

CONNECTICUT BAR EXAMINING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING – Conducted via ZOOM
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
JANUARY 27, 2023

The Chair, Hon. Anne C. Dranginis (Ret.), called the public portion of the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. (EDT). Present were Raymond L. Baribeault, Jr., Campbell D. Barrett, Hon. Nina Elgo, Miguel A. Escalera, Jr., Eric M. Gross, Karen L. Karpie, Gail E. McTaggart, David A. Moraghan, Denise Martino Phelan, Timothy P. Pothin, Perry Zinn Rowthorn, Alix Simonetti, Hon. Elliot Solomon (Ret.), Frederic S. Ury, Abby M. Warren, and Matthew Wax-Krell. Present by invitation were: Kathleen B. Harrington, Deputy Director, Attorney Services; Lisa Valko, Director; and Starr Carroll, Program Manager. Kyle Callejas, member of the public, was also in attendance.

The Chair shared information about the upcoming NCBE Annual Bar Admissions Conference, which will be held in Nashville, Tennessee from May 4-7, 2023. Judge Elgo will be attending with staff, and the Chair hopes to attend as well.

Upon motion duly made by the Chair, seconded by Ms. Phelan, it was voted unanimously to accept and record the minutes of the public session of the Regular Meeting of September 30, 2022.

Mr. Wax-Krell presented the financial reports for the First Quarter (July – September 2022) and the Second Quarter (October – December 2022). It was noted that expenses are in line with those reported pre-pandemic for in-person administration of the bar exam, and that interest rates are up in the STIF account.

The current members of the Nominating Subcommittee are Judge Elgo (Chair), Mr. Gross, and Mr. Rowthorn, but additional volunteers are needed. Officers will be elected next year, and the Subcommittee will meet a few times this year to prepare the slate for presentation to the full Committee. Judge Solomon and Mr. Ury volunteered to join the Subcommittee. Email reminders will be sent to all members in case other members would like to volunteer.

The Director provided a report for the upcoming February 2023 bar examination, which will be held on February 21 and 22, 2023. There are currently 179 applications pending, and there are 6 examinees scheduled to receive nonstandard testing accommodations. Additionally, 86% of candidates registered to use their laptops on the written portion of the exam, which is consistent with past exams.

At 10:10 a.m., member Edward J. Gavin arrived.

The Director thereafter presented updates regarding 1- law school admission numbers for the local law schools, 2- information regarding the number of applicants transferring a UBE score for admission to Connecticut who failed the UBE in the jurisdiction in which it was administered, and 3- the online application and applicant portal.

In relation Item #3 above, the Director reported that the new process is going well and that staff is receiving positive feedback from applicants regarding customer service and the functionality of the website and portal. An issue regarding multiple payments has been encountered in a handful of instances, but the issue leading to the multiple payments has been addressed and applicants have been credited for the additional payments by the vendor, who will in turn bill the Committee for reimbursement. The Director explained further that while the online application itself is working well, the format as it currently exists online is not ideal since it was based on the paper version of the application, which does not translate easily to an online-based question and response format. Upon motion duly made by Judge Solomon, seconded by the Chair, it was voted unanimously to authorize the Director to implement improvements and make changes to the online applications that are not substantive in nature.

At 10:23 a.m., member Deborah L. Bradley arrived.

At the last meeting, the Committee requested that staff inquire whether fingerprints and state/federal background checks could be processed by contracting with an approved third-party vendor, thereby alleviating the administrative and IT burdens on staff. The Deputy Director explained that an agreement was reached with the Judicial Branch's Personnel Services office such that staff can request up to five (5) state and federal background checks per year. There would be no expense passed to the Committee, and this would alleviate the administrative and IT burdens on staff since the Personnel Services office is already approved to conduct the searches.

The Deputy Director presented an update on the availability of space to conduct in-person/hybrid formal hearings and meetings. Several options inside and outside of Judicial Branch facilities were considered, and ultimately conference space was located within the Judicial Branch at 90 Washington Street on the Fourth Floor within the administrative offices. Funding was secure to make the space appropriate for hybrid hearings and meetings, and the updates are expected to be installed and completed by or in June 2023. Until then, hearings and meetings will continue to be conducted remotely.

Finally, the Deputy Director advised that the proposed rules changes that were approved at the Committee's last meeting were forwarded to the Rules Committee. Staff appeared at the November 14th and December 12th meetings and made a short presentation to the Rules Committee, which voted unanimously to send the proposed changes to the judges for consideration at their June 2023 annual meeting. The matter had been referred to the CBA for input, and that group reported back no comments from its membership.

The Chair adjourned the public portion of the meeting at 10:39 a.m. (EDT).

Respectfully submitted,

KAREN L. KARPIE
Secretary