

**STATE BAR OF GEORGIA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

**August 21, 2025, 9 a.m.
Cloudland at McLemore Resort
Rising Fawn, GA**

Members Participating

Christopher Twyman, President; William “Bill” Gentry, President-Elect; Javoyne Hicks, Treasurer; Shiriki Jones, Secretary; Ivy Cadle, Immediate Past President; Veronica Cox, YLD President; Kenneth Mitchell Jr., YLD Immediate Past President; Thua Barlay; Bert Hummel; Joyce Gist Lewis; David Lipscomb; Gary Spencer; and Martin Valbuena.

Members Absent

Virginia Josey, YLD President-Elect.

Staff Participating

Sarah Coole, Chief Operating Officer; Damon Elmore, Executive Director; Jenn McNeely, Director of Governmental Affairs; Andreea Morrison, Assistant Deputy Counsel; Bill NeSmith, Deputy General Counsel; Ron Turner, Chief Financial Officer; and Russ Willard, General Counsel.

Call to Order

President Chris Twyman called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. The members of the Executive Committee in attendance are indicated above. President Twyman welcomed the new members of the Executive Committee: YLD President-Elect Virginia Josey and Executive Committee Member Thua Barlay.

Future Meetings Schedule

President Chris Twyman reviewed the Future Meetings Schedule, including the upcoming meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Governors.

Executive Committee Orientation

Chief Financial Officer Ron Turner and General Counsel Russ Willard reviewed policies and rules that apply to serving on the Executive Committee. Those include (1) Officer and Non-Officer Executive Committee Expense and Reimbursement Policy; (2) Standing Board Policy 600 (Conflicts of Interest); (3) Standing Board Policy 800 (Confidentiality); (4) Keller Considerations; (5) Standing Board Policy 1000 (Positions, Articles, Programs, Meetings, Activities of Committees and Sections); (6) Standing Executive Committee Policy 1200 (Endorsement of Political or Judicial Candidates); (7) Responding to Communication Regarding the Disciplinary Process; and (8) Executive Committee Liaison Assignments.

Executive Committee Minutes

Secretary Shiriki Jones presented for approval the minutes of the April 25, 2025, Executive Committee meeting, which were passed as presented by unanimous vote.

Members Requesting Resignation

Pursuant to State Bar Rule 1-208, the Executive Committee approved the following resignation requests by unanimous vote: Wendy Elizabeth Ahmed-597720; Carolyn Mackie Appelbe-464085; Rebecca G. Ball-308655; George John Batarseh-076204; Laurie Eggleston Beever-242230; Robert Platt Bell-330108; Connie Caldwell Breeser-102507; Julia Mehr Brown-324745; Jennifer Leigh Brown-726070; Robert G. Brunton-090784; Shellee K. Buchanan-425172; Christopher Carlsen-110230; Christopher Patrick Childers-852153; Michael I. Cohn-175560; Stacey S. Collins-690123; Theresa A. Cortese-Fusaro-840173; Jeremy Dakota Cutting-947729; Deborah Anne Czuba-142207; Elizabeth Lynn Daniel-104243; Laura Lynn DeFilippo-362763; Spencer B. Eig-242530; Martin J. Elgison-243187; Paul Michael Eza-930336; Zachary Matthew Fialkow-871262; Carolyn K. Fisher-640540; Melissa Gregory Garcia-274726; John

Philip Gaset-883793; Kathleen Teresa Gillard-294822; Mark E. Gralen-305025; Christopher John Gramiccioni-433054; Paul Scott Greco-340925; Steven Marc Greenbaum-307722; Brandon Tyler Guinn-534157; Susan Joyce Hall-319312; Jennifer Rae Harbaugh-074327; Christopher Jay Barton Harrelson-438290; Jodi Lynn Harter-333750; Lisa Lorraine Heller-344109; Alan Rhys Jenkins-390198; Jihan April Rush Jenkins-196859; Laura Anne Jones-402430; Amy Elizabeth Jones-142350; Jason Peter King-421187; Kimberly Capps Klein-108870; Edward Yomtob Kroub-142730; Barbara Jane League-442355; Joseph Edward Leonard, Jr.-205178; Robert Liguori-452345; Dionna Kathleen Litvin-621495; Sarah Nell Lowe-459954; Emma Haas MacGuidwin-532008; Meryl Colle Maneker-468577; Johann Ray Manning, Jr.-469385; Laurel S. Marks-313566; Cynthia Newberry Martin-541086; Martin Lee McFarland-491291; Marc Joseph Meister-935548; Jonathan Marc Minnen-002580; Susannah Gale Mitchell-133047; Griffith James Morris-523925; Elena Marlene Mushkin-532701; Mark T. Mustian-532906; Karen Sue Nadler-604310; Nicole Marie O'Connor-548423; Joseph Harold O'Neill-735859; Linda Sue Portasik-584672; Melissa Metz Potts-350634; Benjamin H. Pruett-003080; Jason Noah Reisfeld-853443; Richard Michael Riccobono-602630; Gerald Stuart Sachs-415090; Nathaniel Jay mith-471704; Robin Lenn Smith-142430; Craig Tarrant Smith-751847; Knolan Daniel Smith-403995; Samuel Spitzberg Spitzberg-276355; James Ronald Stegall, Jr.-677785; Jason Hughes Stuber-776173; Matthew Henry Triggs-716299; Glen M. W. Trowbridge-717235; Lori Van Rossem-724120; Liza Sharon Vertinsky-448007; Matthew James Vivian-422085; Alex E. Wehner-745730; Andrew M. Weiss-746468; Jane A. Wells-747815; John Leslie Wharton-750838; Sheree Helms Wolfenden-773394; Kelly C. Woolfolk-940645; Benjamin Chingyen Wu-164709; Leslie Macon Yount-783488.

Members Requesting Disability

Pursuant to State Bar Rule 1-202, the Executive Committee approved two requests for disabled status by unanimous vote.

Proposed Rule Change

Rule 4-203.1. Uniform Service Rule.

The proposed changes introduce a new requirement that a member inform the Bar of their email address as part of their “official address” for purposes of Bar business, including service in disciplinary matters. An amendment to subsection (b)(3)(i) will allow the Chair of the State Disciplinary Board to authorize individuals to serve process in disciplinary matters. The provisions at subsection (b)(3)(ii) regarding service by publication will include a requirement that the service documents be emailed to the respondent’s official email address. Subsection (b)(5) creates service procedures for members with an address outside of the United States.

(NOTE: The Executive Committee initially approved a portion of these proposed changes in April 2025. The Board of Governors had additional proposed changes at the 2025 Annual Meeting. This version also includes changes that were previously approved by the Executive Committee that are currently pending with the Supreme Court.)

After extensive discussion and comments from the Executive Committee, the Office of the General Counsel will incorporate additional feedback into the proposed changes. The Executive Committee will then review the revised version at its September Meeting.

Proposed Section Bylaws

Deputy General Counsel Bill NeSmith presented proposed changes to the Eminent Domain Section Bylaws, which the Executive Committee unanimously approved.

President’s Report

President Chris Twyman outlined his goals for the Bar year, which include strengthening bar relations, containing costs, enhancing committee work, and continuing to explore the use of technology in a manner

that provides direction to lawyers to avoid conflicts with the Rules of Professional Conduct. He highlighted initiatives related to the Rule of Law (ROL), including collaboration with the Law-Related Education and High School Mock Trial programs to incorporate ROL components. As part of this effort, a script will be developed to assist attorneys speaking at schools or other places in explaining the importance of the Rule of Law. In addition, he would like to implement the “Law Day Every Day” initiative which aims to highlight Law Day and ROL each month in different judicial circuits.

President Twyman further reported that the Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology has met and that the new toolkit will be rolled out in the near future. Regarding the Bar Center, he clarified that, although it is not a new initiative, efforts are underway to market the rentable space. He has met with the broker currently listing the property and emphasized that filling available space will help offset rising expenses. He also noted that the current parking situation is under review to identify ways to increase revenue while preserving access for Bar members. Meetings are being conducted with various parking vendors to evaluate additional opportunities for improving operations and financial sustainability.

Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Damon Elmore reported on the recent orientations – committee chair, section chair and staff liaison – that focused on committee governance and emphasized the importance of holding robust and effective meetings. He noted that the staff liaison orientation reinforced committee chair responsibilities, with particular focus on ensuring that meetings are conducted consistently. All orientations to date were well attended and positively received. He made the committee aware of a recent safety incident in the parking deck. Since the incident, the Office of General Counsel conducted a comprehensive review, which identified potential areas for improvement and enhancement. Additional security measures have been authorized, including permission for security personnel to carry non-lethal deterrents, specifically pepper spray, additional live sweeps of the parking facility, and revisions to camera feed review. Finally, Executive Director Elmore provided an update on the unallocated cash, highlighting the current management summary of planned projects and building expenditures, as well as a high-level discussion of Bar expenses overall, and plans to minimize. He explained that while planning is based on anticipated needs, unexpected expenses, such as the replacement of the card chip reader in the parking deck and other equipment updates, can arise. For this reason, he emphasized the importance of establishing a proper reserve fund to address unforeseen requirements, describing it as both prudent and necessary.

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Javoyne Hicks presented the financial report as of May 31, 2025, highlighting that the current financials are detailed in the meeting materials. The Executive Committee was provided with a memo that explained budget expense variances of \$2,500 or greater. Senior management of the Bar believes that the Bar, excluding the Bar Center, will be under budget for its total expenses for the year ending June 30, 2025. However, expenses for the Bar Center are expected to exceed the budget due to building repairs and maintenance costs, which were previously known and included in the unallocated cash schedule. There were no additional items of concern related to budget variances. Treasurer Hicks encouraged everyone to review the contributions to both the Legislative Fund and Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP), and a note of thanks was extended for those generous contributions. Lastly, it was mentioned that the audit for the year ending June 30, 2025, is estimated to begin in late September 2025.

Office of the General Counsel Report

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

Committee Updates

Executive Committee liaisons to State Bar committees provided updates regarding the committees to which they are assigned. They were also provided with their new Executive Committee liaison committee appointments for the year.

Legislative Report

Director of Governmental Affairs Jennifer McNeely announced the upcoming Advisory Committee on Legislation meeting schedule, noting that the committee will meet on Sept. 30 and Dec. 11. She then provided an update on the 2026 legislative session. She reported that Senate Bill 215, the Bar Bill sponsored by Sen. Robinson, remains pending; however, there has been no engagement with him beyond initial discussions during last year's session. Director of Governmental Affairs McNeely highlighted anticipated leadership changes, as several key legislators—many of them lawyers—are running for higher office. This creates uncertainty regarding how active the upcoming session will be. She also reported on the decline of lawyer-legislators in the Senate. Currently there are 10, but following the session, only four will remain, with just one serving in the majority party. She emphasized that this will create a significant vacuum of legal knowledge within the Senate and requested feedback from the committee and members on how to encourage more lawyers to run for office or, at minimum, to involve Bar committees and sections in providing expertise on legislation impacting the profession.

YLD Report

YLD President Veronica Cox reported that the YLD theme for the year is “Celebrate the YLD.” This year the YLD celebrates the 20th Anniversary of Leadership Academy and the 15th Anniversary of the Legal Food Frenzy. This year's goals related to the theme include: spotlighting successful programming, creating consistency and transparency, and encouraging more involvement from YLD membership. Members can expect a CLE, service project, and networking event at every YLD General Session. This year's Board of Directors includes a Multi-Bar/Bar Affiliate Committee and each of the YLD Committees will have an advisor from the Board. The YLD had its Officers and Directors Retreat in Athens where the Board had a productive meeting and engaged in team-bonding. The YLD also held its Committee Chair Orientation where committees engaged in robust planning and each chair brainstormed two potential events to be held by respective committees throughout the Bar year.

YLD President Cox shared some specific YLD events to look forward to including: the Leadership Academy Holiday Luncheon, the YLD Leadership Holiday Party, the Signature Fundraiser in Macon benefitting Middle Georgia Justice, and the YLD stand-a-lone meeting in Asheville, NC where the Georgia YLD will join up with the North Carolina YLD to network and perform service in the Asheville community related to Hurricane Helene recovery. Leadership Academy applications for the 2026 program are now open until September 19. The YLD will also be bringing back the Good Lawyer Podcast with Ron Daniels and Bert Hummel as co-hosts. Lastly, at the Fall Meeting at McLeMore, the YLD will have an Ethics and Professionalism “fireside chat” CLE with Justice Bethel and Judge Hise, a Dinner Under the Stars, a leisure hike, and a food and funds drive to pack meals for kids.

Proposed Fee Arbitration Rules Changes

Deputy General Counsel Bill NeSmith presented proposed changes to the Fee Arbitration Rules. He explained the original process, under which a petition was filed, the lawyer was asked if they would be bound by arbitration, and regardless of the lawyer's response, the arbitration proceeded and the lawyer was required to abide by the decision. If they did not agree with the decision, they were entitled to a trial de novo in Superior Court. This process helped ensure that fee disputes were settled effectively. However, under changes implemented in 2022, the rules were revised so that if a lawyer chose not to be bound, the arbitration would not move forward. Deputy General Counsel NeSmith noted that this shift significantly reduced its effectiveness in protecting the public.

Executive Committee Member David Lipscomb, who has served on the Fee Arbitration committee since 2000, provided additional context. He referenced data from Fee Arbitration Director Donna Davis showing that, while the program previously managed approximately 100 hearings per year, only nine hearings have been conducted so far this Bar year, with 62% of lawyers refusing to be bound. Currently, 53 lawyers and seven law firms have multiple pending petitions. The current rules are modeled after The Florida Bar's system, which functions effectively there with three times as many attorneys, but the model has not worked

well in Georgia. Deputy General Counsel NeSmith emphasized that the suggested rule change would align Georgia with practices followed by many other bar associations. The proposed rules changes would revert the program back to its original way of functioning. This will now be presented to the Board of Governors as information at the Fall Board Meeting.

Topics of Discussion with the Supreme Court

The Executive Committee discussed topics for the joint meeting with the Supreme Court of Georgia which follows this meeting.

Board of Governors Minutes

The Annual Meeting minutes were provided as informational material.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

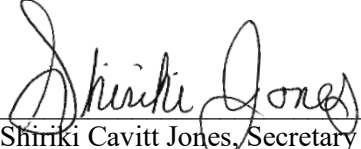
There was no new business.

Announcements

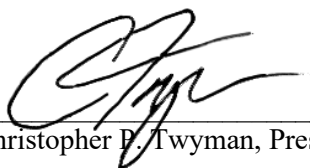
There were no announcements.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.


Shiriki Cavitt Jones, Secretary

Approved:


Christopher P. Twyman, President