

**SENIOR LAWYERS SECTION  
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 21, 2024**

This meeting was conducted via Zoom. The following Executive Committee members and WSBA personnel were present at this meeting: Interim Chair Jeanine Lutzenhiser, Al Armstrong, Joe Gordon, Steve DeForest, Brian Comstock, David Sprinkle, Jim Riehl and WSBA Sections Program Specialist Carolyn MacGregor. Not able to be present were Carole Grayson, Jenny Rydberg, Bill Cameron and BOG Liaison Jordan Couch.

**CHAIR’S WELCOME**

Jeanine welcomed the attendees, once again treating us to pictures of her grandchildren Auden and Ambrose.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Al’s January 17, 2024 meeting minutes were approved by Motion.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Joe was finally provided the WSBA’s financial summaries for September, October, November and December 2023. Joe posted this information on our *WSBACommunity* site. Joe noted that our November figure of \$13, 295.34 reflects our net loss of \$508.57. This loss was due to the expense of our newsletter which more than offset our income from our Mini-CLE. The net income for September also reflects a loss. Financial summaries for January 2024 have not yet been received.

The financial figures provided reflect the following:

Fund balance as of August 31, 2023:	\$	14,325.14
Net Income for September, 2023:	\$	(1,029.80)
Fund balance as of September 30, 2023:	\$	13,295.34
Net income for October, 2023:	\$	499.06
Fund balance as of October 31, 2023:	\$	13,794.40

Net income for November, 2023:		(\$508.57)
Fund balance as of November 30, 2023:	\$	13,295.34
Net income for December, 2023:	\$	505.53
Fund balance as of December 31, 2023:	\$	13,800.67

## **WSBACOMMUNITY**

Carolyn asked for any feedback any Committee member might offer about our participation in the *WSBACommunity* pilot project. Jeanine asked if our Section was still “winning” in the unofficial competition with the other participating WSBA sections. Carolyn confirmed that we indeed still lead the pack in engagement with the site. Carolyn answered some questions the Committee members had about some aspects of site operations.

## **CLE PLANNING FOR 2024**

Jeanine said we now have a full line-up of excellent presenters for our May CLE. She was pleased that U.W. Law Professor Liz Porter had agreed to speak. She recalled that Ms. Porter taught the first class she had in law school, torts. We also have Dr. Charles Ericksen and Liz Frost on board as speakers. Jeanine said she would contact Liz Porter as to the specific nature of her presentation.

Jeanine said we need a title for our CLE. Jim suggested that our title should reflect the idea of “The Rule of Law.” Also, we need a volunteer to mediate the Question and Answer session following the presentations.

Since the exact time of our CLE is somewhat dependent on the convenience of the speakers, the starting time will be announced later.

Plans for our summer CLE were also discussed. It was mentioned that August may not be the best time to hold the event; that perhaps September would be better. David said he would contact Rachell about this. Jim said he would prefer to have this CLE be a hybrid event, with in-person attendance as well as remote viewing.

## **NEWSLETTER**

Jeanine said the latest issue of *Life Begins* was “beautiful.” Steve asked whether the planned e-blast to all age-eligible and otherwise-eligible Bar members regarding our newsletter had been sent. Jeanine said it had been transmitted on February 2. Jeanine said the feedback she has received has been very positive. It was agreed that it was a good move to send our newsletter out to a wider audience.

## **ELECTIONS**

Jeanine said that the election set-up form has been submitted. The application portal is March 11 to April 15. Current Committee members were encouraged to seek out others who may be interested in serving with us.

## **TASK FORCE ON INCREASING MEMBERSHIP**

Al said he and Brian had discussed pathways to increased Senior Lawyer membership; they had talked about ways to offer services to older attorneys, even those who may not, at least at first, be interested in joining our section. This may include travel or health benefits. Al said he had been trading phone calls with the Senior Lawyer Division of the North Carolina Bar, with an eye toward finding out what they might know, as that state offers automatic admission to its Senior Lawyer Division.

Brian opined that the mission of this task force is more important than ever; we want to look and see what the ABA is doing with its own Senior Lawyer Division. Brian said there are 14,000-plus attorneys whose interest and needs are not being addressed by our Section. He recommended other Committee members get involved in this process. It was suggested that Carole be contacted and re-involved in the process if she agrees.

## **JEANINE THANKS THOSE WHO WROTE RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE**

Jeanine offered her thanks to those Committee members who composed responses to a six-part questionnaire from the *Bar News*, a preliminary step towards our Section being featured in the Bar publication.

## **MEMBER STATUS WORKGROUP**

Former Senior Lawyer Section Executive Committee member Steve Crossland joined us to talk about the WSBA's Member Status Workgroup, of which he was soon to be a member. (As there were now two "Steves" present at this meeting, Committee member Steve DeForest, for clarity, donned a distinctive headdress for the occasion.) The purpose of the Member Status Workgroup, which was to be formally established at the March BOG meeting, will be, as stated by the WSBA, "to evaluate the license status options currently available to WSBA members leaving the legal profession and to propose revisions to current license status options or alternative license status options as determined by its evaluation."

Steve C. explained that he anticipates this Workgroup will strive to “preserve the status of the Bar member while protecting the public.” It was noted that there currently are several categories applicable to the older or retired attorney, such as “Voluntarily Resigned” and “Honorary.” Several present at the meeting observed that these categories may serve to obfuscate the status of an individual attorney or former attorney, rather than clarify that status, at least as far as the general public is concerned. “Does ‘voluntarily resigned’ mean ‘resigned under a cloud?’” asked Jeanine. Another said that the status “honorary” may mean, to a lay person, ceremonial award and not really earned, such as an honorary Doctor of Laws. Steve DeF. stated that no attorney near the age of 55 would really call him/herself a “senior lawyer.” “Let’s take another look at this,” suggested Steve DeF.

Steve C. said he would report back to us next month about what transpires at the upcoming BOG meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Jeanine adjourned the meeting.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Our next meeting will take place on a remote-attendance basis on March 20, 2024 at 10:30 am.