reported on the composition of the Innovation Office taskforce. The taskforce will consist of John Lund, Mark Morris, Dean Gordan Smith, Tyler Young, and Michelle Quist. Nick Stiles, and Elizabeth Wright. He reported that the taskforce has many things to study in relation to the Innovation Office and the Supreme Court's request that the Bar take it on and that this will be approximately a year-long process. Mr. Christiansen said it had been reported to him that the Innovation Office will run out of funding in 2024. Mr. Morris opined that there should

more transparency about the Innovation Office's functions. He said there should be regular reports to the Bar about its functions. The Commission supported that objective.

4. Reports

4.1 Leadership Academy: Jen Tomchak and Judge Clem Landau

Leadership Academy Board members Jen Tomchak and Judge Clem Landau reported on the curriculum and activities of the current Leadership Academy class.

4.2 Commission Retreat: Katie Woods.

Ms. Woods reported that the Commission retreat will be October 14th and 15th in Springville, Utah, next to Zions National Park.

5. Luncheon with 50-year award recipients

The Commission met with 50-year award recipients following its regular meeting.

6. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following item was approved without discussion: Minutes of the April 22, 2022 Commission meeting.