

WASHINGTON STATE B A R A S S O C I A T I O N

Board of Governors January Meeting Update

A summary prepared by WSBA of the Board of Governors (Board) meeting held virtually Jan. 14-15. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board of Governors meeting, as well as past meetings, are [online](#). The next regular meeting is March 18-19, 2021. The Board of Governors is WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the bar and approving its annual budget.

Your District 1 Governor is [Sunitha Anjilvel](#); you can contact her at sunitha@amlawseattle.com about any of the information in this meeting recap. Your At-Large Governors are [Russell Knight](#), [Hunter Abell](#) and [Alec Stephens](#).

NEED TO KNOW

- 1. In support of the rule of law and the peaceful transition of power.** After a robust discussion, the board passed a resolution stating "... we unequivocally condemn the political violence that disrupted the Joint Session of the U.S. Congress on January 6," and asked members to unite around the foundational values of our nation: *the rule of law and the peaceful transition of power*. [Read the full resolution](#).
- 2. New faces on the Board of Governors.** [After being certified as the winner of the run-off election](#), At-Large Governor Alec Stephens was sworn in for a second term that runs through September 2023. Thanks to the esteemed volunteers who observed during the remote election certification: WSBA Past-Presidents Anthony Gipe and Sal Mungia, and Ret. Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst. Next up: Are YOU ready to join the board? Seats are open this year in Districts 1, 4, 5, and 7 South; applications are due by Feb. 16. The Young Lawyer At-Large seat and President-Elect position will also be up for election in the spring. [Learn more](#).
- 3. Honor a legal luminary!** We just recognized our [2020 APEX award winners](#), and now we are looking for incredible legal luminaries to honor in 2021. [Applications are due March 15](#).
- 4. Honoring long-time former WSBA Executive Director Paula Littlewood.** [WSBA mourns the loss of Paula Littlewood](#), who died from pancreatic cancer in December. Ms. Littlewood's family invites you to an online celebration of her life on Jan. 23 and recommends several ways to honor her legacy. [More information](#).

MEETING RECAP

Diversity Training Planning. Social equity consultant [ChrisTiana ObeySumner](#) led board members through some important groundwork to guide group expectations and interactions during the board's in-depth equity and anti-racism training throughout the coming year (three major trainings, each three hours, completed by next September). In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, they also read [Dr. King's Letter From a Birmingham Jail](#) and had a facilitated dialogue about how relevant the message is today. ([See page 8.](#))

WSBA Member Wellness

Following President Kyle Sciuchetti's [column in the November Bar News](#), Program Manager Dan Crystal presented information about WSBA's Member Wellness Program, including its purpose, history, array of services, and successes. The ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs spearheaded the formation of a National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being in 2016. The Task Force came out with a series of recommendations and best practices in 2017. Many bar associations subsequently established their own task forces to implement the recommendations. WSBA leaders enthusiastically expressed support for beginning that work for its members, too. WSBA Treasurer Dan Clark said funding for this program can likely be increased appropriately without increasing member dues. ([See page 328.](#))

The Future of Work at WSBA

Like many other organizations, WSBA is making decisions about how and where employees will work, recognizing how capably many functions have been performed remotely in the past 10 months. WSBA Executive Director Terra Nevitt presented results from an employee survey that showed support for continuing to work remotely in a post-pandemic environment. Citing those findings, as well as research/experience that show strong worker productivity when working remotely, WSBA leaders are now embarking on long-term planning to set a direction for WSBA offices. Questions include: How could WSBA best reduce its office footprint? Can WSBA sublease space in its current office space (with a contract that runs through 2026)? Should WSBA offices move out of the Seattle downtown corridor and/or have satellite offices throughout the state? To begin the process, governors authorized WSBA to list its current office space for possible sublet to gauge the market.

WSBA Employee Climate Survey

The Washington Supreme Court last year asked the Board of Governors—specifically the WSBA President and Executive Director—to report back on the overall working climate at the WSBA. Since then, the WSBA employees participated in a climate survey, the results of which are now available to board members. Board members agreed there is much work to do to support a positive culture within the organization. The board will now send the results of the survey to its Personnel Committee as well as the Court, and board members brainstormed ideas such as holding listening sessions with the staff and finding other ways to hear directly from them. Some governors said they hope the

survey process will be ongoing as a regular benchmark. “You can’t improve it if you don’t face it,” said Executive Director Terra Nevitt, noting there is an internal process underway to support a positive employee climate, and that is one of her highest priorities.

Access to Justice (ATJ) Board Annual Report

ATJ Board chair Francis Adewale and members Esperanza Borboa, Hon. Fred Corbit, and Terry Price presented some key highlights from the past year. In response to the ongoing triple pandemic of COVID-19, racism, and poverty, the Board’s work included adoption of a call to action and commitment to battle racism against Black communities and other communities of color; responding to growing legal needs during the COVID-19 pandemic; advancing the new ATJ Technology Principles and addressing digital divide; and prioritizing listening to and taking the lead from communities who are most impacted by marginalization. They also encouraged board members to attend the Legal Foundation of Washington’s annual Goldmark event and the upcoming virtual Access to Justice Conference. ([See page 310.](#))

2021 Legislative Update

Washington’s 2021 legislative session began Jan. 11 and adjourns April 25, with much of the testimony, deliberations, and voting happening remotely. There were two WSBA-requested bills this year—both supported by the Business Law Section—[SB 5005](#) (concerning business corporations) and [SB 5034](#) (concerning nonprofit corporations); both had hearings in the Senate Law and Justice Committee last week. The Law and Justice Committee unanimously passed 5005 to the Senate Rules Committee with a “do pass” recommendation. SB 5034 received overwhelming support in public testimony and is scheduled for an executive session in the Law and Justice Committee on Jan. 21. In addition, we are tracking and monitoring more than 160 bills for WSBA Sections.

COVID-19 Survey Data

Board members received an executive summary of the initial analysis of survey data collected from WSBA members regarding the impact of the pandemic (thank you to all members who participated in the online survey in November!). The [COVID-19 Response Task Force](#) is continuing to delve into the survey results with two goals: To present the results in a transparent way to members, and to meaningfully respond to member priorities and need for resources. ([See page 80.](#))

Other Business

The Board:

- Approved the contract for the executive director, a position that has been offered to Interim Executive Director Terra Nevitt. In the interest of transparency, the contract will be posted on the WSBA website when fully executed;
- Approved several WSBA bylaw amendments: to clarify and increase the number of members of the Budget and Audit Committee ([see page 190](#)), and to align language with the Court’s recent amendments to APR 3(g), Pro Bono Admission ([see page 183](#));

- Authorized WSBA's Civil Rights Law Section and World Peace Through Law Section to join as signatories on the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law's Draft Resolution Concerning the Detention of Immigrant Children, which calls for compliance with the basic rights of detained children under the Flores Settlement Agreement. ([See page 218.](#));
- Considered on a first read a proposed amendment to WSBA bylaws regarding inactive-to-active application fees for Limited Practice Officers and Limited License Legal Technicians. ([See page 179.](#));
- As requested by the WSBA Council on Public Defense, approved a letter in support of the Office of Public Defense's budget request to the Legislature. ([See page 195.](#));
- Approved a comment in support of the Pro Bono Council's suggested amendment to Rule of Professional Conduct (RPC) 6.5 (to provide clarity to non-profit and court-annexed programs providing limited legal assistance, allowing them to utilize the benefits RPC 6.5 and be more accessible to low-income individuals while protecting client confidentiality and safety); the comment will now be transmitted to the Washington Supreme Court. ([See page 198.](#));
- Heard an ABA Mid-Year Meeting preview. ([See page 232.](#));
- Heard an update about the Judicial Information Systems Committee. ([See page 406.](#)).

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