



Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2025
In-person Retreat
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Practice of Law Board Members in Attendance:

- ☒ Lesli Ashley, Chair
- ☒ John Dirgo Deweese
- ☒ Rory Hardy
- ☒ Melissa Kover
- ☐ Ellen Reed

- ☒ Ronald Satterthwaite
- ☒ Craig Shank
- ☒ Drew Simshaw
- ☒ Murugeshwari Subramanian
- ☒ Michael Terasaki
- ☒ Aaron Vanderpol

Liaisons in Attendance:

- ☒ Bobby Henry, WSBA Staff Liaison
- ☒ Kristina Larry, BOG Liaison

Other WSBA Staff in Attendance:

- ☒ Renata de Carvalho Garcia, Chief Regulatory Counsel
- ☒ Anne Trent, RSD Paralegal
- ☐ Cathy Biestek, Managing Regulatory Counsel
- ☐ Terra Nevitt, Executive Director

PUBLIC SESSION

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:13 a.m. by Chair Lesli Ashley.

Coordinating Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) Complaints

The board discussed its role in handling UPL complaints. Prior to the restructuring of the board in 2017, the board had the ability to investigate complaints; however, this authority was removed by the Washington Supreme Court due to anti-trust concerns. Members of the board expressed concerns about acting as a middleman in the complaint process, noting that it is too time-consuming and may not add significant value to the process, the enforcement agency, or complainant. The board explored alternative procedures for reviewing UPL complaints. The general consensus of the board was to continue and improve collection of UPL data to better inform the public of UPL risk as part of the board's education duty. The board decided to form a UPL committee consisting of Michael Terasaki and Rory Hardy to recommend to the board a new process for UPL complaints.

Educating the Public About Competent Legal Assistance

- Legal Check-up: Michael Terasaki informed the board that the Washington Law Help website is going to launch a completely new version in the coming days. The website's intended purpose is to educate and provide resources for legal help to the public. The new platform and tools available on Washington Law Help will better assist the public than the board's Legal Check Up. The board decided to sunset the Legal Check-Up.

- New Initiatives for Educating the Public; UPL: The board discussed the need to better inform the public about how to find competent legal assistance. Questions were raised about whether people know how to identify reliable legal help and how the board can serve as a vehicle to deliver this information to the public. Members noted that physical print materials are still valued by many and can be distributed directly to those in need. Suggestions for how to educate the public included creating materials with guidance of where to go for legal help on specific areas of law and creating lists of red flags and signs to watch out for when seeking legal help. The board identified three key questions to guide future efforts: What do we want the public to know? Who do we want to receive this information? How do we get the information to the public? An education subcommittee was formed to explore these issues, consisting of Aaron Vanderpol, Melissa Kover, Michael Terasaki, and Lesli Ashley.

Innovation for Providing Legal Services

- Entity Regulation Pilot Project Update: Bobby Henry reported that the Entity Regulation Pilot Project is moving full steam ahead. Multiple subcommittees are forming, and several member volunteered to serve on the internal staff/board working committees. The application process is well underway and currently in the final drafting phase. The application will be developed by and using the same vendor used for the admissions applications so that the entity regulation can be completed online. The goal is to have the application ready for review by the board at the next meeting. Information is actively being collected from stakeholders to support the process. The entity regulation webpage on wsba.org has been revised to be more user friendly.
- Entity Regulation Budget FY 2026: The board decided that for purposes of application fees and annual fee there would be a reduced fee for “Access-Focused” entities. The board approved the following definition: An “Access-Focused Entity” is an entity with a primary focus of providing legal and law-related services to low income or low and moderate income individuals or households. Since the last meeting, the budget projections were revised to correct a couple small errors and to include costs for a background investigation process into applicants for pilot project. Due to the increase in the costs associated with the investigation, the board recommended increasing the proposed application fees to \$2,000 for general entity applicants and \$1,000 for “Access-Focused” entity applicants. Staff suggested a member of the board attend the Budget and Audit Committee meeting on May 19, 2025.

Board Members, Attendance and Participation

- Ways to Increase Participation for Members, in Particular Public Members: The board discussed several strategies to increase participation and improve recruitment, especially among public members. Emphasizing clear communication of expectations and creating space for everyone to contribute were identified as key starting points. It was acknowledged that public members often need time to fully understand the board’s work, and efforts should be made to help them feel more engaged and useful. Members were encouraged to speak up, ask questions freely, and not worry about feeling uncertain. Facilitators should ensure all members are heard before moving to the next agenda item or voting on an item.
- The chair decided to use roll call voting—requiring each member to affirmatively vote "yes," "no," or "abstain"—to have a clear record of how people voted. A simple majority was noted as the standard for decision-making.

- Committees of the Board: The board formed a recruitment committee with members Michael Terasaki and Ellen Reed. The committee needs one additional member. The board also discussed the possibility of creating an entity regulation committee for review of applications by entities into the pilot project.
- Succession Planning: Bobby Henry recommended establishing a Vice Chair position to act as Chair during the Chair's absence. The board will decide later on the vice chair position and whether the vice chair should automatically succeed the Chair at the end of the term. The board also discussed recruiting alternates so if a member has to step down, an alternate can take their place. The alternates should consist of one licensed legal professional, and one member of the public.
- Volunteer Recruitment begins May 1, 2025, for FY2026: The board discussed strategies for broadening outreach to improve volunteer recruitment. Ideas included leveraging newsletters, such as those from the League of Women Voters, and possibly placing advertisements. Engaging students, law schools, and law clerks was also suggested as a way to expand the applicant pool. The use of Zoom was highlighted as a tool to increase geographic diversity among volunteers. The board considered whether recruitment efforts should target specific legal areas or roles that are currently underrepresented, such as prosecutors, consumer protection, labor and industries, family law, and immigration. The concept of aligning recruitment with risk-based governance principles was also introduced to help guide these efforts.
- To support volunteer involvement and make the application less onerous, the board decided to eliminate the board-created part of the application process and instead rely solely on the general WSBA application tools and process.
- Board Schedule for FY 2026: The board discussed alternative meeting schedules such as meeting every other month, having committee meeting in the interim to focus on their projects, and holding more meetings in person. No decisions were made at this time.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.