

**STATE BAR OF GEORGIA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Friday, June 19, 2020/12:00 p.m.
Via Zoom Meeting**

Members Participating:

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

Members Absent:

Sally B. Akins, Treasurer; and Elissa B. Haynes, YLD President-elect.

Staff Participating:

Sharon Bryant, Chief Operating Officer; Sarah Coole, Director of Communications; Jeff Davis, Executive Director; Paula Frederick, General Counsel; Michelle Garner, Director of Meetings; Christine Butcher Hayes, Director of Governmental Affairs; Bill NeSmith, Deputy General Counsel; and Ron Turner, Chief Financial Officer.

Call to Order

After obtaining the required 2/3 vote in favor of holding the specially called Executive Committee meeting, President Dawn Jones called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Members of the Executive Committee in attendance are indicated above.

Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism Appointments

By unanimous voice vote, the Executive Committee approved recommending to the Board of Governors the appointments of LaToya Simone Bell and Francys Johnson, Jr. to the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism (CJCP) for three-year terms. Dawn reported that at the request of CJCP Executive Director Karlise Grier, these two appointments will be ratified by the Board of Governors in October since they were not included in the appointments approved by the Board of Governors during the Annual meeting in June.

Indigent Defense Committee Letter re Georgia Public Defender Council (GPDC) Budget

Director of Governmental Affairs Christine Butcher Hayes reported there are two key areas in the GPDC budget that are facing significant cuts. The first is a \$1 million cut to expert witnesses. The second is a \$1 million cut on appellate issues. The proposed letter from the Indigent Defense Committee specifically addresses constitutional issues in undercutting those two areas, which have been litigated before. She also said the letter would be targeted to the six members in the House and Senate who will serve on the conference committee rehashing the budget.

David Lipscomb reported that the opt-out counties are also experiencing substantial budget cuts and asked if that could be addressed in the letter.

By unanimous voice vote, the Executive Committee approved the language in the proposed letter from the Indigent Defense Committee, with the revisions discussed by Christine, and Nicki Vaughan.

Senate Bill 405

Christine provided an update of SB 405 that would allow 6-person juries in state and superior courts from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 in the wake of the COVID -19 crisis. The bill's sponsor, Representative Andy Welch, has asked for feedback from the State Bar.

Committee members affirmed their preference for 12-person juries and discussed the need to move cases while observing social distancing requirements, which are easier with a six-person jury. Some members were not comfortable with the judicial discretion in the bill, and wondered whether it would lead to permanent changes to the right to trial by jury. Members observed that the proposal could be abused by litigants who do not want to get to trial, and could lead to venue shopping.

Executive Director Jeff Davis reported that Treasurer Sally Akins asked him to communicate that the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce have concerns about the bill, and she doesn't believe the State Bar should take action on it.

Christine reported the bill will be voted on by the House and if approved will go back to the Senate for approval, possibly at the end of next week.

Dawn asked Christine to also seek feedback back from the two Executive Committee members who could not participate today, and to report to Representative Welch that the Executive Committee had a mix of opinions on the bill.

Hate Crimes Bill

Christine reported hearings were held last night on the hate crimes bill. There is a lot of support for the House version and a heavy push to pass the bill this year, but the Lieutenant Governor is pursuing his own separate bill.

Dawn reported that she has a greater appreciation now of what Christine is doing in her position, and thanked Christine for continuing to keep the Executive Committee updated on legislative matters.

Seeking Equal Justice and Addressing Racism & Racial Bias Committee

Dawn reported that five Executive Committee members have asked to serve on the Seeking Equal Justice and Addressing Racism & Racial Bias Committee and 50+ other people have also asked to serve, but obviously the committee cannot be that large. Dawn said there will be plenty of opportunities for Bar members to take the lead in acting and effectuating some of the plans that will come out of the committee. She expects the committee to meet monthly and to come back with both short-term and long-term goals.

State Bar Office Reopening

General Counsel Paula Frederick reported that we have been working for months on plans to gradually reopen. We hope to begin Phase 1 of the plan when the number of people infected with COVID-19 begins leveling off and the numbers show a steady decline for two weeks in a row. Managers have assessed who can work remotely, who have childcare issues, and who is medically fragile. Staff currently teleworking will continue to do so in Phase 1, so fewer than half of the staff would be coming back to the office on a staggered work plan to ensure distancing. We have a screening process in place for all people entering the building, and we are closing all common areas and blocking the elevators for no more than two people.

Jeff reported that all replacement equipment will be laptops with docking stations to be better prepared if this happens again. The State Bar is prepared for any security breaches and has backup at the Savannah office. We have been enhancing capacity as we move to a hybrid model. Jeff also reported that because the judicial emergency was extended through July 12, we may push our reopening out to July 13. He thanked everyone for their support, and stated that we have been adequately serving our members.

New Business

Dawn announced the Executive Committee will meet on July 17 and August 14 from 1:00-3:00 pm. Depending on what comes up with legislation, we may also have another meeting next week.

Dawn reported we continue to have discussions with the hotels about our upcoming meeting, including any penalties we may incur due to cancellation and force majeure clauses that may apply in our favor. She said Meetings Director Michelle Garner has done a really good job of keeping us abreast of what the hotels are doing concerning cleaning and social distancing for our upcoming meetings. As of right now, the Executive Committee Extended Meeting will be held at the Wild Dunes Resort. Michelle is also gathering information from the Augusta Convention Center to see if it can safely, under current COVID-19 guidelines and physical distancing requirements, accommodate our Fall Board of Governors Meeting. Dawn stated discussions are ongoing and any final decisions made will be discussed with the Executive Committee. For the foreseeable future, the work of the State Bar will continue through Zoom and conference calls.

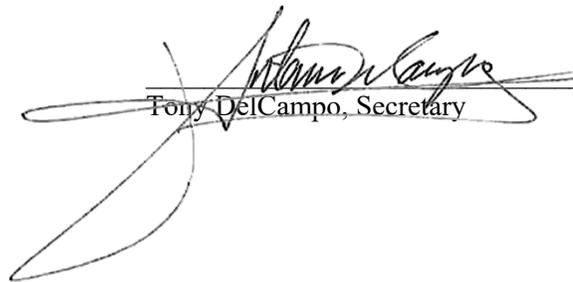
Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn", written over a horizontal line.

Dawn M. Jones, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony DeCampo", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a large loop.

Tony DeCampo, Secretary