

# Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society

## Board of Directors Meeting

September 13, 2021

Via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Wesley Horton (President), Steve Armstrong, Jeff Babbin, William Bevacqua, Henry Cohn, Honorable Greg D'Auria, Pat Fahey, Bill Fish, Clare Kindall, Stanton Krauss, Matt Necci, Eboni Nelson, Donald Rogers, Erick Sandler, Deborah Schander, Barbara Schellenberg, Eric Sonnenberg, Kate Stith, Jon Weiner, Harry Weller, Jeff White, Laura Zaino, Peter Zarella

I. President Wesley Horton called the meeting to order at 2:04pm.

II. **Membership Committee Report.** Since she was calling in from her car, Horton called on Zaino first for the membership committee report.

- A. To recruit new members, Zaino proposed an idea offered by Bare at last meeting to offer free one-year memberships in the society to retiring temporary law clerks in the state appellate and supreme courts. The group decided not to extend the same benefit to permanent clerks, and determined that the society could communicate the offer to temporary clerks through judicial branch channels or at the clerk's farewell dinner. **On motion by Zaino, second by Babbin, the group approved the proposal unanimously.**
- B. Without objection, Horton authorized Zaino's plan to resume dues payments this year after a one-year COVID pandemic-induced moratorium.

III. **Minutes.** The group approved minutes for the April 29, 2021 meeting unanimously on a duly offered motion by Babbin, seconded by Weller.

IV. **Program Committee.**

- A. Sandler reported that his group plans the fall meeting for Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at which the group's member Donald Rogers will speak on his new book *Workers against the City: The Fight for Free Speech in Hague v. CIO*. Given the uncertain public health situation due to COVID pandemic, the group agreed to hold the meeting virtually via Zoom, rather than risk paying a fee to Hartford Club for a cancelled in-person event.
- B. Sandler also indicated that the program committee plans to hold the annual meeting at the New Haven Lawn Club in April or May, 2022, and is looking for a speaker. Horton stated that suggestions need not flow just from the committee, and then Fish suggested Prof. Eric J. Segall, Georgia State College of Law. Sandler agreed to look into the idea.

V. **Connecticut Supreme Court History report.** Schellenberg reported that the journal is in good shape to release Vol. XIII in early 2022 as planned with articles by Judge Henry Cohn on the Nineteenth Amendment, James Sexton and Brendon Levesque on remote court hearings, and former Chief Justice Chase Rogers and John Cerreta on the impact of Chief Justice Ellen Peters.

## VI. Secretary's Report.

- A. Given that last year's Connecticut History Day competition did not generate a single student entry eligible for the society's prize, Rogers proposed a revised description, after consulting CHD's Rebecca Taber and CSCHS colleagues Kindall and Bevacqua. The revision broadens the scope to "American," not just Connecticut legal history.

"Prize for Outstanding Entry in American Legal History. The Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society exists to promote the study and learning of judicial and constitutional history and traditions. The society therefore presents an award to an Outstanding Connecticut History Day entry in any category or division that relates to law in American history, with priority going to law in Connecticut history."

Fish worried that the tag line "priority to Connecticut history" might discourage non-Connecticut topics, but the rest of the group decided to leave the proposal as is, as Rogers argued that the new wording clearly emphasized American legal history. **On motion by Rogers, second by Kindall, the group approved the new prize definition.**

- B. On motion by Rogers, second by Kindall, the group authorized the awarding of two \$500 History Day prizes again for 2022, one each for junior and senior divisions.**
- C. Rogers solicited help for a History Day workshop in late October to advise students on possible legal topics and research material for this year's topic, "Debate and Diplomacy."
- D. Rogers reported that the CBA sponsored documentary *The Law Unmasked* on COVID's impact on the state's legal community is coming together and will be ready soon.

## VII. Archives Committee.

- A. Rogers said in preface that he had communicated with new archive committee members Sonnenberg and Schander about resuming the organization of the society's archives placed on deposit at the Connecticut State Library, and adding new material to them.
- B. Sonnenberg indicated that the archives committee was ready to pick up the task. In support, Justice D'Auria indicated that he would give archives committee members access to the Supreme Court vault, where other archival material has accumulated.

VIII. **Zarella Prize.** Necci stated that the whole \$5,000 of this past year's Zarella prize was awarded to Sorceres Rivera-Tamarez, an excellent candidate. Because the society received only three applications, however, Necci proposed to open the prize to law school students as well as to college and university undergraduates. Discussion raised concerns that law students would crowd out undergraduates in the competition, and that creating separate \$2,500 awards for the two groups would weaken the prize's appeal. Board members decided to postpone decision on this matter until later. Necci said that the next call for applications would go out in April or May.

## IX. Treasurer's Report.

- A. Babbin reported that the society's bank balance rests at \$68,040.37, down nearly \$10,000 from last year because of the COVID-related suspension of dues. **On his motion, second by Stith, the group approved the treasurer's report.**

- B. Noting that another lawyers' association with similar assets has placed 60 percent of its funds in short-term certificates of deposit to earn modest interest, he proposed the same for this society. **On his motion, second by Fish, the group authorized the treasurer to invest some of the society's checking account funds in short-term CDs, so long as he secures board approval in each case.**
- C. **Horton reported that he asked Weiner to audit the society's books this year, and Weiner agreed to do so.**

X. **Social Media Committee.** Bevacqua reported that his committee has set up a society Instagram account. To promote networking of society members on social media, moreover, he proposed a meeting with the membership committee to devise a joint campaign. Zaino agreed.

XI. **Next Board Meeting.** Horton set the next board meeting for 2:00pm January 10, 2022, whether remote or in-person to be determined.

XII. Meeting adjourned at 2:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donald W. Rogers, Secretary