

# **Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society**

## **Board of Directors Meeting**

January 13, 2020  
Lawyer's Lounge, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT  
Minutes

Present: Wesley Horton (President), Stephen Armstrong, Jeff Babbin, Kathryn Bare, Bill Bevacqua, Kathy Calibey, Henry Cohn, Honorable Greg D'Auria, Molly LeVan, Matthew Necci, Donald Rogers, Erick Sandler, Matt Warshauer, Jon Weiner, Harry Weller, Mike Widener, Kendall Wiggin, Laura Zaino, Peter Zarella

I. President Wesley Horton called the meeting to order at 2:00pm and asked attendees around the table to introduce themselves.

II. **Treasurers' Report.** Babbin presented a report covering revenue and expenses for the period from May 3, 2019 to January 9, 2020 which shows an opening balance of \$87,888.88 and a closing balance of \$87,280.54. He termed the society's finances stable. On motion by Babbin and second by Calibey, the group approved the report unanimously.

### **III. Secretary's Report**

A. **Minutes.** The group approved minutes of the September 24, 2019 meeting unanimously with several small corrections to fix misspelled names on motion by Rogers, second by Bevacqua.

B. **Archives.** Rogers reported that he reviewed three archive boxes of society records deposited with the Connecticut State Library. He indicated that those archives are incomplete and not well organized, and offered suggestions as to how to put them in good order. Following discussion, Horton directed the following actions:

1. Designated members of the group to suggest persons from their law firms or organizations within ten days to assist Rogers in bringing society archives up to date.
2. Assigned this archives committee to develop a destruction/retention policy for recommendation at the next board meeting as to which records to preserve permanently. Bevacqua offered to share CPAN's policy for guidance.
3. Based on Zarella's recommendation, agreed that committee should investigate a box of material held in the Supreme Court vault for inclusion in permanent archives.

IV. **Announcements**—Horton conveyed an announcement from member Bill Fish, unable to attend, about an event to be sponsored by the Connecticut Foundation for Open Government at the Hartford Lyceum on January 27, 2020, 5:30-7:00pm about "The Stories Behind the Biggest

Stories of 2019,” which will explore, among other things, the difficulties that reporters faced in sorting out fake news from legitimate information last year.

## **V. Committee Reports and other Reports.**

A. **Law Day.** Justice D’Auria reported that the Supreme Court will support Law Day this year with Chief Justice Robinson’s support. The program remains in the works. Horton reminded everyone that he has asked Judge Kim Knox to make arrangements. On motion by Weiner, second by Necci, the group voted to allocate \$2,000 for two \$1,000 prizes to be awarded to winners of this year’s Law Day competitions.

### **B. Program Committee.**

1. LeVan reported that the society had a successful fall meeting at the Hartford Club on October 23, 2019, at which Attorney Paul DeForest Hicks spoke about his book, *The Litchfield Law School: Guiding the New Nation*.
2. She added that this year’s annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for an April 2020 date at the New Haven Lawn Club with a speaker on women’s suffrage as the board earlier directed, but that details on who the speaker will be and when she will be able to speak are still being firmed up. The official date will be announced shortly.
- (3. Zarella suggested parenthetically that the society consider Ross Gerber as a potential speaker for future meetings, given the notice that he has attracted for speeches on impeachment.)
4. Noting that the society’s board of directors typically meets before the annual meeting at 5:00pm to conduct business and elect board members and officers, Horton named Cohn and Bare as the nominating committee to prepare the election slate.
- (5. Considering how members and the public might get details about the annual meeting, Calibey remarked that the society’s website is very hard to find online. Discussion revealed that a Google search will call up the society’s webpage easily, but that the society’s online page is difficult to find on either the Supreme Court or the Judicial Department sites. Justice D’Auria agreed to look into this.)

### **C. Membership.**

1. Zaino reported that 2020 membership renewals are rolling in with renewals for 51 members and 6 law firms received, and applications for 2 new members gotten.

2. Turning to the question of building up membership, Zaino indicated that she received suggestions from LeVan and Rogers, and a report from Bevacqua, inspiring wide discussion on action steps to retain existing members and recruit new ones.
  - a. Responding to the suggestion that people attending society events such as the annual meeting often sign up as members, the group agreed at Horton's suggestion for the society "buy a table" of ten seats at the annual meeting for invited guests to attend free of charge without compromising law clerks and other government employees who are barred from accepting gifts.
  - b. Bevacqua then reviewed his report "Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society Membership Marketing Ideas" that he developed from the society's 2015 Long-Range Plan and his own marketing experience at CPAN. Stressing the importance of nurturing and retaining existing members, Bevacqua outlined various ways to promote the inherent value of history for lawyers' work to existing members, and methods to reach out to each current member.

Noting that Horton already sends out personal notes and general email announcements to members, the group agreed to create an annual newsletter, a vehicle that virtually all other civic groups utilize to patronize their members. Horton appointed Weller to prepare the newsletter and to have it ready by mid-March for distribution in advance of the April annual meeting. Group members suggested that Horton and Chief Justice Robinson among others submit articles.

Bevacqua completed the summary of his report by suggesting ways to recruit new members, particularly by reaching out to law students, paralegals, and administrative assistants, by collaborating with the Democracy Center at the Old State House, and by pursuing funding for an oral history project.

- c. Based on discussion, Horton asked the membership committee to consider ideas discussed and report back with recommendations at the annual meeting.
- D. **Next Issue of Connecticut Supreme Court History.** In place of editor Barbara Schellenberg who could not make it, Cohn reported that the 2020 volume of Connecticut Supreme Court History is coming together with three articles by Justice Kahn, Michael Besso and Horton (in place of an article that Ms. DeLeon was not able to complete), plus the *New York Times* give and take between last year's annual meeting speaker Akhil Reed Amar and Princeton historian Sean Wilentz over the role of slavery in the formation of the Electoral College in the Constitution.
- E. **Archives.** Widener indicated that there is no report from the Archives Committee.

F. **Zarella Award.** Necci reported that the Zarella award committee is moving forward with this year's competition.

G. **Collier Award.** Rogers stated in absence of committee chair Jeff White who could not attend that the Collier Committee received three estimable nominations and determined this year's first Collier Award should go to Professor Scott Douglas Gerber of Ohio Northern University Law School based on his extensive writing on the origins of the U.S. constitutional system and specific work on religion in early Connecticut law and the development of an independent judiciary in Connecticut.

H. **Website and Facebook Page.** Weiner let members know that his subcommittee is working to improve the society's website and to create a Facebook page. He requested photographs to illustrate both sites. He added that his subcommittee is will be creating a society gmail account for general communication with the public.

I. **Membership list.** Babbin inquired as to whether there is a society membership list that reflects the business associations of members. Zaino reported that a membership list can be generated and shared among board members, and suggested that a question might be added to membership renewal forms to indicate business affiliations.

VI. **Next Meeting.** Horton reminded everyone that the society's next board of directors meeting will take place at 5:00pm on the scheduled day of the annual meeting before that meeting, likely in April..

VII. Horton adjourned the meeting at 3:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald W. Rogers  
Secretary