

# Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society

## Board of Directors Meeting

January 11, 2021  
Via WebEx  
Minutes

Present: Wesley Horton (President), Steve Armstrong, Jeff Babbin, Kathryn Bare, Mike Besso, William Bevacqua, Henry Cohn, Glenn Falk, Bill Fish, Clare Kendall, Daniel Krisch, Kevin McMahon, Matt Necci, Donald Rogers, Erick Sandler, Barbara Schellenberg, Kate Stith, Jon Weiner, Harry Weller, Jeff White, Mike Widener, Kendall Wiggin, Laura Zaino, Peter Zarella

Guests: Molly LeVan, Jillian Murray (WebEx host)

I. President Wesley Horton called the meeting to order at 2:03pm.

II. **Minutes.** The group approved minutes of the May 4, 2020 meeting unanimously on a duly offered motion and second, with observation by Babbin that attachments were not properly included in the circulated copy. Secretary Rogers agreed to recirculate minutes to all members with attachments (as was done later in the day).

III. **Treasurer's Report.** Babbin reported that society funds remain steady at \$78,890.15. He noted that the New Haven Lawn Club still retains the society's \$2,500 deposit for this year's annual meeting, which will be postponed due to COVID restrictions, so that the society will not need to spend that money again when the next in-person annual meeting is rescheduled there. Babbin also said that the check written for student Chassidy Sheffield's Connecticut History Day prize has not been cashed, and will need to be reissued. Horton agreed to investigate the matter in an effort to get this well-deserved prize to the student. **On a duly moved and seconded motion, the group unanimously approved the treasurer's report.**

IV. **Program Committee.** Committee chair Sandler reported on the following:

- A. He reminded members of the January 12 online presentation by Judge Henry Cohn on the colorful life and career of notable supreme court reporter John Hooker. Weller asked whether the talk would be recorded, and discussion followed as to how to do so.
- B. He indicated that his committee proposes that this year's annual meeting set for April 29 at the New Haven Lawn Club go online, due to continuing COVID restrictions. He said that his committee determined that planning for an in-person gathering now is not realistic, but that it is important to hold some kind of spring event to maintain the society's visibility, rather than just cancelling. He added that planned speaker Alison Lange is still available at the agreed upon stipend of \$1,000. In passing, it was observed

that we still need to elect officers and new board members this spring. Sandler suggested that the board meet early online to transact that business, and then proceed to the online annual meeting presentation. The Lawn Club will hold our deposit for April 2022.

Discussion then ensued as to presentation of the society's first Collier prize to Professor Scott Gerber, whom the society hoped would receive this award in person at the annual meeting in April 2020, but has now been put off three times. The group concurred to formally acknowledge his receipt of the award now, send him his \$1,000 check, recognize him at an online annual meeting in April, and then honor him personally at the next in-person society meeting. It was noted that we sent him money to pay for airfare, and that the airline has given him a coupon for a new flight redeemable until 2022.

Duly moved and seconded, **motion to approve program committee's recommendation was passed unanimously to hold an online annual meeting on April 29, 2021, and then hope and plan for a return to in-person annual meetings in spring 2022.**

C. He added that the program committee hopes to hold an in-person program in fall 2021.

IV. **Zarella Prize.** Necci reported that the society awarded three Zarella scholarships last July 2020, two for \$1,250 each (Valentina Krasniqi and Isadore Johnson), and one for the full \$2,500 (Lisette Donewald). **His committee requested an appropriation of \$5,000 to offer two scholarships for competition again this current year, and on a moved and seconded motion, the group unanimously approved.**

#### V. **Membership Committee.**

- A. Zaino observed that the board approved a waiver of membership fees for the coming year, due to the society's lack of programming and hardships faced by some members in wake of the COVID epidemic. She received appreciative thanks from members for this.
- B. She stated that her committee has been thinking about ways to boost the society's membership. One spin off of this consideration is formation of the social media committee under Bill Bevacqua's leadership, as social media can be a big platform for publicizing society activities. (See report below.) Other actions will follow. She anticipates a membership drive next year after COVID restrictions lift.

VI. **Connecticut Supreme Court History journal report.** Schellenberg recommended that society wait until next year to issue a 2020-2021 volume of the journal, since the society has held no events to highlight in the journal this year, and articles are hard to come by in the COVID-locked down academic and legal worlds. She stated, however, that there are promising developments for a volume next year in advance of the society's April 2022 annual meeting. Former chief justice Chase Rogers has promised an article on women in the law, and Judge Cohn reminded the group that there has been discussion of preparing an article on the state appellate courts' experience during the COVID crisis. The group reached a consensus to set the release the next volume of the journal around December 2021/January 2022 as a goal.

## VII. Law Day.

- A. Horton reported that judicial branch executive director of external affairs Melissa Farley has ascertained that Chief Justice Robinson is enthusiastic about holding a Law Day event again this year with the Supreme Court Society again in charge of arrangements.
- B. Horton said that he reached out to Judge Kim Knox who has promoted this event splendidly in the past, but found her swamped with work and unable to coordinate the event again this year. **Upon Horton's recommendation, the group moved and seconded a commendation for Knox's excellent work on Law Day over the past few years, which the group passed unanimously.**
- C. Fish then kindly agreed to take up the duty to organize a Law Day event. This year's ABA theme is "advancing the rule of law." Proposing a program and student competition like last year's, Fish requested an appropriation for two Law Day prizes for an essay and for art at \$1,000 each. **Upon motion and second, the group approved the plan with prize allocation unanimously.**
- D. Horton confirmed that **Law Day will occur likely virtually online on May 3, 2021.**

## VIII. Social Media.

- A. Bevacqua indicated that he is setting up the society's Social Media committee with help of CPAN assistants and Logan Carducci of Halloran Sage. The committee's initial aim is to build sites on Facebook and Instagram, and then perhaps Linked In. For these sites, he asked for board member help to gather photographs of past society events and copy from past programs to describe online what the society does. Various board members made suggestions. He expects that media sites will effectively advertise society events.
- B. Horton named, and Kendall kindly agreed to join this committee.

IX. **Nominating Committee.** Horton asked the nominating committee headed by Bare, to be kindly joined by Cohn, to report on a slate of officers and board nominees for election at the next annual meeting. Horton urged the committee to seek greater diversity in the nominations.

X. **Next Board Meeting.** With the group's concurrence, Horton set the **next board meeting at 5:30pm online on April 29, 2021**, shortly before the start of the annual meeting at 6:00pm.

XI. Meeting adjourned at 2:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald W. Rogers  
Secretary