

NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING
Thursday, May 15, 2025
4:00
LIVE WITH REMOTE OPTION
Meeting Minutes

Present for all or part of the meeting:

Board Members:

Tony Naro, Barry Schuster, Charla Stevens, Derek Lick, Gar Chiang, Geoff Gallagher, James Shepard, Kathleen Mahan, Kyle Robidas, Len Harden, Matthew Stachowske, Monique Schmidt, Nik Frye, Paul Chant, Paul Kleinman, Robert Lucic, Steven Dutton, Vanessa Wilson, William Woodbury

NHBA Staff: Sarah Blodgett, Caitlin Dow, Vince O'Brien, Jennifer McManus, Debbie Hawkins

NHSC Liaison: Justice James Bassett

ABA Delegates: Michael Iacopino, Lyndsay Robinson

Guests: Incoming board member Caroline Epperson

4:00 PM

A. Call to Order

Kate Mahan

President Mahan called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

This is the last board meeting for Cheshire County Governor Monique Schmidt, Rockingham County Governor Paul Kleinman, and New Hampshire Supreme Court Liaison to the Board, Justice James Bassett. President Mahan thanked them for their service on the board. She also welcomed new Strafford County Governor Matthew Stachowske, who was appointed to fill Joshua Wyatt's seat. Also in attendance was incoming Rockingham Governor Caroline Epperson.

REGULAR BUSINESS – CONSENT ITEMS

B. Membership Status Changes

Jennifer McManus

C. Minutes of April 17, 2025 Meeting

Catherine Shanelaris

ACTION

On Motion to approve the consent agenda. Passed. With one abstention by Vanessa Wilson.

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

D. Budget Presentation and Approval **ACTION ITEM**

Sarah Blodgett/Derek Lick/Jennifer McManus

Executive Director Sarah Blodgett called the Board's attention to the memo she submitted regarding the main changes in the draft FY 26 budget. She added that she has asked Member Services Supervisor Misty Griffith to attend today to speak with the Board about a future idea to grow revenue.

Executive Director Blodgett outlined the main changes in this year's budget. First there is an increase in CLE registration fees. Most board members are aware of the In Reach cost that the association is charged for all CLE services except for live attendance of our programs. The next item is an anticipated decrease in revenue from delinquency fees. We are taking steps to streamline the renewal process and improve communication with our members to ensure timely completion of license renewal requirements, which will create a decrease in these fees. Third, there will be an anticipated increase in the professional fees paid by the association. This line increase was not a part of the budget that was sent to and approved by the Finance Committee. Director Blodgett anticipates we will have this need going forward. Lastly, we have included an increase in credit card fees that members are charged for paying the association by credit card to 2%. We have not charged members any fees for credit card use in the past. This is to offset the increase that we are being charged for processing fees. Director Blodgett stated that several other bar associations are now passing on the credit card processing fees to their members.

President-Elect Derek Lick stated that some of these increases are to offset our rising costs. He did not realize how much some of the NHBA programs were costing the bar. Fees for credit card use are becoming commonplace. The fee we will be charging doesn't completely offset the fees that we are paying for processing.

There was discussion about how this credit card increase will affect the renewal process, and whether the Bar can accept electronic check payments. Controller Jennifer McManus responded that we aren't currently set up for electronic or ACH payments. It is intensive to set up, and there are fees associated with this, but we will look at doing this in the future. There is usually a per check fee for this type of processing. The Board agreed that assessing fees is a better approach rather than increasing member dues to cover costs.

Controller McManus added that the budget represents the most likely financial scenario for the upcoming year. Another reason for the increase in our expenses is that we haven't previously budgeted for depreciation costs. This is a common accounting practice, but we aren't sure why this hasn't been done in the past. It was also noted that we have increased Marcom advertising fees. In addition, we reviewed some of our data expenses and have adjusted some of these support contracts.

President-Elect Derek Lick and Vice President Robert Lucic commented on the amount of work by staff to put together the budget as presented and thanked them for it.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the FY 26 budget as approved by the Finance Committee with an additional \$10,000 budgeted for professional services. Passed unanimously with one abstention, Robert Lucic.

Director Blodgett shared that the association has received a tax credit in the amount of \$288,000. This payment was the result of a submission for the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC). The ERTC is a refundable tax credit for certain eligible businesses and tax-exempt

organizations that had employees and were affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Former Deputy Director Paula Lewis authorized submission by NHBA's payroll vendor, Paychex. We are in discussions with our auditors about how to handle this.

Director Blodgett introduced Member Services Supervisor Misty Griffith to speak about her idea for future revenue for the bar.

Supervisor Griffith spoke about the Lawyer Referral Service (LRS) and Modest Means Programs. Full fee clients do not pay an application fee currently, but modest means clients do. She is suggesting that we charge the same \$25 fee for the full fee program clients. Full-fee clients get up to three referrals but currently at no charge. She stated that LRS made 10,002 total referrals in 2024 – 1,136 Modest Means referrals and 8,866 Full Fee referrals and handled 778 Modest Means cases and 5915 Full Fee cases. The number of cases is lower than the number of referrals because some cases require more than one referral. (We make up to 3 referrals per case.) The 130 attorneys participating in Full Fee LRS generated more than \$2.5 million in income in the last fiscal year. By her estimates, the bar would raise \$100,000 based on our current number of referrals. While some clients may balk at it, the fee has not discouraged Modest Means clients. She thinks it may deter some full fee clients, but she believes it would mainly affect the 'nuisance' cases (i.e. those that don't have a case that is actionable.) She believes that the time that it would take to discuss and process this fee would decrease the efficiency of our staff, but she thinks it could generate revenue that would make up for it. She added that other mandatory bars, such as Michigan, charge a fee.

The Lawyer Referral Service attorneys pay \$100 to join our panel, and 10% of their fees earned are paid to the bar. LRS has collected roughly \$240,000 from the disposition fees, which is \$2.4 million in fees to the attorneys. Some attorneys have earned as much as \$100,000. The Board discussed factchecking attorney self-reports of fee collection. Director Blodgett responded that it might be overly burdensome administratively to check every panel attorney. A random audit would be more manageable.

President-Elect Derek Lick noted that he was surprised at the volume of referrals and thinks this should be publicized. Supervisor Griffith told the Board that when they meet an attorney that is struggling for clients, they should refer them to our LRS program. They should keep in mind that it doesn't work for some types of clients. Director Blodgett adds that we need everyone to spread the word. Justice Bassett suggested we take some time during the lunch at the Midyear Meeting to speak about this program and to help spread the word.

Section D – Budget - continued - Capital Budget Presentation – **ACTION ITEM**

The capital budget has 5 major items - \$60,000 for website redesign, \$32,614 for PC Workstation and laptop replacement plan, \$32,769 for server replacement (this was approved by the Board at a prior meeting), \$14,000 for Reception Door security installation/upgrade and lastly, \$15,355 for a switch replacement that was carried forward from FY25. There were questions about the door installation upgrade. Director Blodgett explained that this is mainly due to members of the public who are confused about our function and walk in looking for legal assistance. We have had some disgruntled members of the public that have come in, so the door will now have a buzzer system for admittance. The website work was budgeted last year, but the upgrade hasn't been done yet.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the Capital Budget as presented by the Finance Committee. Passed unanimously.

E. Treasurers Report

Jennifer McManus

Treasurer Gallagher stated that there is nothing new to report and the financials are as expected. We are on track to hit where we thought we would for March and April. There has been a shift in the personnel expenditures. 50% of Executive Department Assistant Cindy Roberts salary from June through April was shifted to the Bar Foundation budget to match her actual time spent on Foundation work. Cindy accepted the position of Bar Foundation Coordinator in mid-May, so currently 100% of her salary has been shifted to the Bar Foundation. In addition, 10% of Director Blodgett's salary was moved to the Foundation, also to reflect actual time spent on Foundation work.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Passed unanimously.

F. ABA Rule of Law Statement – ACTION ITEM

Sarah Blodgett/Kate Mahan

The Board went into executive session at 4:45 p.m. to discuss this item.

The Board came out of executive session at 5:09 p.m.

ACTION ON MOTION FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion to issue statement on the rule of law – with the addition of “undersigned” before members in first sentence, replacement of “the members of the New Hampshire Bar Association Board of Governors” with “we” at beginning of final paragraph, and addition of “undersigned” before officers in disclaimer, and addition of signatories' names and titles. The following voted in favor: Geoff Gallagher, Jim Shepard, Charla Stevens, Bob Lucic, Derek Lick, Tony Naro, Monique Schmidt, Steve Dutton, Matthew Stachowske, Barry Schuster, Paul Kleinman, Paul Chant, Len Harden, Vanessa Wilson Gar Chiang, Kate Mahan, Mike Iacopino, Lyndsay Robinson, Cathy Shanelaris (by email)

Passed unanimously with two abstentions, Nick Frye, Kyle Robidas.

Those board members that were not present at this meeting will be emailed to be given the opportunity to sign onto this statement.

G. LRE Subcommittee Recommendation – ACTION ITEM

President Mahan noted that the report from the LRE Board subcommittee chaired by President-Elect Lick was discussed at the April board meeting. Director Blodgett, and LRE Coordinator Martha Madsen suggested the recommendations noted in the original report. She stated that some have already been implemented.

Director Blodgett submitted a memo outlining these recommendations. She discussed the main points of the memo. The LRE Coordinator will be allowed to spend up to 300 hours per fiscal year on We the People (WTP). Additional hours may be requested, and the Executive Director

has the discretion to grant or deny these requests. In addition, it is important that Bar staff not be involved in fundraising for New Hampshire schools' participation in the national We the People competition. The memo also clarified that the LRE Coordinator is supervised by the Executive Director, who has ultimate authority over the position. The LRE Coordinator may spend some time on the Bar Foundation civics work, but this will be at the discretion of the Executive Director, and it will be tracked and costs allocated accordingly.

There was a question about the 300 hours to be spent and whether the LRE Coordinator has the capacity for this. Executive Director Blodgett thinks she does. The reason that WTP was noted separately is to address the disproportionate amount of time that was being spent on this program. The board discussed the other LRE programs, and the amount of time spent supporting them.

President-Elect Lick stated that he has met with LRE Coordinator Madsen, and she is fantastic. She has already accomplished a lot in the short time she has been at the Bar. He went on to share his goals for the program.

#1 - He would like a focus on the Lawyer and Judge in Every School (ALIES) program, including the monitoring and recording of who is going into schools and their activities.

#2 – He would like to help collaborate and work with the Court. He would like to reach out to Clerk Gudas and the Justices to determine needs of the Court and how we can facilitate that with Coordinator Madsen's help. One idea is to have an attorney ambassador when kids come into the Court.

#3 – Work on WTP and give it a couple of years to get up and running with Ms. Madsen's assistance. President Lick also spoke briefly about a program called Street Law.. It has a wider focus than WTP and would reach more students. Ms. Madsen is working on trainings for both WTP and Street Law over the summer.

President-Elect Lick is very happy with what will be happening in this space, and he wants to work with the committee to make sure they are engaged and doing some of the work.

Governor-at-Large Charla Stevens shared that she has participated in the Street Law program in a Manchester school and commented that it was excellent. Teachers love this program. By contrast, We the People is very intensive for a small number of students and is a semester long.

Justice Bassett commented that the Court is very supportive and will get the word out to the rest of the bench to support Coordinator Madsen's work. The Court is willing to convene a civics summit.

President Lick has asked Coordinator Madsen to identify all the groups in New Hampshire doing civics work so we can try to eliminate overlap and see where the gaps are. He adds that Judge McCafferty agrees that the Bar is the place where this should happen.

President Lick asked how long we want to allow WTP to run – either through 2026 or through 2027? There was discussion about giving the program until 2027 since Coordinator Madsen came in after the 2025 year. Geoff Gallagher, who was on the subcommittee, made this point. He also sang her praises – she has impressed him.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the recommendation including that participation in We the People must increase to at least 5 schools in two years. Coordinator Madsen will give a status update in 2026. The board will evaluate the continuation of WTP in 2027. Passed unanimously.

H. Small and Solo Firm Section Creation

Vince O'Brien

Executive Director Blodgett spoke to this agenda item, as Professional Development Director O'Brien had to leave the meeting. She referenced the materials given to the Board; proposed bylaws, first year goals and budget for this section. The Bar has many solo and small firm practitioner whom she thinks would appreciate the creation of this section. An amendment to the section's bylaws would be required, but it doesn't require a full vote of the Bar membership. There was a discussion about the review process for sections – there currently isn't a formal one, but there should be. Continuation of individual sections has been reviewed in the past when membership and activity has lagged.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the creation of the Solo and Small Firm Section. Passed unanimously.

I. Proposal from Board Subcommittee on Standing Committee Review Process

James Shepard

The subcommittee has drafted a process by which the Board of Governors will review NHBA Standing Committees. It includes a provision whereby the Board is empowered to adopt a policy that outlines how this will happen. The subcommittee has drafted an additional section to be added to the bylaws that will require review of 1/3 of the Bar's standing committee's each year. This bylaw change, if adopted, will need to be voted on by the full membership at the Midyear Business Meeting in February of 2026.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the bylaw amendment as presented by the Board subcommittee. Passed unanimously.

J. Bylaws Amendment Proposal -Article II Section 7-Limited Active Membership Status-unpaid volunteer pro bono service

Sarah Blodgett

This proposal was distributed to the Board but will be tabled until a future meeting.

K. President's Report

Kate Mahan

The Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held on Saturday, June 7th. There is no Board meeting that day. Instead, there will be a cocktail reception for the Board beginning at 4:00 p.m., just before the President's Reception and Banquet.

President Mahan announced that she would like to create a special committee on Public Sector and Public Interest Attorneys. She feels there should be more of an opportunity for the Bar to provide meaningful support to this sector of our members. She drafted a charge for this committee, which was distributed with today's materials. Attorney Jane Young has agreed to chair this committee.

ACTION

On Motion to approve the proposal to create an ad hoc committee on Public Sector and Public Interest attorneys. Passed. Unanimously.

L. Executive Director's Report

Sarah Blodgett

Executive Director Blodgett acknowledged the good work of the NHBA Special Committee on DEI. Following its final report to the Board of Governors, the Committee had requested a transition to a standing committee. President Mahan and Executive Director Blodgett met with Committee Chair Courtney Herz to discuss next steps. While the Committee members are anxious to continue working in this area with an expanded scope, the special committee should be dissolved as their charge has been accomplished. We have received a proposal for a new committee with a new charge in this area that will be discussed at a later meeting. More work is needed in this area.

ACTION

On Motion to dissolve the NHBA DEI committee because it has accomplished its mission and to continue discussion about these issues. Passed unanimously.

Executive Director Blodgett thanked President Mahan for her leadership and is thankful to have worked with her during her first year as Executive Director.

M. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 5:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Hawkins

Deborah J. Hawkins for Catherine Shanelaris, Secretary

New Hampshire Bar Association

Membership Status Changes

Presented to the Board of Governors May 15, 2025

Status Changes April 10, 2025 - May 9, 2025

Bar ID	Name	Old Status	New Status	Effective Date
7889	Attorney Joseph Robert Fallon	Active	Deceased	01/24/2025
12462	Attorney Timothy J. Crutchfield	Active	Deceased	04/13/2025
831	Attorney Richard C. Follender	Active	Inactive Retired	04/22/2025
1428	Attorney Robert J. Lanney	Active	Inactive Retired	04/18/2025
14889	Attorney Daniel M. Deschenes	Active	Inactive	03/28/2025
15130	Attorney Megan C. De Vorsey	Active	Inactive	04/28/2025
278897	Attorney Kristina Lee Farmer	Active	Inactive	05/01/2025
278911	Attorney Rachel Carolina Morley	Active	Inactive	04/21/2025
2482	Attorney Mark F. Sullivan	Active	Resigned	05/01/2025
566	Attorney Victor W. Dahar Sr.	Honorary Active	Deceased	12/16/2024
1075	Attorney Thomas J. Hammond	Honorary Inactive	Deceased	04/01/2025
2503	Attorney John F. Swope	Honorary Inactive	Deceased	04/29/2025
8147	Attorney William Congreve III	Honorary Inactive	Deceased	05/02/2024
2163	Attorney James E. Ritzo	Honorary Inactive	Suspended	04/14/2025
9684	Attorney Michael Dean Wright	Inactive Retired	Resigned	05/02/2025

16197	Attorney Stephen D. Anderson	Inactive Retired	Resigned	04/30/2025
275387	Attorney Amy Beth Royal	Inactive	Active	04/23/2025
9656	Attorney Rosemarie Mullin	Inactive	Inactive Retired	04/15/2025
6805	Attorney Nancy Thompson Briscoe	Inactive	Resigned	05/01/2025
20952	Attorney Joshua P. Ryan	Inactive	Resigned	03/31/2025
268829	Attorney Harrison Adam Schwartzman	Inactive	Resigned	05/01/2025
269659	LTJG Joshua Lee Hanthorn	MLTRYA	Resigned	04/08/2025
383	Attorney Quentin J. Blaine	PBACTV	Inactive Retired	05/01/2025