**JANUARY MINUTES**

January 21st, 2025

Time/Location: **5PM @ the** **Barrister’s Lounge or MS Teams**

**BOARD MEETING**

* Present: Sheila Simpson, Jacquelyn Miller, Darren Williams, Sofia Green, Freya Kodar, Katherine Tochor, Carly Haynes, Andrew Kaban, Malaki Suppin, Alexander Bjornson, Marlisa Martin, Clare Jennings, Anwar Mujtabah, James Legh, Xiaopeng (Leo) Yuan, Jessica Thomson, Stephen Lyons

1. **Approval of meeting minutes** 
   1. **Motion**: to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2024 Board Meeting

* Sheila moved the above motion
* Motion carried – no abstentions, no opposition, all in favour

1. **Reports**
   1. UVic Report (Freya Kodar)
      1. TBD

* Update on the new building: it was initially expected to be ready for March. They are waiting for a new report and are now expecting it to be ready for May. They are planning to hold the opening ceremony in the fall.
* 2025-2026 is the UVic Faculty of Law’s 50th anniversary. They will be holding a celebration on the weekend of Oct 25-26 and will be partnering with CLE on programming.
* The Faculty will be participating in the Battle of the Bar Bands, partnering with students
  1. Benchers’ Report (Jim Legh)
     1. TBD
* Main report:
  + The election for the Victoria Bencher vacancy is now open. Candidates include Darren Williams, Ronald Dumonceaux, Marcia McNeil, T.J. Senko, Peter Ameerali, and Diane Turner, KC
  + The position of Second Vice President is also up for election. Two people have put their names forward: Katrina Harry and Michael Welch
  + The next LSBC meeting is on February 7
  + The LSBC has a new CEO: Gigi Chen-Kuo.
* Added to Bencher’s report from discussion during Jim’s report on the newsletter:
  + Jim is increasingly worried about the ability of articling students to connect, now that PLTC is all virtual now. PLTC being reviewed now.
  + This trend toward doing everything online has been a huge loss to young lawyers.
  + Thinking VBA should consider a monthly meeting at the courthouse (Barrister’s lounge) – very informal. Just an opportunity to interact. If the board is okay with this, he’d like to publish about this in the newsletter. Jim would host initially, facilitating a short conversation on ethics or something similar, not as CPD but to connect.
* Discussion:
  + Clare agreed about the value of in-person meetings that we’ve lost, and noted that the CBA-BC Young Lawyers and Women Lawyers Forums have monthly in-person social events in Victoria, and that the Inns of Court has usually been held in-person close to monthly.
  + She added that perhaps it would be good to do this more on an ad-hoc basis, so there isn’t another monthly commitment we have to work to maintain.
    - Jim asked how many people attend these gatherings
    - Jacquie noted that she has often attended both and there’s generally 10-15 and sometimes more at each
    - Clare noted that these are great, but often the intergenerational connection can be missed
    - Marlisa noted that not-so-young lawyers should be encouraged to bring young lawyers they know along to things
  + Jim noted that he’d like to put this topic in the newsletter to see if there’s feedback from the community
  + Sheila proposed resuming this conversation after Jim returns from Asia (mid-March) and that she would add it to the agenda for March under Benchers Report
  1. President (Sheila Simpson)
     1. VBA Pride Parade Representative Volunteer
        + Connect with CBABC for a joint float
        + Contact Meaghan Parker-Sutton
* Pride Parade:
  + Sheila noted that she has talked to Meaghan Parker-Sutton at the CBA-BC about the option of doing joint float
  + Clare & Jacquie will be our ad hoc parade committee
* Meetings:
  + Sheila will not be able to host at the Barristers Lounge at least until the end of April, so if anyone is planning to join from the Barristers Lounge, they should bring a laptop to connect and they should also tell others they’ll be there so they can join
  + Stephen mentioned that he could regularly join with his laptop from the Barristers Lounge and people can join him there
    - Stephen is also designated to bring snacks
  1. Vice-President (Stephen Lyons)
     1. Current Membership #
* The current membership count is at 65 people, but this will increase soon, as he’s still processing membership forms that have been coming in
* He has received no complaints about the new membership fee (up $10)
  1. Treasurer (Anwar Mujtabah)
     1. Treasurer’s monthly reports
        + Motion: to approve the December 2024 report
        + Motion: to approve the January 2025 report
* Report:
  + The December report had been tabled pending an update, so Anwar had two reports to present at this meeting.
  + December 2024 Financial Report:
    - The previous version went to December 16. The updated version has been extended to December 18 to include the transferring of all PayPal amounts into our RBC account, for simplicity of accounting. So now there is nothing in the PayPal account, for the time being
      * The title of this financial report says that it goes to December 16, but that is a typo in that one spot – it goes to December 18, 2024.
    - Our balance as of December 18 was $15,481.97.
  + January 2025 Financial Report:
    - As of January 19, 2025, we had $6,208.27 in our RBC account
    - The significant drop in our balance is a result of payment of $10,412 for the AGM & dinner event at the golf club was made during this period
    - We’ll need to do some work to increase the balance in the account
* Discussion:
  + Jessica Thomson asked if our current balance is considerably lower than what we have typically floated in the past, whether we have any upcoming expenses that will be difficult to meet, and the impact that membership renewals will have
    - Anwar noted that this balance is lower than what we have typically floated as a balance over recent years, and that as memberships are renewed, the balance should increase to an extent
    - Sheila added that usually we float a balance between $10,000-$15,000, so that is really low for us, and that we usually have about 300 members
    - Anwar noted that he’s received some additional cheques for membership renewals and that he just transferred about $1,500 from our PayPal account, so our RBC balance as of today (Jan 21) is closer to between $8,000 and $9,000
    - Stephen added that while membership renewals will increase our balance, that is likely to increase our balance by a few hundred dollars, not much more. Membership is not a big part of our revenue
    - Sheila asked Stephen if he’s received membership renewals from the big firms and he noted that they are continuing to trickle in
* Motions:
  + The above motions were moved by Anwar
  + Motions carried – no abstentions, no votes against, all in favour
  1. Awards Committee (Sofia Green, Darren Williams & Sheila Simpson)
     1. TBD
* Report provided by Sofia:
  + The Committee’s specific recommendations were emailed with the meeting materials, to address wording issues around the awards raised in our October 2024 meeting.
  + The Committee recommended replacing “practicing member of the Victoria Bar” with “member of the Victoria Bar Association,” as this is more aligned our constitution and allows some more flexibility for the awards to go to eligible members (e.g., law professors) rather than only practicing lawyers.
  + The current wording of the Contribution to the Law award stipulates that the contribution should be during the year – the Committee proposes to remove that time period to enable more flexibility.
* Motion:
  + Sofia moved to amend the wording of the eligibility for the awards as set out in the document attached in the meeting materials.
* Discussion:
  + Stephen noted that there appears to be a contradiction in the wording for the Pamela Murray award, which calls for an eligible candidate to be a “practicing member” of the VBA – one can be a practicing lawyer, but isn’t typically described as a practicing member of an association.
  + Jim noted that he had been involved in creating all but the Pamela Murray award, that he believes the proposed amendments makes sense in terms of some of the issues that have been raised in terms of the wording re eligibility over years, and that he supports the proposed revisions.
  + Alexander noted that he thinks the changes make sense. The forms online have an eligibility requirement baked in, which already says that the person has to be a member of the VBA. So we should take care to ensure that these forms align with the revised criteria – close but there might need to be some wordsmithing. Also, the online forms say that to be eligible, one must be a member of the VBA, but cannot be a member of the board– the criteria included in the motion should also include this.
    - Darren suggested the committee consider this point and report back at the next meeting.
  + Sofia noted that it’s not necessary to stipulate “practicing member” in the criteria, since most members are practicing lawyers.
  + Jacquie noted that the current wording suggests that an eligible candidate must be an existing member, rather than someone who is eligible to become one, which may exclude good candidates.
    - Sofia noted that it hasn’t really been a bar, because it’s easy to become a member once nominated.
    - Darren suggested the committee consider this in revisions and consider revising the forms to ensure they don’t imply that a nominee must be a present member to be nominated.
  + Jim suggested tabling the recommendations, for the Committee to bring back the recommendations as a whole after considering the points made.
    - Clare seconded this.
      * The Committee’s recommendations report was tabled.
  1. Social Events Calendar (Danielle Young, Sofia Green & Geneva Houlden)

1. Benji Quiz Night
2. Spring Dinner

* Report on Quiz Night provided by Sofia:
  + Will be held on Feb 13th in the Maple Room at the Stickey Wicket. We have about 38 tickets sold so far and about 10 more spots left
  + Tickets are $35 each, and appies will be provided.
  + If we sell out, we’ll break even. We have no funds from the event for prizes, so a there will be a bit of a bite out of our budget for that.
* Report on the Spring Dinner and other events provided by Danielle:
  + The Committee will meet on Feb 10 to finalize dates for other events
  + She has contacted the Hotel Grand Pacific about holding the Spring Dinner in mid-April. They’ve said that we have to be within 60 days of the event to confirm a reservation.
  1. Sporting Events Calendar (Andrew Kaban, Carly Haynes & Alexander Bjornson)
     1. Spring Event
* Report by Andrew:
  + Curling will be held on Feb 8. Currently 3 teams have registered – one from Carfra Lawton, one Crown, and one AGBC. Hoping for at least one additional team. Might have to cancel part of the booking. There used to be more uptake for curling.
    - Have yet to reach out to UVic Law students.
    - Andrew called on any heads of law firms in the meeting to create teams.
  + Bowling will be held in early May, subject to Crown conference dates.
  + The Committee is looking forward to getting together soon for planning – maybe pickle ball, lawn games, etc.
* Discussion:
  + Freya noted that if we send her the event info, UVic Law can probably form a student team.
    - Darren noted that student registration is complimentary.
  + Jim noted that SLL is looking to create a team
  + Sofia encouraged people to get out of their comfort zone, rally their firms and come out and support.
  1. CPD/Inns of Court (Selina Wall, Darren Williams)
     1. Update on January 22nd session
     2. Next session?
* Report by Darren:
  + The November session was a success
  + A session was planned for January on bankruptcy but that has had to be postponed, due to a scheduling conflict that came up for the speaker
  + The next one will be on February 24, held at the Hotel Grand Pacific, which has given us a competitive rate
* Jacquie provided more information about the Feb 24 event on Darren’s request:
  + Jacquie will moderate a talk by *Kilslay Kaaji Sding* Miles Richardson, OC, who she has worked with for many years.
  + He has served as President of the Council of the Haida Nation and Commissioner and Chief Commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission on issues that should be relevant to those practicing in Aboriginal law and working directly for Nations and Indigenous individuals, as well as for the wider bar with respect to reconciliation.
* Return to Darren’s report:
  + Everyone should ensure they come to the Feb 24 event and help ensure that we get a full house – “we should all be there”
  + On April 24, we’ll hold a session on proprietary estoppel cases. Presenters are John Alexander, Heather Fisher, and Darren. Covering the last several years’ litigation cases using proprietary estoppel in property disputes and real estate claims
  + After, we’ll have a criminal law speaker. He asked that anyone on the board that does criminal law, please let the Committee know. Sheila noted that the Supreme Court has recently granted leave for a delay case, so the Committee may want to think about the issue of delay.
  + The next plan is to have a family law speaker.
  + They are aiming to organize a session for every second month
  + Darren welcomed suggestions
    - Jacquie suggested an ethics session
  1. Donations Committee (Marlisa Martin, Katherine Tochor, Leo Yuan & Selina Wall)
     1. TBD
* Report by Marlisa:
  + She hasn’t received any requests so far, so she is not sure if they go directly to her via the website or if there is another process
    - Sheila noted that she believes it is set up to go directly to Marlisa
    - Darren noted that it is not unusual at this time of year not to have any requests
    - Sheila noted that the next likely request will be for the Battle of the Bar Bands
  1. Newsletter (Jim Legh/Geneva Houlden)
     1. Next newsletter:
* Report by Jim:
  + Jim will be away in Asia Feb 10-Mar 13, so he won’t be able to do the newsletter for March 1. Geneva may be able to, but it’s important to get any content to them early if possible. There is a bit of a risk about timing.
  + Jim made some points here he wanted to add to his Bencher’s report – they and any comments made in response are reflected in that section above
  1. CBA Report (Clare Jennings K.C.)
     1. TBD
* Clare provided the following report:

Advocacy

Agenda for Justice 2025 has been launched: <https://www.cbabc.org/Our-Work/Agenda-for-Justice>

This document sets out CBABC’s advocacy positions, which are the backbone of CBABC’s overall advocacy, in three main categories:

* Making Justice Affordable
* Reaching Equal Justice for Everyone
* Restoring Public Confidence

Participate in calls for input:

Updates to the Uniform Class Proceedings Act: <https://www.cbabc.org/Our-Work/Calls-for-Consultation/Have-your-say-Uniform-Class-Proceedings-Act?utm_source=IFZ&utm_medium=EM&utm_campaign=BC&_zs=EOS7O1&_zl=obLA3>

Influence Standard Form Contracts of Purchase and Sale: <https://www.cbabc.org/Our-Work/Calls-for-Consultation/Influence-Standard-Form-Contracts-of-Purchase-and>

Events

Victoria lawyers might be interested in:

SCC 150th Visit Public Town Hall Event, In-Person Only, February 3rd, 3 p.m.: <https://www.scc-csc.ca/150/victoria_eng.html#public>

CBA National AGM, In-Person or Online, February 5th, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. BC time: <https://www.cba.org/AGM/Home>

Access to Justice in the AI Era: Innovation vs. Risk, Online Only, February 5th 4:30 to 6 p.m.: <https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=BC_BC25A2J01W&_ga=2.123145283.97629969.1737507854-160267044.1725389261>

Civility in the Profession, Online Only, February 6th, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.: <https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=BC_BC25FLV02R&_ga=2.123145283.97629969.1737507854-160267044.1725389261>

CBABC AGM, Online Only, February 7th, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.: <https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=bc_bc25pcm01r>

Young Lawyers – Victoria Monthly Meeting, In-Person Only, February 11th at the Sticky Wicket, 5:30 to 7 p.m.: <https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=BC_BC25YLI02M&_ga=2.123145283.97629969.1737507854-160267044.1725389261>

Women Lawyers Forum – Vancouver Island Judges Dinner, In-Person Only, March 11th at the Hotel Grand Pacific, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.: <https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=BC_BC25WFI02d&utm_source=IFZ&utm_medium=EM&utm_campaign=BC&_zs=EOS7O1&_zl=CdGA3>

* 1. Courthouse Liaison
     1. Civil Liaison (Alexander Bjornson)
     2. TBD
* Report by Alexander:
  + The welcoming ceremony for two new BCCA justices – Justice Edelman and Justice Gomery – will take place on January 27 at 4:15 in Courtroom 60 of the Vancouver Law Courts
    1. Criminal Liaison (Clare Jennings K.C.)
    2. TBD
* Report by Clare:
  + Judges Brooks and McKimm are retiring and there will be a special sitting for them in June
    - Darren noted that he’s communicated with Selina about an Inns of Court with them, sometime before June
  1. Website, Email and Forum (Sheila Simpson, Clare Jennings K.C. & Maliki Suppin)
     1. Motion: to approve the creation and use of a LinkedIn Account on behalf of the VBA that would be linked to our Gmail account.
* Report by Sheila:
  + Jacquie provided Sheila with info about why she hasn’t been receiving VBA emails. She provided her firm’s IT person with a record of emails she should have been sent from the VBA, via MailChimp. Her Microsoft Outlook had been blocking the emails but she hadn’t been getting notifications that that was happening and you’re supposed to. They had been going into quarantine and not coming into her inbox or junk mail. The IT person changed the setting to change that.
    - So, for anyone using Outlook, that is what the problem is. You can reach out to Sheila and she can forward you the specific information, but it is also on the website in News under “Are You Getting Our Emails?”
    - Otherwise, Sheila hasn’t been notified about any specific issues regarding emails.
      * Jacquie noted there was a small spelling error in the Microsoft quarantine email address posted on the website & Sheila noted she’d double check that and correct as needed
  + Sheila got Jim’s email about updating the mentors, but she hasn’t had a chance to do that yet.
* Motion:
  + Sheila moved and Alexander seconded
* Discussion:
  + Jim asked whether an organizational LinkedIn account is quite expensive
    - It’s to have a basic account, but to advertise it costs money
    - If we’re going to pay for it we should know what it will cost us and what the purpose is
  + Sheila noted that the purpose is to advertise our events. It sounds like a lot of the civil firms use it
    - She noted that there is a free account, a premium account that costs $30 per month, and a business account that costs $60 per month
  + Jim noted that the free one won’t let you market or send message
  + Darren noted that we may find already have an account from about 10 years ago, but may have been wiped out
    - Sheila noted we are definitely not paying for it right now
  + Sheila tabled this item to the next meeting and will come back with more info
  1. Barrister’s Lounge & Court Boxes (Marlisa Martin)
     1. TBD
* Report by Marlisa:
  + No update re the Barristers Lounge. Hasn’t had any contact on that.
  + She has taken over this portfolio and collected 7 cheques for the last year and 1 for 2023.
  + She wasn’t at the last meeting, but understood there was some discussion re automating payment. Looking at a spreadsheet from online, we could simplify it. It is complicated right now.
  + Dealing with etransfers is easier than cheques. Have to figure out how to coordinate that. We do have a VBA email, so we could ask people to etransfer to that and we should get notification about who has paid and require them to put in the message which mailbox it’s for, so we can coordinate that.
  + Notices are going out from my office’s email. There’s got to be a way to do it through the website. Let’s streamline by end of the year. We have about 192 mailboxes but not all being used, some being used by multiple people.
* Discussion:
  + Sheila noted that we don’t have etransfers set up right now because the Treasurer changes every year. If we are thinking about doing that we should set it up for one of our many generic VBA email accounts we have (e.g., Gmail, Hotmail, Coroda).
  1. Lockers (Danielle Young & Darren Williams)
     1. TBD
* No report this meeting due to illness.

1. **Old Business:**
2. **New Business:**
3. **Confirm that next board meeting is the AGM, to be held on Tuesday February 18, 2025, at 5PM in person at the Barrister’s Lounge at the Victoria Law Courts and/or by MS Teams**

* Meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm

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**2024/2025 VBA Board Composition**

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| **Executive** | **2025** |
| Past President | Sofia Green |
| President | Sheila Simpson |
| Vice President | Stephen Lyons |
| Treasurer | Anwar Mujtabah |
| Secretary | Jacquelyn Miller |
| **Portfolios** | **2025** |
| Social Coordinator – Sports | Andrew Kaban, Carly Haynes & Alexander Bjornson |
| Social Coordinator – Events Chair | Danielle Young, Sofia Green & Geneva Houlden |
| Awards Committee | Sofia Green, Darren Williams & Sheila Simpson |
| Donation Committee | Marlisa Martin, Katherine Tochor, Xiaopeng (Leo) Yuan & Selina Wall |
| Education CPD coordinator | Selina Wall, Darren Williams |
| Praecipe Author | Jim Legh & Geneva Houlden |
| Women’s Locker Room | Danielle Young |
| Men’s Locker Room | Darren Williams |
| Court Box Registrar | Marlisa Martin |
| Barrister’s Lounge | Marlisa Martin |
| Court House Liaison (Civil) | Alexander Bjornson |
| Court House Liaison (Criminal) | Clare Jennings K.C. |
| Website & Email Coordinator | Sheila Simpson, Clare Jennings K.C. & Maliki Suppin |
| Member at Large | Jessica Thomson |
| Ex-Officio: UVic Law Dean | Freya Kodar |
| Ex-Officio: LSBC Benchers | James Legh & [currently vacant] |
| Ex-Officio: CBA-BC Liaison | Clare Jennings, K.C. |