

Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society

Board of Directors Meeting

Lawyers' Lounge, Connecticut State Library, Hartford CT
September 16, 2024

Present: Wesley Horton (President), Jeffrey Babbin, Mike Besso, Bill Bevacqua, Henry Cohn (remotely), William Fish, Laura Ray, Donald Rogers, Barbara Schellenberg (remotely), Jonathan Weiner, Harry Weller, Jeff White, and Peter Zarella. Guest: Scott Garosshen

I. President Wesley Horton convened the meeting at 2:04pm. He reported that Kathryn Bare has unfortunately had to submit her resignation from the board due to pressing duties at her work.

II. **Secretary's Report.** The group approved minutes for May 14, 2024, on motion by Rogers, second by Weiner.

III. Treasurer's Report.

- A. Babbin reported that the society's bank balance rests at \$68,555.09, about \$7,000 less than last year's balance at this time. He observed that the lower balance reflects big payments for last winter's "Declaring Freedom" Conference, the Zarella Scholarship and CSCHS support for Chief Justice Robinson's retirement dinner, but still remains healthy.
- B. Babbin also noted that the society has invested in three Bank of America CDs which have earned almost \$500 in interest to date. The first CD will reach its maturity on October 1.
- C. Zarella stated that the \$3,000 authorized (and paid) to the Connecticut Bar Association for the Chief Justice's dinner was supposed to cover any CBA shortfalls, but that the CBA actually got some money back. **The board consequently agreed that Horton should contact the CBA about getting some of our money back as well.**
- D. Zarella also observed that the society cannot continue to rely just on dues for revenue, and so urged consideration of grants, Go-Fund-Me campaigns and other fundraising mechanisms as other not-for-profit groups do. Discussion zeroed in on support for grants, especially "quick grants" and long-term grants from Connecticut Humanities (CH). "Quick grants" designed for specific needs might support the society's archives project, website update, and journal publication. **Weiner promised to update the board on CH grant criteria so that the board can consider what we might apply for.**
- E. Zarella and the group agreed to reassess the new corporate dues structure later this year.
- F. **The board unanimously approved the treasurer's report.**

IV. **Chief Justice Robinson Retirement Dinner.** Horton reported that the dinner was attended by 150 to 200 guests and went over well with the Chief Justice, making it a good investment, even though food service was disappointing. Zarella urged that any pictures taken get posted.

V. **Connecticut History Day Prizes.** On motion by Rogers, second by Babbin, **the board again approved sponsorship of two \$500 prizes** at junior and senior levels for best entries on legal topics at this year's 2024-2025 Connecticut History Day competition.

VI. Zarella Scholarship. Horton called attention to Zarella Prize Committee chair Patrick Fahey's report indicating that the society awarded two prizes worth a total of \$5,000 this year.

VII. Connecticut Bar Association Liaison. CBA representative and lawyer Scott Garosshen was present to discuss cooperation between his organization and our society on areas of mutual interest. Weiner observed that a similar liaison exists between New York State's bar association and court history society. Discussion focused on appealing to young lawyers by creating jointly-held events for them. Horton urged the program committee to work with Garosshen on this.

VIII. Program Committee Report. The committee did not have a report, but

- A. Horton indicated need to identify an annual spring meeting speaker now and asked for suggestions. Zarella reminded all that the society has tried to select speakers who are apolitical. **Horton will send a notice out to the entire board to solicit speaker ideas.**
- B. Discussion also asked about a fall program, and Horton urged the committee to come up with one. Besso added that public library talks by society members could be a good way to sponsor society-related events and publicize the society's existence and work.

IX. Archives Committee Report. Schander could not attend, but submitted a report indicating that she can now move ahead to organize the society's archives with the goals of updating our retention policy, gathering records, and hiring an intern. By email this past summer, the board authorized her to spend \$669.80 on archival supplies and promised financial support to hire an intern. The board concurred that securing a grant would be a good way to pay for that support.

X. Membership Committee. Zaino also could not attend, but submitted a report indicating that membership renewal notices should go out in December, and that she will seeking new members. In addition, she is down to a committee of one, and so Horton asked for volunteers to assist her.

XI. Connecticut Supreme Court History.

- A. Cohn said that printing issues have delayed the publication of the 2024 issue, but that it should come out soon with some good articles, though costing a bit more due to photos.
- B. As for future issues, it was agreed to devote 2025 to commemorating of Chief Justice Ellen Ash Peters and 2026 to the 250th anniversary of the *Declaration of Independence*.

XII. Social Media. Bevacqua reported that his committee has gotten into the routine of making regular posts for the society on LinkedIn, and is ready for more content and wider networking on that platform. He urged board members to follow and share the society's LinkedIn posts.

Horton said that he would send out a message asking the rest of the board to do just that.

XIII. Next Meeting. Next meeting is set for **2pm, January 13, 2025** in the Lawyer's Lounge.
XIV. The meeting adjourned at 3:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Donald W. Rogers, Secretary