

Wyoming State Bar Board of Officers & Commissioners Meeting

November 1, 2024
Wyoming State Bar
Cheyenne, Wyoming

In Attendance: James T. Whiting, President; P. Craig Silva, President-Elect; Alison O. Gee, Vice President; Kelly M. Neville, Treasurer (for a portion of the meeting); Stefanie L. Boster, First Judicial District Commissioner; Dona Playton, Second Judicial District Commissioner; Jason Petri, Third Judicial District Commissioner; Kevin K. Kessner, Fourth Judicial District Commissioner; Jennifer L. Kirk, Fifth Judicial District Commissioner; Kyle A. Ferris, Sixth Judicial District Commissioner; Emily S. Madden, Seventh Judicial District Commissioner (via Zoom); Anne K. Wasserburger, Eighth Judicial District Commissioner; Clayton M. Melinkovich, Ninth Judicial District Commissioner; Carl A. Edelman, Chair, Young Lawyer Section; Sharon Wilkinson, Executive Director; Mark W. Gifford, Bar Counsel; Melinda S. McCorkle, Deputy Bar Counsel, and Cathy Duncil, Admissions Director

Absent: Anna M. Reeves Olson, Immediate Past President

Guests: Hon. Lynne Boomgaarden; Elisa Butler, State Court Administrator; and Angie Dorsch, Executive Director of Equal Justice Wyoming

President James T. Whiting called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2024.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Vice President Alison Gee made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Kevin Kessner seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Admissions Update

Cathy Duncil shared that the new admittee ceremony was hosted at the Wyoming Supreme Court last month followed by the Bar's reception for all of the new admittees and their families. She shared that 32 applicants were recommended for admission. She also reported that one applicant was recommended under conditional admission. Mark Gifford shared that conditional admission is a path for applicants who are having substance abuse, mental health or debt issues but have met all requirements for admission. He shared that there is a requirement that these applicants be in active treatment and working towards resolving whatever the issue may be. Mr. Gifford shared that Wyoming was one of the first jurisdictions to implement conditional admission. Under a conditional admission, there is a monitoring agreement in place so the Bar can track the progress made by the conditional admittee. At the end of two years, the conditional aspect of their licensure will be lifted. Cathy Duncil shared

that the Court admitted a member in 2022 under a conditional admission and she has met all of the requirements and is fully compliant. She is always pleased with these success stories.

Ms. Duncil reported that there are still two applicants who have passed the July bar exam; however, she is still waiting on their Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) results.

Cathy Duncil reminded the Board that Wyoming will begin administering the NextGen bar exam in 2027. She shared that she was fortunate to travel to Denver to observe a prototype exam given last month. She shared that the new exam is all computer based so she was able to see how the whole process works. As a result, she reported being very enthusiastic about administering this exam in July 2027. She shared that the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) surveyed all participants and she will be interested to see the feedback.

Commissioner Dona Playton shared that she will be interested to see the feedback from those prototype participants who just took the July Uniform Bar Exam (UBE).

Vice President Gee shared that she would be interested in seeing projections on exactly how many lawyers we need in the state of Wyoming so we could approach the Legislature again. Treasurer Kelly Neville wondered how we would even go about defining the actual “need” in Wyoming.

Cathy Duncil shared that in August, she, Mark Gifford and Executive Director Sharon Wilkinson spoke to the third-year law students and really emphasized the need for them to stay in Wyoming once they are licensed.

Mandatory Continuing Legal Education

Executive Director Wilkinson reminded the Board that all active lawyers must be compliant with their 2024 CLE requirements by January 15, 2025. She also discussed the penalties handed down to those who are not compliant.

President Whiting shared that Marie Ellis, CLE Director, shared in the new board member orientation that Board members are eligible for CLE credit due to their volunteer service on any of the Bar’s boards and/or committees.

Office of Bar Counsel Report

Mark Gifford shared that his office has received 115 complaints to date, which is an increase from what his office received last year. He predicts they will end the year with approximately 130 complaints. He reported that at any given time, his office has 50 matters under investigation.

Mr. Gifford reported that there was a hearing at the Bar office recently that resulted in a hearing panel’s recommendation to the Supreme Court for a ten-month suspension. He reported that Melinda McCorkle, Deputy Bar Counsel, resolved a case by stipulation that

resulted in a recommendation for a four-month suspension. He shared that the report and recommendation will be sent to the Court very soon.

Mark Gifford reported that the Ethics Hotline remains very steady and very busy, which he and Ms. McCorkle enjoy very much. He also shared that he traveled to Thermopolis and presented at the Public Defenders' Conference.

Commissioner Stefanie Boster made a motion to convene an Executive Session. Treasurer Neville seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive Session was convened at 12:51 p.m.

Commissioner Stefanie Boster made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session. Treasurer Neville seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive Session was adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

2023-2025 Strategic Plan Progress Report

Executive Director Wilkinson walked the Board through the progress she had noted in the progress report. She shared that she will be transitioning the mentoring program from her desk to Kim Robért's desk. She shared that with her workload, she has not been able to give the mentoring program the attention she had hoped and knows Ms. Robért will do a great job with it.

Treasurer Neville reported that she got good feedback from Nick Hummel, the law student who is the beneficiary of the law school endowment funds, about his experience. She reminded the group that he was matched with a lawyer in Moorcroft for a summer internship.

Treasurer Neville reminded the Board that we made a run at some legislation for the rural practice initiative during last year's legislative session, but it was not successful as it did not receive the requisite 2/3 vote. She shared that she and Executive Director Wilkinson are trying to schedule a meeting to discuss trying it again during the upcoming session. Treasurer Neville shared that she has been in communication with Judge Kaste in Uinta County about this and he is wondering if the University of Wyoming could fund this initiative. She shared that they are also looking at other funding sources.

Commissioner Dona Playton shared that Kristin Lanouette is the new Director of Career Services at the University of Wyoming College of Law. She reported that there is a list of students who graduated but cannot find jobs and shared that this list was longer than it has been in the past simply due to Ashli Tomisich's departure from the Director position. Commissioner Playton wondered if there was something we could do potentially match those students with law offices in rural areas. Executive Director Wilkinson offered to get notice to those firms in the "legal desert" counties. Commissioner Playton indicated that if lawyers contacted Director Lanouette and let her know they are looking for help, she could potentially match them.

Executive Director Wilkinson offered to touch base with Director Lanouette when she returns from vacation and brainstorm some ideas regarding this issue—perhaps some social media posts about opportunities.

Judicial Branch Update

Justice Lynne Boomgaarden and Elisa Butler, State Court Administrator, joined the meeting. Justice Boomgaarden shared that Chief Justice Fox extends her regrets for not appearing. Justice Boomgaarden shared that the Chief has to retire in May 2025, so she will be taking over the Chief responsibilities. She indicated that they are starting to work on some transitioning.

Justice Boomgaarden shared that members of the Officers and Commissioner as well as Bar representatives on the eFiling committee have worked with Elisa Butler on numerous eFiling issues. She asked if there were any new or outstanding issues that the Board wished to address. There was discussion regarding guardians and conservatorships as well as authenticated wills in probate cases. There was discussion of the eFiling rules requiring original wills and clerks not being consistent throughout the state.

Commissioner Jennifer Kirk shared that an issue she experienced that was brought forward during the Board's Zoom meeting with File & ServeXpress team was addressed immediately after the meeting and she was very impressed with the customer service. Elisa Butler shared that the File & ServeXpress team found that meeting to be incredibly valuable and had many takeaways.

Commissioner Clayton Melinkovich asked Ms. Butler what kind of feedback she or the File & ServeXpress team is receiving from clerks. Ms. Butler shared that they meet with a committee of clerks for two hours each month and walk through many issues. Commissioner Melinkovich asked if there were minutes from those meetings.

Executive Director Wilkinson shared that she received a call from Anne Sutton, Clerk of District Court in Teton County, about writing periodically for the *Wyoming Lawyer* in order to share some tips, tricks, do's and don'ts about eFiling with the membership. Executive Director Wilkinson indicated that she would publish those whenever she received them and reported that there will be something published in the December issue.

Commissioner Anne Wasserburger asked how non-attorney parties were expected to file documents. Elisa Butler reported that the Court has not taken a position on that yet, but they have had some discussions with the Department of Family Services as well as other organizations. They have determined that if those agencies are filing under an attorney, the mandatory rules apply. However, if they are not, they file as a pro se litigant over the counter.

Commissioner Melinkovich asked what the timeline was for eFiling in the Circuit Courts. Ms. Butler indicated that piloting in the first court is scheduled for February/early March. Piloting in the second court will take place one to two months later. She reported that it is the Court's hope to have eFiling in all trial courts by the end of 2026.

Justice Boomgaarden reminded the Board that the treatment courts have been transitioned to the Judicial Branch. As for the mental health diversion courts, Justice Boomgaarden shared that they are monitoring what is going on in Campbell County while both Natrona and Laramie Counties have expressed interest in having these as well. She reported that Kurt Zunker has been hired as the Behavioral Health Specialist for the Judicial Branch.

Justice Boomgaarden shared that there is a bill that will be discussed by the Joint Judiciary Committee that will broaden the application of the treatment court program to include mental health issues. She feels that this has good potential to create some synergy.

Commissioner Playton asked if the addition of these alternative courts opens up new position for judges in those courts. Vice President Gee shared that in Campbell County, both District Court and Circuit Court judges are tag-teaming those duties. She shared that in her new position as a part-time city judge she has referred some cases to those courts. Justice Boomgaarden clarified that there are no additional judicial positions as a result of these new courts.

Justice Boomgaarden shared that she and her colleagues are in anticipation of the results of Tuesday's General Election. She reported that the biggest anticipation is the Republican Caucus, as they are unaware who the leadership will be.

Justice Boomgaarden reported that there will also be a bill coming through to increase the filing fee that funds the Judicial Systems Automation (JSA) account for technology. She anticipates a \$10 increase for a total fee of \$50. She shared that the fund continues to decrease due to the number of citations being down. Elisa Butler reported that the bill, sponsored by Representative Nicholas, will go before the Joint Judiciary Committee next week.

In regard to Chancery Court, Justice Boomgaarden shared that we would know the Governor's decision about the new Chancery Court judge in about three weeks. That person will serve full-time in Casper beginning the first of January.

Justice Boomgaarden shared that the Access to Justice Commission will be preparing a substantial report for the Wyoming Judicial Council (WJC), which will recommend strategic objectives to further its work. The WJC will have strategic planning in March. Justice Boomgaarden shared that there is currently a significant discussion about pro bono work and an acknowledgement that pro bono work alone is not going to solve the justice gap. She feels like there is more that can be done and asked the Board members to consider two things: 1) she encouraged the Board to continue to get the word out. She shared that we live in a state with rural deserts, so being creative and understanding what resources are available is important; 2) she shared that another thing she wants the Bar to be thinking about is systemic reform. Justice Boomgaarden shared that when you look at the numbers of matters with self-represented litigants—not just in Wyoming but nationwide—the notion that we will be able to operate long-term is a lark. Justice Boomgaarden does not believe the system will survive as it is due to the fact that it is a system designed by lawyers and judges for lawyers and judges. She reported that there will be continued requests from her and others to get the right

number of people engaged in this discussion so we can see what meaningful reform looks like. She shared that we are past the concern of having a paralegal do some work and worrying about it being the unauthorized practice of law. Justice Boomgaarden would like to see the Bar work upstream to develop a community justice system simply for the Bar's own self-preservation long term. She feels strongly that if the citizens of Wyoming do not think lawyers and judges are relevant, then we are not. She believes that citizens have to have some respect for the services the legal profession provides and there needs to be heightened awareness and discussion of that. Justice Boomgaarden shared that the Board's role in this is critical, as this will continue to be a high strategic priority for the judges.

Justice Boomgaarden shared that the Rules committees have been working on governance within the branch. She shared that there are many members of the Bar as well District Court and Circuit Court judges, clerks and the Court's technology folks that serve on these standing committees of the judicial council. The Court relies on these folks to go back out to their constituents and gather feedback, but she thinks there is room for improvement. Justice Boomgaarden encouraged the Board to be getting the word out about these efforts. Executive Director Wilkinson shared that whenever the Bar is proposing changes to any of its rules, those always go out to the full membership for a 30-day comment period. She shared that the members really do pay attention to those and, as a result, they get very good feedback that often results in more or different amendments. Executive Director Wilkinson shared that whenever the judicial council or any other body wished to gather member feedback, she is happy to take the lead on the formal comment period and share the results with the Court. Justice Boomgaarden thanked Executive Director Wilkinson for the opportunity and shared that she thought this was a good reminder of the role the Commissioners play in this.

Justice Boomgaarden shared that the judicial branch will participate in a strategic planning session in March, which will be facilitated by the National Center of State Courts. She shared that in preparation, they will schedule some focus group meetings with multiple stakeholders. She read the list of stakeholders. She shared that she would like to have two individuals identified from each of the groups, so there would be four general members of the Bar. She reported that they are supposed to get the proposed schedule in the next day or so. When she receives that, she will share that with President Whiting and Executive Director Wilkinson.

Commissioner Kirk shared that she did not wish to speak for all prosecutors; however, her office is finding fees and costs in Circuit Court to be a bit circular in that prosecutors' offices are having to pay for certified copies. She wonders why the state is having to pay the state for a piece of paper. She shared that the clerks will only take cash or checks so if she needs something from Natrona County, she has to either travel there to pay cash or jump through the hoops to get a check. She expressed her frustration that there is no uniformity across the state. Justice Boomgaarden shared that she would loop Chief Justice Fox into this issue and get back to the Board with some information.

Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation Annual Report

Angie Dorsch, Executive Director of Equal Justice Wyoming (EJW), joined the meeting. Cathy Duncil shared that she serves on the advisory committee for Equal Justice Wyoming, which

used to be the governing board. She shared that in 2011, the Court created EJW as a court entity and established the EJW Board. Recently, the WJC announced that the Board is now an advisory committee of the WJC. Ms. Duncil shared that there will be two co-chairs of the advisory committee and it will hold its first meeting next Tuesday to discuss the role of the committee, the leadership and the finances of EJW. She shared that the future of grant making will also be discussed, as the entire structure has changed.

Angie Dorsch thanked Ms. Duncil and thanked the Board for all of its support for EJW and the Equal Justice Wyoming Foundation (EJWF). She specifically thanked the Board for the matching funds, the optional contribution line item for EJWF on the license fee statement and all of the support for pro bono opportunities. She shared that EJW would not be able to have the reach it does without the support of the Bar.

Angie Dorsch shared that this has been a long transition of EJW and for the last few years, there have been many unknowns. She shared that in the Judicial Branch's Strategic Plan, access to justice is the number one priority along with restructuring of the decision making within the branch. She reported that there were a few entities that were not reporting to the WJC. Ms. Dorsch shared that as part of the reorganization, there has been much discussion about where EJW fits. She shared that the decision was finalized in May that EJW would fall under the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which makes the EJW Board an advisory committee as Cathy Duncil shared. They are meeting to figure out the transition from an oversight body to an advisory committee.

Ms. Dorsch shared that they are trying to align EJW with the Judicial Branch. She reported that being separate and independent did create some inefficiencies within the program, so they are very open to this new structure.

Vice President Gee asked if contributions to EJWF would now go to the Court or is it still a non-profit. Angie Dorsch clarified that the structure of the finances has not changed. EJW's funding has always been part of the Court's budget as part of a special revenue account, so there are restrictions. Ms. Dorsch distributed a hand-out showing a summary of where the civil legal service fees are deposited and shared that these funds can only be used for low-income services. She shared that that piece of funding will not change but the decision making about those funds may change. She shared that she and her advisory committee can make recommendations about what they would like to have going through their budget, but they are no longer the ultimate decision makers. Ms. Dorsch also clarified that the EJWF is a separate 501(c)(3).

Angie Dorsch shared that she and the committee have spent time diversifying the kinds of funds coming in. At first, they only managed the IOLTA funds. She shared that they are trying to make a lot of effort to use the Foundation to back-fill some of the decreases on the civil legal services accounts. Ms. Dorsch also shared that the Access to Justice Commission has stressed that private fundraising is going to be critical.

Ms. Dorsch shared that as a result of the decreases in the civil legal services account, they used emergency pandemic funds to fund some of those services; however, those funds are no longer available so they are unable to grant as much as they used to to those legal aid providers, which are all 501(c)(3)s.

Vice President Gee asked if EJW has considered forming an endowment. Ms. Dorsch shared that there have been discussions about an endowment, and she learned at a recent conference that several states have had success with endowments.

Commissioner Kirk, who also serves on the EJW advisory committee, shared that Angie Dorsch has done an amazing job during this transition. Ms. Dorsch acknowledged that the transition has been a struggle but also recognized many positive things that have come as a result of it. She also gave kudos to her small staff of three full-time employees and one part-time employee and discussed each of their duties.

Angie Dorsch referred the Board's attention to her annual report and shared that the Volunteer Reference Attorney (VRA) program is seeing almost double the number of people accessing that for assistance; however, she shared that they are seeing a decline in the number of people taking advantage of the evening clinics. Ms. Dorsch reported that with the expansion to Teton County, they now have eight VRA locations delivering two sessions per month. She provided an overview of how the VRA programs operate and shared that the VRA program is different from the Natrona County Court Navigator program because those navigators are limited to three topic areas, whereas the VRAs are lawyers and not limited in practice area. She shared that the court clerks really like the VRAs because they are one more resource and can deal with issues the clerks cannot. Ms. Dorsch shared that they are currently looking at some expansion around the state, as more and more librarians are learning about the program and are interested in implementing them in their libraries.

Angie Dorsch shared that a Forms Committee was a recommendation that came as a result of the Access to Justice 2.0 initiative and it has been operational for over a year. She described the informal process that was in place to maintain the self-help forms, but indicated that as part of the restructuring, it was determined that a formal process through a committee structure was needed. She shared that the committee did apply for Forms Camp through the National Center for State Courts and is currently learning about accessibility.

Ms. Dorsch shared that IOLTA rates were really trending upwards; however, she is already seeing the rates drop. She explained how this results in a decrease in revenue. As a result, she reported that they are working on some grants to support some of the work they are doing—one of those being a grant from Cheyenne Regional Medical Center to support the medical/legal partnership. She reported that EJW has received a grant from Natrona Collective Health Trust.

Review of Officers and Commissioners Expense Reimbursement Policy

Executive Director Wilkinson shared that President Whiting was contacted by Chief Justice Fox to inquire about the Bar's expense reimbursement policy and wondered why Board members

are not given a per diem in accordance with the State's policy similar to what judges receive. President Whiting brought this to the Executive Committee's attention and Treasurer Neville directed the staff to do a comparison of what the Board members were actually reimbursed for a selection of meetings versus what they would have received if they were subject to the per diem policy.

Executive Director Wilkinson shared that she and Cathy Duncil, Bookkeeper, pulled the numbers and found the results to be interesting. She shared that the majority of time, the Bar's reimbursement was less than what would have been paid out under the per diem policy.

The Board reviewed its current policy and there was a vigorous discussion. Following the discussion, the decision was made to leave the current policy in place. Factors that weighed in on this decision included: 1) Officers and Commissioners are not state employees and, therefore, not subject to the state's policies; 2) judges are getting paid their salaries when they travel, while the Officers and Commissioners are volunteering their time; 3) the Bar staff is very fiscally responsible and neither the meeting locations nor the restaurants are extravagant; 4) the Board members use what is allocated to them for travel appropriately and none abuse these funds; and 5) very few Board members spend all of what is budgeted for them to attend board meetings and conferences. In fact, Executive Director Wilkinson pointed out that in the 2023/2024 fiscal year, we ended at 52.8% of what was budgeted for board travel.

Furthering the discussion, Cathy Duncil reminded the Board that it changed the policy years ago to limit the number of people who were eligible to attend the Western States Bar Conference when the conference is hosted in Hawaii.

Annual Meeting Wrap-Up Report

Executive Director Wilkinson directed the Board's attention to her written wrap-up report and shared that she, the staff and the videographers all sit down after the conference to get good notes down about what worked, what did not and make notes for improvements in future conferences. She also directed the Board's attention to the written evaluations from the conference attendees. Overall, she felt the conference was a huge success. She reported that there was a total of 784 registrants—316 in person and 468 virtual registrants.

Commissioner Melinkovich shared his frustration that so many of the written comments were so contradictory—some enjoyed the AI program while others disliked it.

Commissioner Kirk shared a suggestion for improving how registrants receive a receipt showing the breakout of all the CLE courses they signed up for.

Selection of Committee Liaisons

Executive Director Wilkinson reminded the Board that all of the Bar's committees have a liaison from this Board. She mentioned that President Whiting had completed all of his recommendations for the Court-appointed Boards/Committee but now needed to focus on the Bar's committees. Executive Director Wilkinson went through the list of current liaisons. There was discussion about who was interested in serving and those appointments were made.

Wyoming High School Mock Trial

Melinda McCorkle, Deputy Bar Counsel, reminded the Board that the Bar takes an active role in recruiting volunteers for the Wyoming High School Mock Trial (WHSMT). She shared that George Powers, an attorney from Cheyenne, and his wife Marguerite Herman have volunteered their time to coordinate the mock trial for over 20 years and they are wondering if the Bar could play a role in administering the program. Ms. McCorkle shared that this mock trial gives high school students the ability to try a case from start to finish. They work on the case for about ten weeks and then try the case before volunteer judges. Ideally, Ms. McCorkle shared that this program could conceivably be in every high school around the state; however, the fact is that Cheyenne and Laramie and typically the only schools that participate.

There was a discussion about the importance of the program. Ms. McCorkle shared that she likes the idea of the Bar and the judiciary brainstorming to see how we can assist with the program. She also likes the ideas about getting younger lawyers involved.

Executive Director Wilkinson shared that the staff recently had a meeting with Mr. Powers and Ms. Herman to discuss the program and she was surprised to hear that the majority of WHSMT participants do not go on to law school. She thought if the opposite was true, it could be an effective recruiting tool and a potential resource for the rural practice initiative. Commissioner Playton wondered if it could be a good partnership with the law school as a recruiting tool.

Commissioner Melinkovich shared that he sat with Mr. Powers and Ms. Herman at a luncheon during the Annual Meeting and heard their pitch. Afterwards, he tried to recruit teachers back in Pinedale to participate and never even got a response.

After discussion, Commissioner Stefanie Boster suggested creating a Bar exploratory committee to determine who we could hand the WHSMT off to. Commissioner Melinkovich agreed that it is an important program and likes the idea of the Bar being involved, but he noted that the Bar does not have the manpower to handle it.

UW College of Law Update

Commissioner Playton shared that Julie Hill, the new Dean, is very engaged and has been making her rounds around the state. She of course has a lot of work to do. She shared that they are in their new building expansion and it is very nice. She also commented that the space for the clinics is great and much needed.

President's Report

President Whiting thanked the Bar staff for the amazing job they doing running the Bar. He shared that going to national conferences points out that we simply do not experience the problems that other bars are tackling. He shared that the staff makes it wonderful to practice law in Wyoming. Executive Director Wilkinson thanked him for his compliments.

President-Elect's Report

President-Elect Craig Silva shared that there is a law library in Casper for which the Natrona County Bar Association has been funding; however, now that e-filing is mandatory, there are no

more filing fees to fund this. He reminded his colleagues that by statute, each county must maintain a law library.

Executive Director Wilkinson mentioned that she has approached vLex Fastcase about this, and she just needs to work with them to work this caveat into the Bar's contract and she believes counties can offer vLex Fastcase in their local law libraries.

Vice President's Report

Vice President Gee echoed President Whiting's sentiments about the staff. She also welcomed the new Board members and encouraged them to always speak up and participate.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Wilkinson reported that of the 3,760 members that owe a license fee by November 30th, 1,451 have paid, which is about 39%. She shared that Danielle Moyte, Administrative Assistant, is handling license fees and is doing a fantastic job.

Executive Director Wilkinson shared that typically this time of year, she processes numerous status changes, but she has only processed 53 status changes since October 1st. She does, however, have a handful of pending status changes from members wishing to transition to Retired status at the end of the year.

Executive Director Wilkinson reminded the Board that it made the decision in August to transition away from yearly, flimsy bar cards to nicer permanent bar cards. She shared that the bar cards have been designed and passed around a sample of the design. She reported that the necessary data will be shared with PermaCard, the new vendor, at the end of the year and lawyers who have paid their license fees should receive two permanent cards directly from the vendor after the first of the year.

Executive Director Wilkinson also reminded the Board that it directed her to look into the possibility of having the ability to store the mobile bar card in the wallet of mobile devices. She shared that she checked into this and learned that the estimated time it would take to code this both for the Apple and Google platforms would be 120 hours, which would cost an estimated \$12,000. The IT people would also need to create developer accounts for the Bar—both Apple and Google—which would be an expense on top of the \$12,000 along with the yearly fee to maintain.

After discussion, it was determined to hold off for now and see how the members are liking and using the mobile bar card, which is already available to all members, as well as the permanent bar cards.

Executive Director Wilkinson reminded the Board at the August meeting that she had been approached by Decisis, a legal research platform and sister company to LexisNexis, to consider offering it as a member benefit instead of vLex Fastcase. She reported that following the August meeting, she put together a working group made up of heavy Fastcase users. President Whiting, Commissioner Jason Petri and Commissioner Melinkovich were also on the working

group. She reported that the working group participated in a demo with Dan Griffith from Decisis to learn about the platform. Following the demo, the members of the working group were given a 30-day free trial to use the platform as much as possible. Executive Director Wilkinson reported that they had a follow-up call last week to discuss the outcome. She shared that one thing she found surprising was how much some of our members dislike Fastcase.

Executive Director Wilkinson shared the annual dollar amount the Bar currently spends on Fastcase on behalf of the members. She then walked through the proposed pricing structure of Decisis.

After discussion from the three members of the working group who serve on the Board, Commissioner Melinkovich shared that he felt this decision was a no-brainer. He feels that the Decisis platform is much more user-friendly and with the cost savings, he wondered why we would not make this change. All were in agreement.

Young Lawyer Section Report

Carl Edelman shared that the section council had its first meeting and discussed opportunities to collaborate with the University of Wyoming College of Law. They are considering hosting a Zoom meeting to hopefully answer questions from law students.

Carl Edelman shared that they are hoping to sponsor another panel discussion at the 2025 Annual Meeting. Topic considerations include how to bill properly, how to communicate the value you are providing your client and client counseling. He shared that there is an overall feeling that young lawyers do not know how to communicate with clients. Mr. Edelman shared that they are working on getting a young lawyer representative on the Wellbeing Ad Hoc Committee.

Commissioners Reports

- ***Ninth Judicial District*** – Commissioner Melinkovich shared that his district is grateful to swear in a new judge in Teton County. He reported that he attended Judge Weisman’s robing ceremony. He indicated that he is trying to get to Lander and up to Teton County to make another loop and do local bar get-togethers. He shared that his district is in dire need of attorneys. While his office is fully staffed, as is the Public Defender’s Office, he reported that there are only a couple of attorneys in Pinedale that are actively practicing. He hears the same throughout his district.
- ***Eighth Judicial District*** – no report
- ***Seventh Judicial District*** – Commissioner Emily Madden shared that things in Natrona County are good. President-Elect Silva has been busy trying to get the local bar up and active, as they have new leadership. She reported that the Supreme Court held oral arguments at Casper College. She also shared that her district hosted a luncheon for Dean Julie Hill that was well attended.
- ***Sixth Judicial District*** – Commissioner Kyle Ferris shared that he appreciated the warm welcome. He shared that he was thinking about the judges that were in his district when he became an attorney and noted that there is only one sitting judge left; however, he commented that the whole staff of the Bar is still here. 😊

- ***Fifth Judicial District*** – Commissioner Kirk welcomed the new Board members and reported that they are very busy in her district. She is in fact hoping that her district will eventually get a new District Court judge. She shared that a few of the judges in her district are up for retention and there has been a very boisterous Facebook campaign to vote against the retention of one of them.
- ***Fourth Judicial District*** – Commissioner Kessner shared that his local bar was getting up and active but the wildfires in the area put a damper on that.
- ***Third Judicial District*** – Commissioner Petri reported that his district lost two attorneys—Teresa Thybo and John Olson. Both moved on to other County Attorney offices in Campbell and Lincoln Counties respectively. He shared that he emailed his constituents in preparation for this meeting to see if there were any concerns or items of discussion they wished for him to bring before the Board. He learned that his constituents either really like or really dislike File & ServeXpress. Several said that they expected to dislike it but find it very useful and nice to use. He shared that the remainder of the comments pertained to the Judicial Performance Assessment. Overall, Commissioner Petri reported that the sentiments were unanimous—that the assessment is useless and a complete waste of Bar funds.
- ***Second Judicial District*** – Commissioner Playton shared that she will take Executive Director Wilkinson’s offer up and use her help to figure out who serves in leadership roles for the Albany County and Carbon County Bar Associations. She has a desire to get those local bars up and active again.
- ***First Judicial District*** – Commissioner Boster shared that the Coin Shop murder trial starts next week and it will be live streamed. She reported that she was invited as a community bar leader to attend a meet and greet with Dean Julie Hill last month. She shared that Dean Hill spoke for about 45 minutes and she found her to be very engaging and thinks she will be effective in her new role at the law school. It is Commissioner Boster’s hope that the Bar can really connect with her and work to strengthen our relations with the law school. She shared that the judges in Laramie County really want to be involved with the Laramie County Bar Association; however, she is struggling to determine how best to engage them. She was displeased to report that the crime in Cheyenne has risen significantly. She shared that the municipal court is extremely busy as a result. She reported that she recently ran the numbers and they currently have 6,000 cases in municipal court. She communicated this to the Mayor and learned that the number of DUIs has sharply increased. She reported that she has reached out to the District Attorney’s office to see if it can take the drugs and alcohol cases.

Board/Committee Liaison Reports

- ***Civil Pattern Jury Instructions Committee*** – Commissioner Kessner shared that they have not met since the last report. They are meeting today.
- ***Criminal Pattern Jury Instructions Committee*** – Executive Director Wilkinson reported that the Committee has just submitted several new sets of instructions to vLex Fastcase.

President James Whiting adjourned the meeting at 5:38 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2024.

Minutes Submitted by:

Sharon Wilkinson
Executive Director