



Serving the Public. Serving the Profession.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

November 10, 2023

Lake Charles, LA

*** MINUTES ***

President Shayna L. Sonnier called the meeting to order at 9 a.m., Friday, November 10, 2023, at the Golden Nugget Lake Charles. Business was conducted in accordance with the agenda below.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Ms. Larsen called roll and advised that the following members, who constituted a quorum, participated:

President, Shayna L. Sonnier
President-Elect, Patrick A. Talley, Jr.
Treasurer, Larry J. Centola III
Secretary, Valerie T. Schexnayder
Immediate Past President, Stephen I. Dwyer (by phone)
Chair, Young Lawyers Division, Senae D. Hall
First Board District Representative, J. Christopher Zainey, Jr. (by phone)
First Board District Representative, Graham H. Ryan (by phone)
Second Board District Representative, Jeffrey G. Lagarde
Fifth Board District Representative, Carrie LeBlanc Jones
Fifth Board District Representative, Kelly M. Rabalais (by phone)
Sixth Board District Representative, Charles D. Elliott
Seventh Board District Representative, W. Michael Street
Eighth Board District Representative, Curtis R. Joseph, Jr.
At-Large Member, Blake R. David (by phone)
At-Large Member, Jeffrey A. Riggs
At-Large Member, L. Bradley Hancock
From the Faculty of Loyola University College of Law, Monica Hof Wallace
From the Faculty of Southern University Law Center, Donald W. North
From the Faculty of Louisiana State Law Institute, André Doguet
House of Delegates Committee on Liaison Chair, Keenan K. Kelly (by phone)
House of Delegates Committee on Liaison Member, Sandra K. Cosby (by phone)
House of Delegates Committee on Liaison Member, Shannon Seiler Dartez

Also present were:

President-Elect Designee, Edward J. Walters, Jr.
Treasurer-Elect, C.A. "Hap" Martin III
Executive Director, Loretta Larsen, CAE

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Associate Executive Director, Cheri Cotogno Grodsky (by phone)
Access to Justice Director, Monte T. Mollere (by phone)
Communications Director, Kelly W. Ponder (by phone)
Director of Member Outreach and Diversity, Tricia R. Pierre
Executive Assistant, Jennifer France

Absent were:

Third Board District Representative, Melanie W. Chatagnier
Fourth Board District Representative, Adam P. Johnson

Agenda Item 2. Consent Calendar

- a. **Approval of Minutes** – Consideration of approval of minutes of August 26, 2023 meeting.
- b. **Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education** – Periodic report from the LCLCE, as required by the April 2010 agreement.

Upon motion by Mr. Riggs and second by Mr. Joseph, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Calendar without discussion or debate.

Agenda Item 3. 2024 Annual Meeting/Summer School Fee Schedule – Loretta Larsen

Ms. Larsen presented the proposed fee schedule for the 2024 meeting, noting that there was an increase over the 2023 rates due to increasing costs in goods and services. She added that both the Louisiana Judicial College and Louisiana Supreme Court had approved fee increases for judges. Upon motion by Mr. North and second by Mr. Riggs, the Board unanimously approved the schedule.

Agenda Item 4. LSBA Appointment to Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board Administrative Committee – Shayna L. Sonnier

Ms. Sonnier reported to the Board that as President, she is tasked with appointing a member to the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board Administrative Committee for term beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. Her appointment is pending a conversation with Louisiana Supreme Court General Counsel David Becker to discuss the criteria. Current LSBA appointee Valerie Briggs Bargas of Baton Rouge is completing her third one-year term and is not eligible for reappointment. Ms. Sonnier advised that after her conversation with Mr. Becker, she would make a recommendation to the Board via email and ask for a vote in that manner.

Agenda Item 5. MCLE Committee Appointments – Shayna L. Sonnier

Ms. Sonnier asked the Board to consider the following appointments:

- Reappointment of Barbara Bell Melton for a second three-year term which will begin January 1, 2024 and end December 31, 2026; and
- Appointment of Adrian G. Nadeau of Baton Rouge for a three-year term which will begin January 1, 2024 and end December 31, 2026. Mr. Nadeau will replace

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Monique Edwards (who currently serves as Chair), who is completing her second three-year term and is not eligible for reappointment.

Upon motion by Mr. Street and second by Mr. Hancock, the Board voted unanimously to make the appointments.

Agenda Item 6. Member Benefit Proposals – Tricia R. Pierre

Ms. Pierre asked the Board to consider adding the following member benefits:

- **Benchly** – a benefit which offers ezBriefs to assist attorneys and paralegals with review of complicated legal documents (specifically briefs, motions, and pleadings). ezBriefs utilizes Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technologies and technology stacks to review cited authority from opposing counsel's filed briefs and motions. ezBriefs also features a complete case law database that is accessible for ezBriefs users at no charge.
- **Smokeball** – a legal practice management software that delivers solutions to small and midsize law firms. Smokeball improves every aspect of firm operations by combining the core functionalities of automated time tracking and billing, document automation and Microsoft Office integration.
- **TimeSolv** – a web-based software platform that features document and storage management, matter planning, and detailed project and task management. TimeSolv offers a platform (TimeSolv Legal) exclusively for the legal industry.

After a brief discussion and upon motion by Mr. North and second by Ms. Dartez, the Board voted unanimously to make the recommendations.

Agenda Item 7. Employee Retirement Contribution – Shayna L. Sonnier

Ms. Sonnier asked the Board to consider the annual employee retirement contribution equal to 10 percent of gross wages, for LSBA and JLAP employees meeting eligibility requirements (JLAP employees' contributions are funded through JLAP budget). Funds for LSBA employees' contribution were approved in the 2023/2024 budget adopted by the Board on June 9, 2023. Upon motion by Ms. Schexnayder and second by Mr. Joseph, the Board unanimously approved the contribution.

Agenda Item 8. Budget Committee Recommendations – Larry J. Centola

Mr. Centola reviewed a number of budget amendments recommended by the Budget Committee from its November 9, 2023 meeting, explaining each of the proposed changes. Upon motion by Mr. Douget and second by Ms. Schexnayder, the Board unanimously approved the amendments as recommended.

Agenda Item 9. Election Report – Shayna L. Sonnier

Ms. Sonnier referred the Board to the qualifying report for the 2023-2024 elections and congratulated Mr. Walters and Mr. Martin on their elections as President-Elect Designee and Treasurer-Elect, respectively.

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Agenda Item 10. Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program – Patrick A. Talley, Jr.

Mr. Talley updated the Board on JLAP operations noting that JLAP was projecting a deficit for the current fiscal year.

Agenda Item 11. Single Billing 2023/2024 – Loretta Larsen

Ms. Larsen referred members to the report on billing/payment of dues and assessment. She noted 367 members were certified ineligible on September 12.

Agenda Item 12. Malpractice Insurance Disclosure – Larry J. Centola III

Mr. Centola discussed a possible amendment to Supreme Court Rule XIX to provide for malpractice insurance disclosure as part of the annual attorney registration process. He added and research and discussions were ongoing.

Agenda Item 13. Report of the Young Lawyers Division Chair – Senae D. Hall

Ms. Hall reported that nominations for the YLD Awards are open until November 15 and encouraged members to nominate young lawyers. She reported on past and upcoming events. On October 30 a Level Up Learning hybrid CLE was hosted at the Bar Center and on Zoom. There was a Barristers for Boards November 2 in Baton Rouge and one scheduled for November 16. Wills for Heroes is still very active with a recent event in Gretna. She also added that Ms. Sonnier, Mr. Johnson and Past President Alainna Mire participated in a WFH event in Lake Charles, wherein they celebrated the 15th anniversary of the program. She also noted that the fall meeting of the YLD Council was held the previous week in Shreveport.

Agenda Item 14. Report of the Treasurer – Larry J. Centola III

Mr. Centola waived his report, noting that all items had been addressed elsewhere in the agenda.

Agenda Item 15. Report of the Secretary – Valerie T. Schexnayder

Ms. Schexnayder reported that the Editorial Board met on November 2 via Zoom to discuss articles submitted and a Young Lawyers issue. She noted that the Journal is seeking articles for local practices including tips for parking and areas around courthouses. She encouraged Board members to consider submitting information and/or articles for the issue.

Agenda Item 16. Report of the Immediate Past President – Stephen I. Dwyer

Mr. Dwyer encouraged members to sign up for the Danube CLE cruise scheduled for November 2024.

Agenda Item 17. Report of the President-Elect – Patrick A. Talley, Jr.

Mr. Talley waived his report.

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Agenda Item 18. Report of the President – Shayna L. Sonnier

- a. **2024 Midyear Meeting** – Ms. Sonnier reported that the Board of Governors’ next meeting will be held on the afternoon of Friday, January 19, in conjunction with the January 18-20, 2024 Midyear Meeting at the Renaissance Baton Rouge Hotel. The House will meet on the morning of Saturday, January 20, and the Board will reconvene immediately thereafter to consider ratification of the action of the House.
- b. **CLE Opportunities** – Ms. Sonnier announced the following upcoming programs and encouraged Board members to consider attending:
 - **New York, New York Multi-Topic CLE**
Saturday, November 18 – Tuesday, November 21
Hotel InterContinental Times Square
[LSBA Events and Seminars](#)
 - **A Grand CLE**
Friday, December 8 – Sunday, December 10
Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa, Autograph Collection
Point Clear, Alabama
 - **Charm of Quebec City CLE**
Wednesday, February 28 – Friday, March 1, 2024
Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac
Quebec City, Quebec
- c. **October Bar Admissions Ceremony** – Ms. Sonnier directed members to the letter from the Supreme Court extending their gratitude to the LSBA for their participation in the October Ceremony. She noted that the LSBA will continue to have a presence at future admissions ceremonies.
- d. **Bar Admissions Changes Under Consideration** – Ms. Sonnier discussed the proposal to have an abbreviated bar exam for members licensed and practicing in other states, provided they meet certain criteria. This is currently being explored by the Supreme Court and she added that she will update Board members when she receives additional information.
- e. **Other Matters**

Agenda Item 19. Report of the Executive Director – Loretta Larsen

Ms. Larsen referred members to her written report.

Agenda Item 20. Report of the Associate Executive Director – Cheri Cotogno Grodsky

Ms. Grodsky referred members to her written report noting the launch of the new Transition Into Practice section of the LSBA website.

Agenda Item 21. Departmental Reports

a. Member Outreach and Diversity

Ms. Pierre referred members to her written report.

b. Communications

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Ms. Ponder referred members to her written report noting the “WEEN DREAM Halloween costume donation drop off locations and stating that the Secret Santa program is underway.

c. Access to Justice

Mr. Mollere referred members to his written report noting that during Pro Bono Week (October 23-28, 2023) the LSBA held 134 events, including 51 at libraries across the state. He also announced that the Louisiana Justice Community Conference was held the week prior and recognized Past President Marta-Ann Schnabel for her lifetime of work in the advancement of Access to Justice.

Agenda Item 22. Other Matters

• 2025 Annual Meeting/Summer School Site Selection

Ms. Larsen asked the Board to consider Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort as the site of the 2025 meeting, noting that they were proposing only a minimal increase in accommodations rates. Upon motion by Mr. Talley and second by Ms. Schexnayder, the Board unanimously approved the selection.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Valerie T. Schexnayder

Valerie T. Schexnayder
2023-2025 Secretary
Louisiana State Bar Association

**APPROVED BY BOARD OF GOVERNORS
JANUARY 19, 2024
BATON ROUGE, LA**