

NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING
Thursday, March 19, 2026
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Live with remote option
Meeting Minutes

Present for all or part of the meeting:

Board Members:

President Derek Lick, Vice President Sarah Mattson Dustin, Past President Kate Mahan, Oliver Bloom, Gar Chiang, Steven Dutton, Jimmy Eager, Kristin Fields, Nikolas Frye, Geoffrey Gallagher, Chrissy Hanisco, Kyle Robidas, Barry Schuster, Cathy Shanelaris, Charla Stevens, William Woodbury.

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

NHSC Liaison: Justice Patrick Donovan

ABA Delegates: Mike Iacopino

Guests: Melissa Fales, Chair NHBA Legislation Committee, Kathy Fox, NHBA Lobbyist

A. Call to Order Derek Lick

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by President Lick.

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

B. Legislation Committee Recommendations Melissa Fales, Chair, Legislation Committee
Kathy Fox, NHBA Lobbyist

President Lick welcomed Legislation Committee Chair, Melissa Fales and NHBA Lobbyist, Kathy Fox. Melissa Fales explained that the bills that she will be reviewing with the Board are the remaining bills that the Legislation Committee reviewed at their February 9 and 17 meetings.

The first bill Chair Fales discussed was SB-0464. She explained that this bill is a civil rights amendment bill which is inserting language which was not previously there. The Legislation Committee felt that this bill would hamper civil rights enforcement, and so is recommending a position of Oppose. Kathy Fox explained that this bill has gone into interim study, it will go to the full Senate. While there is no opportunity to weigh in on this bill at this point the Board should act on the recommended position. The Board asked for clarification on the possible positions they could take. Chair Fales explained the positions and the meaning of each.

ACTION

On Motion: To change the position recommended by the Legislation Committee (Oppose) to Information Negative. Passed 13-1.

Next, HB-1377 was discussed. Chair Fales explained that this bill gives parents the right to make alternative caregiver arrangements for the short term, so they would not have to go through the full guardianship process for things like doctors' appointments, etc. if the parent was not available. The Legislation Committee recommended a position of Support as they felt that it would be helpful to parents, and felt there wouldn't be a lot of pushback on this bill. There was a discussion regarding whether there would be substantial unanimity among the Bar. Ms. Fox noted that this bill was voted ITL (inexpedient to legislate) by the committee. If the full House decides to take this bill back up, it would have to go to the Senate to be acted on. The Board disagreed with the Legislation Committee's position and opted for a position of No Position.

ACTION

On Motion: To change the Legislation Committee's position from Support to No Position. Passed unanimously.

The next bill discussed was SB-0512. Chair Fales explained that this bill would require the court to waive the filing fee for criminal annulment if the defendant has been found not guilty or the case has been dismissed or not prosecuted. Kathy Fox explained the current status of the bill. There was a discussion on fees as a barrier to annulment.

ACTION

On Motion: To approve the recommendation of the Legislation Committee to Support. Passed unanimously.

The next bill discussed was HB-1730. Chair Fales explained that the Legislation Committee was concerned about the impact on the administration of justice should this bill be passed. Death penalty prosecutions are incredibly resource intensive, both for the court and counsel.

ACTION

On Motion: To approve the recommended position of the Legislation Committee of Information Negative. Passed unanimously.

The next bill discussed was HB-1424. This bill would change the current requirement that public officials, including law enforcement officers or other employees of a law enforcement agency be served a summons directly. Chair Fales shared that the Legislation Committee felt that there were many good things that could come from this bill. Kathy Fox explained that the House voted this bill ITL.

ACTION

Motion: To approve the recommended position of the Legislation Committee of Information Positive. Passed 11-2.

Executive Assistant and Legislation Committee Liaison Debbie Hawkins explained that the Board needs to act on all the positions recommended by the Legislation Committee on the remaining slate of bills as this is the historic practice.

ACTION

Motion: To approve the recommended positions of the Legislation Committee on the remainder of the bills. Passed unanimously.

C. Regulation of DOJ Attorneys – USAG Proposal

Mike Iacopino

ABA Association Delegate Mike Iacopino explained to the Board that USAG Proposal would effectively remove regulation of federal Department of Justice (DOJ) attorneys by the states in which they are admitted to practice. It was noted that DOJ attorneys do not need to be admitted to the bar in the state in which they practice, but they do need to be admitted to the bar in at least one jurisdiction. In New Hampshire, DOJ attorneys are regulated along with all other attorneys by the Attorney Discipline office, part of the NH Supreme Court. Delegate Iacopino believes the Board should speak on this proposed change, as it is a matter of administration of justice, and not a political matter. He feels our Bar should oppose this, as it is a fundamental intrusion into the long-standing authority states have to regulate attorneys. It is suggested that the Board should submit comments on this proposed rule as to why this is improper. There was a discussion on the Bar's responsibilities to the Bar membership and to the public. There have already been over 35,000 comments posted on the website.

Justice Donovan commented that the National Association of Chief Justices are planning on making a comment, but the New Hampshire Supreme Court will not. There was a discussion on having President Lick prepare a letter. The Board members suggested possible topics to include, and he asks that Board members reach out to him if they have additional ideas.

ACTION

On motion that the Board authorize the President to prepare a letter in opposition with input from the officers. Covering the following areas: 1- Reference to the current statute, - this would not be in conformance. 2 – Concerned about not allowing state bars to regulate their own attorneys. 3 – Public confidence angle to be addressed. Also – NH Attorneys have the obligation to cooperate with NH professional conduct rules, but this change would conflict with that. Comments would be submitted before the deadline on April 6.

Passed unanimously.

REGULAR BUSINESS – CONSENT ITEMS

- D. Minutes of January 15, 2026 Meeting
Minutes of February 3, 2026 Special Meeting

Catherine Shanelaris

ACTION

On Motion: to approve the consent agenda. Motion: Approved. Passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

- E. Update on Brown and Brown – preferred malpractice carrier

Sarah Blodgett

Director Blodgett gave an update to the Board on Brown and Brown, a preferred malpractice insurance carrier. She explained that the NHBA had entered in to a 5-year endorsement agreement and we are seeking to dissolve this agreement as they have not been helpful to our members. They recently had many of their staff depart the company. There have been many complaints by NHBA members. This has been impacting many solo and small firms. The Bar's Membership Supervisor, Misty Griffin is looking into other alternatives for our members to work with, including local companies. There was a

question brought up with these types of agreements and what the NHBA's obligation is to vet these businesses before entering into such agreements. This will need to be discussed as we go forward. There was also a discussion on ALPS, a preferred malpractice insurance vendor, which is different than an endorsement agreement. Executive Assistant Debbie Hawkins gave some history about the relationship with Brown and Brown. The NHBA used to have its own insurance company, staffed by Susan Morand. The Bar sold it to Amity Insurance some time ago, which was then bought by Brown and Brown. Susan Morand continued to work for Brown and Brown and service our members until her retirement last year.

Charla Stevens left the meeting at 5 p.m., so Item F – Special Committee on Attorney Wellness Charge approval was tabled until the April Meeting.

F. Treasurer's Report

Geoff Gallagher/Jennifer McManus

Treasurer Geoff Gallagher reviewed the NHBA Financial reports. He explained that we are in a good position currently. Our expenses are under budget, as spending from several programs are under budget. Also of note, our expense for credit card fees is down due to implementation of a 2% fee on transactions. As for revenue, we are ahead of budget on LRS fees, member dues and interest. We are in the usual spot with CLE numbers right now, however in April we should see the CLE numbers start to increase as we have more programs scheduled.

ACTION

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

G. Proposed Revised Ethics Committee Comment to Rule 1.7 – Harsh Reality – **ACTION ITEM**

Geoff Gallagher explained that this replaces the existing NH Bar Ethics Committee Comment to Rule 1.7– Harsh Reality, this change needs to be sent to the NH Supreme Court Rules Advisory Committee for consideration. The Board adopted this proposed amendment to the comments on Rule 1.7 at their February meeting, but at that time, we did not understand that the Board also needed to make a recommendation whether or not it be forwarded to the NHSC Rules Committee. Executive Assistant Debbie Hawkins will forward the comment to the secretary of the NHSC Rules Committee for consideration at their next meeting, on the advice of Justice Donovan, who oversees the Rules Committee.

ACTION

On Motion: To recommend to the NH Supreme Court Rules Advisory Committee. Passed unanimously.

H. Board Election Plans

Derek Lick/Sarah Blodgett

Director Blodgett explained that online balloting for the upcoming Board of Governors Elections will start April 1. The candidate profiles are in the Bar News, which will be published in the next couple of days. There is also a page on the bar's website with the information. There are two candidates for two Governors-at-Large positions, and there are two candidates for one Belknap County position. There were no candidates for the Vice President position or the Hillsborough North position, however, Attorney Jane Young has agreed to step into the Vice President role. She has a Public Sector background

and will be a wonderful addition to the Board. The Board will need to appoint governors at the May meeting to the open positions that had no petitions submitted.

I. President's Report

Derek Lick

President Lick thanked the NHBA staff for all their hard work on the Mid-Year Meeting. There were attorneys that reached out after the program that commented that they like the extra CLE and were happy with the program. He is looking forward to the Annual Meeting in June.

J. Executive Director's Report

Sarah Blodgett

Director Blodgett commented that there was a lot of positive feedback on the speakers at the Mid-Year Meeting this year. It was a very successful event. She also noted that we are starting work on the budget for the bar year beginning June 1. We are including in the Capital budget funds for a new member database. Our current system, The Associate, has new problems every week and it is very outdated. It would be a huge advantage to members and staff to have an updated member database. The implementation itself will be budgeted for about \$60,000. This does not include the regular ongoing subscription costs once implemented. Right now we pay \$350 a month for our current database, which is over a decade old. We cannot implement acceptance of electronic payments with our current database, but members can submit a check to pay their dues to avoid payment the assessed credit card fees.

Also, we are working on a CLE program for late fall on defending the judiciary, there have been feelers sent out for speakers on the program.

K. Old Business, if any

L. New Business, if any

Judge Carbon Gender Equality Breakfast Request

Director Blodgett recommends that we reach out to the Gender Equality Committee regarding Judge Susan Carbon's letter about suggested changes to the format of the Gender Equality Breakfast at Midyear Meeting. There are concerns about the space available, the time of day of the event, and that the Gender Equality award winner does not get the same treatment as award winners at Midyear Meeting. We will reach out to Gender Equality Committee and see what their thoughts are regarding a stand-alone event, get input from everyone and bring it back to the Board for review

M. Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly S. Chandler

Holly S. Chandler for Catherine E. Shanelaris, Secretary

New Hampshire Bar Association
Membership Status Changes
Presented to the Board of Governors March 19, 2026
Status Changes February 12, 2026 - March 11, 2026

Bar ID	Name	Old Status	New Status	Effective Date
205	Attorney John J. Cronin III	Active	Inactive Retired	03/02/2026
5623	Attorney George B. Waldron	Active	Inactive Retired	02/21/2026
6830	Attorney Bridget C. Ferns	Active	Inactive Retired	03/01/2026
1699	Attorney Timothy James McKenna	Inactive Retired	Deceased	02/05/2026
12915	Attorney Patricia L. Benner	Inactive	Active	03/06/2026
13969	Attorney Dennis J. Withee	Inactive	Active	02/17/2026
265360	Attorney Danielle H. Sakowski	Inactive	Active	02/23/2026
268166	Attorney Julianne Desmet	Inactive	Active	02/28/2026
13525	Attorney Donald Lee Smith	Inactive	Inactive Retired	03/03/2026
265832	Attorney Michael Fraga	Military Inactive	Military Active	02/19/2026
272216	LT Atticus Omega Lantos-Swett	Military Inactive	Military Active	02/19/2026