

Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society

Board of Directors Meeting

Lawyers' Lounge, Connecticut State Library, Hartford CT
January 22, 2024

Present: Wesley Horton (President), Jeffrey Babbin, Katie Bare, Bill Bevacqua, Honorable Henry Cohn (remotely), Honorable Gregory D'Auria, Patrick Fahey, William Fish, Zelda Harris, Pamela Nagy, Eboni Nelson, Donald Rogers, Erick Sandler, Matt Warshauer, Jonathan Weiner, Harry Weller, Laura Zaino, and Peter Zarella. Guest: Laura Ray.

I. President Wesley Horton convened the meeting at 2:05pm.

II. **Secretary's Report.** The group approved minutes for September 11, 2023, on motion by Weiner, second by Fahey. Rogers reported that the Connecticut Bar Association will release its video *The Law Unmasked* on COVID's impact on the Connecticut legal community soon.

III. **Treasurer's Report.**

- A. Babbin reported that the society's bank balance rests at \$70,787.87, even after spending \$10,000 on the upcoming "Declaring Freedom" conference. It's a normal level.
- B. He noted that membership checks are coming in, but that some firms are balking at the new corporate membership plan. He has successfully explained the new system to them.
- C. Horton said he solicited memberships from big law firms as usual. Checks are coming.
- D. Based on past authorization, Babbin indicated that he will this week **invest** half (\$35,000) of the society's money in Bank of America CDs to take advantage of good interest rates.
- E. **On motion by Bevacqua, second by Bare, the group approved the report.**

IV. **Program Committee Report.**

- A. Representing himself, Weller and Ray (there as a guest), Sandler reported a successful fall meeting with Judge Maria Araujo Kahn on November 29. About 25 persons attended.
- B. He added that the **annual meeting is set for Tuesday, May 14, 2024** at the New Haven Law Club at which ACLU president and NYU law professor Deborah Archer will speak. He thanked UConn law school dean Nelson for helping to arrange this.

V. **Membership Committee Report.** Zaino reported that the society has successfully launched its new corporate membership program, and that 52 individual and 4 law firm memberships have signed up so far. She added that "kinks have to be worked out" explaining to corporate partners how the new plan works, especially that their fees pay ahead for annual meeting tables. Horton asked Zaino to secure contact information and names of persons covered for corporate members.

VI. **Law Day.** Fish reported that this year's Law Day ceremony is set for **May 1, 2024** in the Supreme Court courtroom using the ABA theme "Voices of Democracy."

- A. His committee is seeking Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas as potential speaker and is sponsoring essay and art contests for individuals or groups of high school students with cash prizes of \$1,000 each entry, as usual.

- B. The group discussed ways to publicize the event to high school teachers and students via the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies and social media, including use of CT-N's video of Law Day last year, and setting up a table at CCSS's fall conference. Prompted by Harris, the group agreed to expand the program to Western Massachusetts next year.
- C. Good attendance was urged for society members and the public at this year's Law Day.

VII. **"Declaring Freedom" Conference.** Warshauer indicated that plans are moving nicely forward, and now have been extended from three to four days, March 13-14-15 and 16, 2024.

- A. The first two days will involve 250 high students and their teachers in an engaging array of breakout sessions facilitated by Connecticut Youth Forum manager Alex Taylor.
- B. Day 3 will convene principal groups and leaders of the 250th Commission, including the governor, and Day 4 generously funded by a new sponsor will convene private groups.
- C. Warshauer described the conference as a great opportunity for the society to publicize its work. He proposed to circulate a pamphlet about the society, five banners for display in a museum hall on Connecticut participants in drafting the *Declaration*, and handouts on Law Day. He estimated cost of banners at \$300, and Horton promised to get that paid.

VIII. **Connecticut Supreme Court History.** Cohn said that the next issue of the journal is in the works with anticipated articles by Chief Justice Robinson on judicial branch diversity efforts, a Warshauer student on CT lawyers who helped issue the *Declaration*, and a law student on the 2023 pardoning of Connecticut women accused of witchcraft. Submissions are expected in April.

IX. **Awards Committees.** Horton stated that Fahey has agreed to head up the Zarella (student scholarship) and Collier (scholarly) award committees. Horton will appoint members as needed.

X. **Law Student.** Horton said that Nagy will work with law schools to engage law students in society events such as the annual meeting, a networking opportunity. Nelson noted the hardship of ticket costs, so Nagy was urged to suggest remedies, such as free seats at law firm tables.

XI. **Social Media.** Bevacqua reported that his committee has activated social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, and now needs content to maintain visibility with frequent postings.

XII. **Long-Range Planning Committee.** Weiner said the society's website has been updated, but that the method for online dues payment needs be finalized. He will report more later.

XIII. **Nominating Committee.** Horton reappointed Bare and Zarella to report a slate of nominations for officers and board members at the annual meeting coming up in May.

XIV. The meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald W. Rogers, Secretary