

**STATE BAR OF GEORGIA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 1 p.m.
Zoom Meeting**

Members Participating

Dawn M. Jones, President; Elizabeth Louise Fite, President-Elect; Tony DelCampo, Secretary; Darrell L. Sutton, Immediate Past President; Bert D. Hummel, IV, YLD President; Elissa B. Haynes, YLD President-Elect; William T. Davis, YLD Immediate Past President; Ivy N. Cadle; R. Javoyne Hicks; Amy V. Howell; David S. Lipscomb; Martin Valbuena; and Nicki N. Vaughan.

Members Absent

Sally B. Akins, Treasurer.

Staff Participating

Sarah Coole, Chief Operating Officer; Damon Elmore, Executive Director; Paula Frederick, General Counsel; Christine Butcher Hayes, Director of Governmental Affairs; Bill NeSmith, Deputy General Counsel; and Ron Turner, Chief Financial Officer.

Call to Order

President Dawn M. Jones called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. after establishing a quorum. Members of the Executive Committee in attendance are indicated above.

License Fee Notice Draft

General Counsel Paula Frederick provided the Executive Committee with information about the history of the legislative and public education fund opt-out on the license fee notice. Director of Governmental Affairs Christine Hayes and Immediate Past President Darrell Sutton reported that the wording on the current license fee notice was drafted carefully and revised last year so that it is clear the payment is a voluntary contribution.

Request to Support HB 272

Executive Committee Member Nicki Vaughan requested that the Executive Committee support HB 272 (raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 17 to 18), pursuant to Executive Committee Standing Policy 100. Nicki reported that the Indigent Defense Committee, Child Protection and Advocacy Section, and the Children and the Courts Committee voted to support the bill. The general sentiment of the Executive Committee was that there is no emergency reason for the Executive Committee to approve support, and that it would be more appropriate for the Advisory Committee on Legislation to review it next year. The Executive Committee took the following action on HB 272:

- 1) By majority vote, found the subject matter to be within the legitimate scope and purposes of the Bar; and
- 2) By majority vote, the motion to support HB 272 failed.

President's Report

President Dawn M. Jones announced the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award and the Employee of the Year. She also reported that she meets twice a week with senior Bar staff to handle various Bar business items and plan for the first in-person meeting of the Bar year in June. In the interest of time, she

reserved the remainder of her report to occur during the discussions about the Annual Meeting plans and other items she had added to the discussion portions of the agenda to come during this very meeting.

Credit Card Fees

Chief Financial Officer Ron Turner gave a brief overview and provided information regarding credit card processing fees. Approximately 33,000 credit card payments are processed online or over the phone, and the State Bar has paid all credit card processing fees. For the 2021-2022 Bar year, the estimated cost of processing fees is \$200,000 to \$225,000. The Executive Committee, along with other Bar committees, have discussed passing on some of these processing fees to Bar members who pay their license fee by credit card.

After extensive discussion, by majority vote with one abstention, the Executive Committee approved charging a convenience fee of \$3 specific to payments of annual license fees, along with any related section and/or voluntary contributions made at the time of the annual license fee payment, to begin with the 2021-2022 Bar year going forward. (This convenience fee does not include purchasing other storefront items or joining sections separate from the license fee notice.) President Jones requested that Executive Director Damon Elmore and Chief Financial Officer Turner work on notification and messaging regarding the convenience fee to inform members as soon as possible.

Annual Meeting Update

President Jones reported that the Annual Meeting will be a hybrid event, with both in-person and virtual events, and it will be a full, typical meeting schedule. The meeting platform Bizzabo has been purchased for one year and will be the platform we use for the virtual portion of this hybrid meeting. This being our first meeting back in person since the COVID-19 pandemic began, President Jones advised that safety is of the utmost importance, for attendees and Bar staff alike, and all necessary precautions will be taken: outdoor receptions; diligently working with the hotel about sanitation and how to serve food safely, etc.; extensive signage; tables in every room with wipes and hand sanitizer; etc. Director of Meetings Michelle Garner reported that room reservation information for the meeting will be sent to the Executive Committee soon, followed by opening the room block to the general membership. President Jones said that everyone will be required to wear a mask, both at indoor and outdoor Bar events, and social distancing will be expected, regardless of vaccination status.

Executive Session

Following a motion, second, and unanimous voice vote, the Executive Committee met in executive session to discuss the litigation report and crisis communications. Thereafter, by unanimous voice vote, the Executive Committee emerged from Executive Session.

For the record, while in executive session, Executive Director Damon Elmore outlined additional safety procedures regarding the State Bar offices, including moving forward with plans to enhance a role on the Bar Building Security Committee, creating a Safety and Crisis Response Liaison. Executive Director Elmore said the thought is to add additional duties to one of the existing UPL investigator positions, starting with least senior first. All UPL investigators are former military police and familiar with safety protocols such as this.

Key (additional) duties include:

- Monday coordination with security and facilities teams to review upcoming schedule
- Friday coordination with security and facilities teams to review activity
- Coordination with meetings and COO as part of BOG and other meeting planning
- Coordination with OGC on key committee meetings/security planning
- Coordination with COO on other meetings

- Coordination with office manager and bar conference center team for calendar of events
- Review of security reports from building walk-through
- Coordination with finance and facilities management regarding command center activity
- Monthly report to Executive Director (or as requested)
- Evaluate threats from communications or OGC for credibility and potential planning
- Evaluate landscape to anticipate potential threats or challenges and plan accordingly
- Coordinate with local law-enforcement to create heightened and additional security presence
- Monitor public/available information outlets and evaluate for exposure
- Regular building walk-throughs
- Create annual or more regular training activity (active shooter, credible threats, etc.) for Bar staff
- Coordinate with building tenants to ensure similar plans and processes consistent with 104 Marietta Street expectations
- Coordinate with other mandatory, volunteer and general bar associations
- Gain membership and active presence in equivalent trade associations
- Attend and participate at BOG meetings and coordinate with onsite security and contracted security teams to review safety protocol and planning

Crisis Communications Consultant

After Executive Director Damon Elmore gave an overview of four communications firms and their submitted proposals, the Executive Committee agreed, by majority vote, to hire Castle, giving the executive director the authority of paying them up to \$50,000, as a crisis communications consultant to support the State Bar in matters above and beyond typical Bar communications efforts. The vote was 10 in favor and 1 against, with Darrell Sutton (asking to have his vote recorded) voting against.

Regulatory Innovations

President Jones reported that she attended a recent National Conference of Bar Presidents meeting, and one of the topics of discussion was how to fill the access to justice gaps and developing “sandboxes” in that regard. Wanting to share what was discussed, she asked General Counsel Paula Frederick to provide further information regarding the topic. General Counsel Frederick reported that some states are experimenting with these “sandboxes,” allowing regulated paralegals to do limited scope legal matters. President Jones said she had never heard of this and that it raised many concerns and questions for her as an attorney and Bar leader, and wanted to bring it to the attention of the Executive Committee. General Counsel Frederick will update the Executive Committee on any further information that is discussed at NABE/NCBP/ABA meetings regarding this topic.

Legislative Report

Director of Governmental Affairs Christine Hayes reported that HB166 (license fees and other monies collected by the State Bar to be paid into the general fund of the state treasury) did not cross over. She said that the Uniform Mediation Act bill and the Remote Online Notary bill crossed over. She referred the Executive Committee to the legislative email sent on March 11 for a full report on other bills of interest to the Bar. She said that right now, the Legislature is waiting for the Senate to finish and present the budget.

Committee Updates

The following committee updates were provided:

- Martin Valbuena reported that the iCivics Committee will become inactive after the current year. It is a special committee that President-Elect Fite will not reappoint since the Bar no longer funds the program. He also reported that the Local Bar Committee voted on the 2020 awards and they have a plan in place for the 2021 awards.
- Will Davis reported that the Children and the Courts Committee is almost run like a section, and they are unsure of their purpose. They do a lunch and learn each month, and they would like to

expand and will look to Bar leadership for more direction on that.

- David Lipscomb reported that the Professional Liability Insurance Committee has stopped meeting for now, and they continue to wait for an in-person meeting to present their options to the Board of Governors.
- Javoyne Hicks reported on the Wellness Committee and reminded everyone that the first wellness newsletter was sent with the Board Book. From now on, the quarterly, opt-in wellness newsletter will be included in the Board Book as information and emailed to membership. She also reported that the Committee to Promote Inclusion in the Profession has remained active and is currently soliciting nominations for the Commitment to Equality Awards.
- President Dawn M. Jones reported on the Seeking Equal Justice and said that more Courageous Conversations are being planned. She urged Executive Committee members to attend the professionalism CLE at the Spring Meeting, "The Necessity of Unparalleled Unity."
- Nicki Vaughan, as the liaison to the Delivery of Legal Services in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic special committee, said that they committee is not sure they need to continue their work at this point, especially with the Access to Justice Committee holding clinics to clear records.
- Bert Hummel reported that the YLD is holding a CLE on implicit bias in judicial proceedings at the Spring Meeting that has been opened it up to everyone to attend.

Old Business

There was no old business.

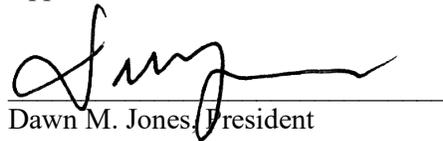
New Business

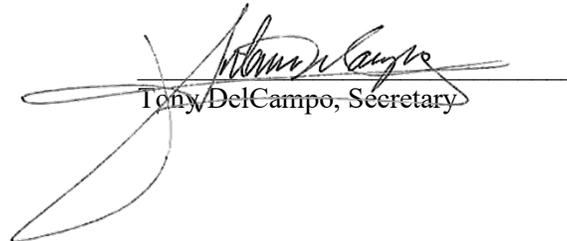
There was no new business.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Approved:


Dawn M. Jones, President


Tony DelCampo, Secretary