



Board of Governors Meeting Recap

Sept. 6–7, 2024

A summary prepared by the WSBA of the Board of Governors (Board) meeting held Sept. 6-7, 2024, in Grand Mound. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board meeting are posted online. The next regular meeting is Nov. 7-8, 2024, in Seattle. The Board is the WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the WSBA and approving its annual budget. To subscribe to the Board Meeting Notification list, email barleaders@wsba.org.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

- **Welcomes and Farewells.** Chief Justice González swore in WSBA's incoming Officers and Board members: President Sunitha Anjilvel, Incoming President Francis Adewale, Immediate-Past President Dan Clark, Treasurer Kari Petrasek, and Governors Parvin Price (District 1), Mary Rathbone (continuing for District 4), Alain Villeneuve (District 7-South), and Jordan Couch (continuing as At-Large representing young lawyers). Because Gov. Adewale relinquished his seat to assume his new office, the Board elected Emily K. Arneson to fill the District 5 position for the 3-year remainder of the term (and, following that, she was also sworn in). Outgoing Gov. Serena Sayani, from District 7-South, was lauded for her service and leadership. Look in the October issue of *Washington State Bar News* magazine for an introduction to President Anjilvel and biographies of all FY25 WSBA Officers and Governors.
- **Proposal for New License Statuses.** Based on much member feedback, a work group studied current WSBA member license status options and presented proposed changes for first reading. The recommendations address members' desires to have options other than "voluntarily resigned" when they stop actively practicing but may want to, for example, do a small amount of volunteer work with the WSBA or remain active in bar activities; others want a name for that status with a more positive connotation. The Board expects to take action on the proposal in November. ([See page 135.](#))
- **Standards for Family Defense Services and Appellate Caseloads.** The Board approved new WSBA Standards for Indigent Defense Services regarding the provision of family defense services ([see page 364](#)) and to implement an interim appellate caseload standard pending the results of an appellate workload study ([see page 525](#)). The Board will also transmit the suggested amendments to the Washington Supreme Court for its consideration. These changes are part of the Council on Public Defense's (CPD) process to comprehensively update the WSBA's and Court's standards for indigent defense. In March, [the Board approved a significant update](#), and the CPD at that time promised to

bring forward corresponding standards specific to particularized areas of practice, such as appellate and family defense services. [Relatedly, the Court is holding a hearing on Sept. 25 about proposed amendments that would align its defense standards with the updated WSBA standards.](#)

OTHER BUSINESS

Local Hero. The WSBA recognized [Patrick O'Connor](#) and [Stephanie Stocker](#) as Local Heroes, an honor bestowed by the WSBA President in partnership with local bar associations to recognize colleagues who make noteworthy contributions to their communities. O'Connor, nominated by the Government Lawyers Bar Association, has successfully navigated Thurston County Public Defense through many challenges recently, all while supporting his community at large through activities like coaching and volunteering. Stocker was nominated by the Thurston County Bar Association because—in addition to numerous accolades, awards, and accomplishments—she is a shining example of professionalism and community involvement.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. The Board approved the FY25 budget, which aligns with working drafts brought forward in previous months. [The complete budget will be available online at the beginning of the fiscal year.](#) License fees for 2025 have already been set; they will remain stable with no increases. The overall FY25 budget forecasts an overall impact of about \$1.4 million of purposeful drawdown of the reserve fund. ([See page 31.](#))

FY 2025 Strategic Priorities. Informed by member feedback and prior discussion, the Board approved four strategic priorities for the coming year, which continue on the work of the current year's priorities: 1. Study member well-being and expand and improve resources for and assistance to legal professionals and the legal community; 2. Assess technology-related opportunities and threats and determine WSBA's role vis-a-vis regulation, consumer protection, and support to legal professionals; 3. Improve the experience of belonging in the legal community; and 4. Support rural practice and access to justice in small towns and rural parts of the state. ([See page 536.](#))

Demographic Study and Update on New DEI Plan. Thank you to everyone who participated in the WSBA's comprehensive demographic study during the past year—whether by online survey and/or focus groups. The findings are compiled and ready to be shared; the Board heard a few top takeaways, including the fact that the historically marginalized identity groups continue to be underrepresented in the legal community. Although that imbalance is slowly changing, the bulk of members from non-dominant identity groups are not experiencing positive, accommodating, or welcoming environments in the legal community. Look for more in-depth data and findings from the demographic study in an upcoming issue of Washington State Bar News. The demographic study is the foundation of a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan being created by the DEI Council. The plan will guide the WSBA's resources and efforts in the coming years to make strides toward its strategic goals of improving the sense of belonging for everyone in the legal community. The draft plan will be available soon, and all members will be invited to provide feedback. ([See page 626.](#))

Pilot Test of Entity Regulation. WSBA and Practice of Law Board (POLB) leaders led an information and feedback session about a draft order they will send to the Court at the end of September. The order, if adopted, would create a time-bound pilot test of entity regulation under carefully controlled, data-driven conditions. What does that mean? [Here are details, including a Q&A video.](#)

The Board also:

(Please note: All WSBA bylaw amendments approved by the Board will be submitted to the Court for final approval.)

- Approved a WSBA Bylaw amendment to provide an exemption from the inactive license fee for members who seek to transfer to or remain on inactive status because they are experiencing a significant health condition. ([See page 258.](#))
- Approved the 2025 Keller deduction. ([See page 208.](#))
- Approved a WSBA Bylaw amendment to change the delivery method for the pre-suspension notice required under APR 17 to be delivered by first-class mail instead of certified mail. The requirement that the WSBA contact the member by email and phone after delivering the pre-suspension notice remains unchanged. ([See page 232.](#))
- Approved a WSBA Bylaw amendment so that all active out-of-state bar members will continue to vote in WSBA At-Large Governor and At-Large Young Lawyer Governor elections; in addition, any active bar member who resides outside Washington but continues to practice law within Washington is eligible to vote in district elections in the district of their primary Washington practice. This bylaw amendment was necessary to align with a recent decision to eliminate the requirement for out-of-state members to maintain an in-state resident agent. ([See page 243.](#))
- Approved a WSBA Bylaw amendment to simplify and align the MCLE requirements for a member who is returning to active status, to ensure it is not more difficult to make that license status switch than it is to become admitted to the WSBA for the first time. ([See page 268.](#))
- Reviewed a proposal to create a WSBA policy to provide stipends to remove financial barriers so people with low incomes can participate in decisions to form WSBA policies and programs that impact them. The Board expects to take action on this proposal in November. ([See page 701.](#))
- Approved the FY25 roster of Trustees for the Washington State Bar Foundation and heard the Foundation's annual report. Look for more information about the Foundation in the September issue of Washington State Bar News magazine. ([See page 542.](#))
- Completed the Executive Director annual evaluation.