

**OFFICIAL  
MINUTES  
STATE BAR OF TEXAS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Friday, April 19, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. CDT**

**The Tremont House  
Tremont Ballroom  
2300 Ship Mechanic St.  
Galveston, TX 77550**

**A. Call to Order at 9:00 a.m. CDT from Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten**

**B. Roll Call from Executive Director Trey Apffel**

***Present:***

Executive Director Trey Apffel\*, Immediate Past Chair of the Board Chad Baruch\*, President-elect Steve Benesh, Cade Browning, Elizabeth Sandoval Cantu, Luis Cavazos, Jason Charbonnet, Craig Cherry, Kelly-Ann Clarke, Jeff Cochran, David Courreges, Kenda Culpepper\*, General Counsel Ross Fischer\*, Immediate Past President Laura Gibson, Bob Goss\*, Pierre Grosdidier\*, August Harris, Britney Harrison, Noelle Hicks, Matthew Hill, Sonya Hoskins\*, Forrest Huddleston, Rakhi Israni\*, Krisi Kastl, Lori Kern, Bill Kroger, Senior Justice Debra Lehrmann\*, Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez\*, TYLA President-elect Hisham Masri, Dwight McDonald, Rudy Metayer, Lawrence Morales, Kimberly Naylor, Rosalind Perez, Chris Pineda, Chris Popov, TYLA President Laura Pratt, Shannon Quadros, TYLA Immediate Past President Michael Ritter, Audie Sciumbato, John Sloan, G. David Smith, Paul Stafford, Alex Stelly, Jr., Nitin Sud, Carlo Taboada, Radha Thiagarajan, President Cindy Tisdale, Robert Tobey, Aaron Tobin, Michael Vasquez, Brandy Wingate Voss\*, Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten, Michael Wynne, Justice Evan Young\*

***Excused Absence:***

Jerry Bullard\*, Tom Crosley, Judge Jesse McClure III\*, Judge Jason Pulliam\*, Dr. Martin Tobey, Stephen Venzor

*\*Nonvoting member*

**C. Invocation by Immediate Past Chair Chad Baruch**

**D. Pledge to the U.S. and Texas Flags by Director Lori Kern**

**E. Remarks from General Public**

Members of the public were given the opportunity to comment during the meeting. One public member, Theresa Hayes, signed up to speak by Zoom and comments were given.

**F. Report from Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten**

**Director August Harris made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. Seconded by Director Krisi Kastl. No discussion; motion carried.**

President Cindy Tisdale presented a Resolution to Melody Poole (League City) and comments were given by Ms. Poole.

Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten presented books that were donated by the Board of Directors to Judge Wayne Mallia and Randy Robinson on behalf of Galveston County Clubhouse. Chair Wooten provided a general report, including board communication efforts.

2024-2025 Chair of the Board election was held electronically using the BoardEffect platform and Paul K. Stafford (Dallas) was voted in to serve as the 2024-2025 Chair of the Board. Chair-elect Stafford gave brief remarks.

**G. Report from Executive Director Trey Apffel**

Executive Director Trey Apffel provided a general report on including the free CLE held the day before the quarterly board meeting, Updates for Solo Practitioners and Small Firms, the upcoming State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting to be held in Dallas at the Hilton Anatole June 20 and 21, and updates on State Bar departments and programs. Executive Director Apffel presented the quarterly Staff Excellence Award to Amanda Engle of the Office of Legal Counsel in Austin.

**H. Report from President Cindy Tisdale**

President Cindy Tisdale provided a general report on travels, meetings and outreach events, and presidential initiatives, including the Taskforce for Responsible AI in the Law, the Vacation Letter Portal, and a new wellbeing initiative, involving BetterHelp.com.

**President Tisdale made the motion to consider and discuss approval of appointment of Caren Lock (Lewisville) as At-Large Director to the Board of Directors, for a three-year term, effective Annual Meeting 2024 and expiring Annual Meeting 2027. Seconded by Director Hisham Masri. No discussion; motion carried.**

Sylvia Borunda Firth provided a report on the Building Planning Special Committee regarding the 1415 Lavaca building.

**Director August Harris made a motion to consider and discuss approval of authorizing State Bar staff to move forward with design and construction planning. Seconded by Director Luis Cavazos. No discussion; motion carried.**

**I. Report from President-elect Steve Benesh**

President-elect Benesh provided a general report on meetings and travels. President-elect Benesh provided updates on behalf of the Budget Committee on the 2024-25 proposed budget and dues increases.

**President-elect Benesh made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the State Bar of Texas 2024-25 proposed budget for presentation to the Supreme Court of Texas. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**President-elect Benesh made a motion to consider and discuss approval of statutory membership fees increase effective fiscal year 2025-2026. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. Discussion ensued by Director Rudy Metayer; motion carried.**

**President-elect Benesh made a motion to consider and discuss approval of a plan to develop a recommendation on the amount, timing, and necessity of a referendum for a second membership fees increase. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**J. Report from Immediate Past President Laura Gibson**

Immediate Past President Gibson provided a report on meetings and travel, and an update on Succession Planning initiative.

**K. Executive Committee**

**Nominations & Elections Subcommittee**

Immediate Past Chair Chad Baruch provided an update on President-elect and District Director elections, and on proposed amendments to State Bar Board Policy Manual and State Bar Rules pertaining to the nominations process for President-elect candidates.

**Immediate Past Chair Baruch made a motion to consider and discuss approval of amendments to the State Bar Board Policy Manual pertaining to the nominations process for President-elect candidates.**

**Coming from a committee, no second is needed. Discussion ensued by Director Alex Stelly, Jr.; motion carried.**

**Immediate Past Chair Baruch made a motion to consider and discuss approval of proposed amendments to the State Bar Rules pertaining to the nominations process for President-elect candidates. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

#### **L. Audit & Finance Committee**

Director Forrest Huddleston provided a report on financial reports and a general review of financial statements.

**Director Huddleston made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the quarterly investment report for the quarter ending February 29, 2024. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**Director Huddleston made a motion to approve a one-year extension of PFM Asset Management's contract for investment management services. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

Liz Meyers, of McConnell Jones, gave a presentation on the State Bar's internal audit reports.

**Director Huddleston made a motion to approve the internal audit reports. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

#### **M. Administration Committee**

Director Dwight McDonald provided a report on 5 proposals from the Court Rules Committee

**Director McDonald made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the Administration Committee's recommendation regarding the Court Rules Committee's proposed amendments to Rule 621a to update its reference to former Article 3773, Vernon's Annotated Revised Civil States of the State of Texas, to the current law under Section 34.001, Civil Practice and Remedies Code. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**Director McDonald made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the Administration Committee's recommendation regarding the Court Rules Committee's proposed amendments to Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure 18.1 regarding when a court of appeals must issue its mandate. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**Director McDonald made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the Administration Committee's recommendation regarding the Court Rules Committee's proposed amendments to Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure 9.4(h) regarding the existing obligation of parties to electronically bookmark an appendix and original proceeding record that is e-filed. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**Director McDonald made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the Administration Committee's recommendation regarding the Court Rules Committee's proposed amendments to Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure 9.4(j) clarifying that the obligation to include electronic bookmarks applies to all briefs and to petitions in original proceedings. Coming from a committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**Director McDonald made a motion to consider and discuss approval of the Administration Committee's recommendation regarding the Court Rules Committee's proposed amendments to Texas Rules of Civil Procedure 194.4 to add a comment stating that a party should not file a document or exhibit but must file a list that describes a document or exhibit that will or may be offered at trial. Coming from a**

**committee, no second is needed. No discussion; motion carried.**

**N. Performance Measures & Strategic Planning Subcommittee**

Director David Courreges provided an update on strategic planning that will begin on July 24, 2024 at the Board of Directors Retreat.

**O. DCAAP Subcommittee**

Director Robert Tobey provided an update on the referendum and communication efforts. Comments were made by Directors Bill Kroger and Matthew Hill.

**P. Client Security Fund Subcommittee**

Director Kimberly Naylor provided a general report. Fiscal year 2023-2024 totals to date are 184 applications reviewed with 105 approved for a total of \$901,758.48.

**Q. Committee on Disciplinary Rules and Referenda**

Lewis Kinard provided a general report on Committee activities and rule proposals.

**R. Affordable Legal Services Subcommittee**

Director G. David Smith provided a general report.

**S. Professional Development Subcommittee**

Director Radha Thiagarajan provided a general report on Texas Bar CLE courses, Texas Bar Books publications, and Law Practice Management.

**T. New Directors Orientation Subcommittee**

Director Elizabeth Sandoval Cantu provided a report on the upcoming New Directors Orientation to be held on June 19 in Dallas.

**U. Insurance/Member Benefits Subcommittee**

Director Audie Sciumbato provided a general report.

**V. Technology Oversight Subcommittee**

Director Bill Kroger provided a general report.

**W.** Chair of the Board Wooten recessed the meeting at 12:14 p.m. for a lunch break and reconvened at 12:57 p.m.

**X. Section Representatives to the Board**

Director Sonya Hoskins reported that section membership is up 1,005 members for a total section membership of 87,800 members. Director Hoskins also reported that Toni Nguyen, of Austin, as Small-sized Section Representative to the Board and Laura Ellis Kugler, of Dallas, as Large-sized Section Representative to the Board will be sworn in at the June Board of Directors meeting.

**Y. Commission for Lawyer Discipline/Chief Disciplinary Counsel**

Judge Monica Gonzalez provided a general report.

**Z. Texas Access to Justice Commission**

Harriet Miers provided a general report and reported that the Access to Justice Gala has raised \$565,000 so far this year.

**AA. Texas Young Lawyers Association**

Texas Young Lawyers Association President Laura Pratt provided a report on meetings, travels, and TYLA projects.

**BB. Supreme Court of Texas Liaison**

Senior Justice Debra Lehrmann provided a general report and reported on the status of rule changes being considered by the Court.

**CC. Court of Criminal Appeals Liaison**

Judge Jesse McClure III had an excused absence, and no report was given.

**DD. Judicial Section Liaison**

Chief Justice Rebeca Martinez provided a general report and reported on the annual Judicial Conference to be held this September in San Antonio.

**EE. Federal Judicial Liaison**

Judge Jason Pulliam had an excused absence, but provided a report that was read by Chair of the Board Wooten. Comments were given by Director Michael Wynne.

**FF. Out of State Liaison**

Director Rakhi Israni provided a general report on dues and mental wellness in other states.

**GG. Report from General Counsel**

General Counsel Ross Fischer discussed personal financial statements due by April 30.

**HH. Report from Chief Legal Counsel**

No report was given by Chief Legal Counsel Chris Ritter during the open session.

1. Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten recessed the open session and reconvened in closed session at 1:50 p.m. as authorized by Texas Government Code Section 551.071 for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel regarding *Boudreaux v. Louisiana State Bar Association*, 86 F.4th 620 (5th Cir. 2023), *Turnbull v. Commission for Lawyer Discipline, et al.* (No. 1:23-cv-00314) (W.D. Tex.), *Washington v. State Bar of Texas et al.* (No. 1:23-cv-00526-RP) (W.D. Tex.), *Yan v. State Bar of Texas et al.* (No 4:23-cv-758) (N.D. Tex.), *Butler v. State Bar of Texas et al.* (No. 4:23-CV-01070) (E.D. Tex.), and legal matters related to 1415 Lavaca; and as authorized by Texas Government Code Section 551.074 to deliberate regarding personnel matter(s).
2. Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten reconvened the open session at 2:00 p.m.
3. During the closed session, only matters relating to consultation with legal counsel regarding *Boudreaux v. Louisiana State Bar Association*, 86 F.4th 620 (5th Cir. 2023), *Turnbull v. Commission for Lawyer Discipline, et al.* (No. 1:23-cv-00314) (W.D. Tex.), *Washington v. State Bar of Texas et al.* (No. 1:23-cv-00526-RP) (W.D. Tex.), *Yan v. State Bar of Texas et al.* (No 4:23-cv-758) (N.D. Tex.), *Butler v. State Bar of Texas et al.* (No. 4:23-CV-01070) (E.D. Tex.), and legal matters related to 1415 Lavaca. No action was taken in closed session.

**II. SBOT Mission Statement**

Director Shannon Quadros led the Board in reciting the mission statement.

**JJ. There being no further business, Chair of the Board Kennon Lily Wooten called for a motion to adjourn. Director Rosalind V.O. Perez made the motion, seconded by Director David Courreges. Meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.**