

THURSTON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
Board of Directors Board Retreat Minutes
Saturday, November 15, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
hosted by John Kesler at John Kesler's Office

Members Present: Marie Docter, Jerry Gray, Brandon Koenig, Bill Pope, Joe Scuderi, Michael Young, Wayne Graham, Rosemary Fitzgerald, John Kesler III, and Jenna Norden

Members Absent: Melissa Goldmann, Jeffrey Carr

Others Present: Heather Ligtenberg

1. **Call to order** 9:06 a.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes of October 8, 2025, Board Meeting** - Joe moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Brandon. The motion carried without objections.
3. **New Business**
 - 3.1 **Donations (Marie)** – Marie shared that we received zero donation requests for 2026. Heather did not send out the reminder to the agencies that have historically applied. A discussion took place. Heather will send the email reminder in July again with a September 1 deadline and the board will review the donation applications in the fall for 2027 donation requests.
 - 3.2 **Bylaws & Sections (Marie)** – Marie said there are designated sections in the bylaws but there are no guidelines on what the sections should be doing. We should include some guidelines in the bylaws. Heather will send the board the section policy and then the bylaws committee will take a look at it and propose something for the bylaws.
 - 3.3 **Funding Request for Social Event (Brandon)** – Brandon shared that he met with Devon, the Young Lawyer Co-Chair, at their Young Lawyer section lunch to discuss doing a joint event together to try to get more participation. Brandon suggested offering events to law students too. Brandon suggested having some funds to help at this social event. We could have two events per year with \$300 total (\$150 at each event), but we will have to adjust the proposed budget to fund this. A discussion took place. The board liked this idea and will adjust the 2026 budget to include \$300 for two social events.
 - 3.4 **Credit Card Processing through Heritage Bank (Brandon)** - Brandon shared he met with Heritage Bank and discussed having an option to process credit cards at our events through a third-party company called PCI. For non-profit organizations they don't charge for transactions. They normally charge \$650 for the credit card machine, but they are willing to give us the machine for free. They do charge the customer a 3.25% fee for business cards and 10 cents plus 2.5% of the transaction on personal cards. That is how they make their money. PCI sent Brandon a compliance form that was created by Visa that needs to be completed in order to proceed. All we need at our events is Wi-Fi to work the credit card machine. Brandon moved to approve getting the credit card machine, seconded by Joe. The motion carried without objections.
4. **Old Business**
 - 4.1 **Update on Attorney General's Office Involvement (Marie)** – There is no update. Marie is still waiting to hear who the representative at the Attorney General's Office will be that will Chair the Land Use section.
 - 4.2 **Update on New Sales Tax from Dept. of Revenue on Live Presentations (Heather)** – Marie said she called attorney Julie Fulks who specializes in tax law and Julie told Marie to move

forward as if we do need to pay the taxes. The board asked Heather to add a statement to the Legal Brief page on the website that says the advertising rate is not inclusive of tax and add a statement on the CLE page on the website that says “transaction fees are not refundable” for credit card payments.

- 4.3 Holiday Lunch Update (Heather) & Choir (Marie) – Heather reminded the board to please sign up for the lunch if you haven’t yet. We have low RSVPs right now. Marie said we received an email from a choir group soliciting their choir for \$200. Marie said the Capital City Chorus is doing a fundraiser right now to raise money for their trip to sing at Carnegie Hall and they may be interested in singing at the holiday lunch. Marie contacted them and they said they would love to come and put out a hat for donations. They have 16 singers and can be background music while people are eating lunch. A discussion took place. The board said the TCBA can donate \$100 out of the president’s fund. Marie asked Heather to add this to the program and flyer/email. Marie will send Heather a paragraph to include in the flyer/email.
- 4.4 Holiday Donation Update (Heather) – Heather said the Adopt-A-Family program is going well. All of the families have been adopted that we received from the Salvation Army. We let the members know that they can also donate directly to Safeplace if they would like to. Heather finally heard back from Toys for Tots program to explain how their program works. While it is too late for this year we will have the information for next year if we choose to include their program in our options to our members.

5. **Treasurer’s Report** (Brandon) – October 2025 Financial Report – Brandon provided a financial report for October 2025, although the October Balance Sheet was from 2024 instead of 2025, so Heather will fix the Balance Sheet for October 2025, and it will be discussed at the next meeting. Brandon moved to approve the October 2025 Profit & Loss statement, seconded by Marie. The motion carried without objections.

2026 Proposed Budget – Brandon shared that the TCBA is doing well. Brandon shared the 2026 proposed budget. A discussion took place. Any shortfalls in the proposed budget will be covered by funds currently available in the checking account. Brandon moved to approve the 2026 budget as proposed except we want to revise the following line items:

- Add \$500 to Law Day for a total of \$2300, so first place will be \$1000, second place will be \$800, and third place will \$500;
- Add \$300 to the Social Events line item and remove the word BBQ from that line item as it is for all social events;
- Add \$750 to the President’s Discretionary Fund for a total of \$1000.

Bill seconded the motion. The motion carried without objections.

An executive Session took place to discuss budget issues.

6. **Monthly Luncheon Update** (Jerry) – Jerry shared that Mike Morgan is presenting on November 21 on Mediation. Trevor Zandell will be presenting on January 30 on Easements. He has a couple things in the works for the following months of CLEs.

7. **Committee Reports**

- 7.1 Bench/Bar (President) – The next meeting is on November 17, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. The Court had to move the date because of a conflict they had.
- 7.2 CLE (Bill, Brandon, Wayne, Melissa, Jeffrey) – Bill said the half day CLE has been rescheduled to January 12, 2026.
- 7.3 Rules Committee (Marie and Jerry) – Marie said the timeline to submit local rules has been advertised. Judge Egeler sent a note to Marie that said the Judges Association has been receiving complaints that one party’s experts have been attending the deposition of the other

- party's expert witnesses. Judge Egeler wanted to know if this has been occurring locally and if rules should be created to address this problem. The statewide judicial committee on rules is trying to determine if this is a statewide problem or not. Joe said there is no prohibition from attending depositions. Judge Egeler would like feedback. Marie will share the feedback that this is not an issue in Thurston County.
- 7.4 Social Events Committee (Jerry (Chair), Heather, Joe, Jenna, Jeffrey, Wayne, Brandon) – Jerry said the social events committee has been dormant for a while. Marie said she received an email from Washington Association of County Bars and one of the topics in the email was about how to enhance your bar. A survey had been sent out to bar leadership to determine what issues should be addressed at the yearly convention in May. Among the issues was the topic of encouraging membership involvement in bar activities. Once a year they have a meeting in May to discuss the survey. Brandon said he will reach out to Devon Kohr, the Young Lawyer Co-Chair, and let her know we have \$300 for two events in 2026. He will attend the next young lawyer section lunch and plans to include the new law students/rule 9 students. Brandon will send information to Heather to send out to the members. Some other social event ideas the board discussed were Fantasy Football, March Madness, bike ride, spring fun run, escape room, Insert Coin, Well80 Trivia, scavenger hunt in teams (like a bingo card), and a Bunco game night.
D&D Game Night (Mike DeWitt) – Heather will reach out to Mike to ask for the next game night date.
- 7.5 Newsletter & Marketing (Heather) – Heather said the advertisements and articles for the January Legal Brief are due by December 20. Heather will add a statement on the website that says sales tax is not included in the advertising prices.
- 7.6 Judicial Evaluation Survey & Bylaws Committee (Michael, Wayne, Joe, John, Jenna, Chris Meserve) – No report.
- 7.7 Law Library (Michael and Marie) – Michael said the Law Library still has a lot of money in their account and are still trying to decide what to spend it on. – The Law Library Board is looking into setting up an internship with the SPSCC Paralegal program. The paralegals would staff the kiosk and help people find forms. Timberland Library is not allowed to have this at their libraries because they aren't at all libraries.
- 7.8 Law Day Speech Contest (Marie, Melissa, Rosemary, Jeffrey) – Marie said the prize money will be increased to \$2300. She asked for any suggestions for topics this year. Some suggestions were whether to release the Epstein files, redistricting, AI topic, and the use of Chat GPT.
- 7.9 New Courthouse (Marie) – Marie said Judge Skinder said the budget shortfall seems to be working itself out. The initial budget from the County was incorrect and the deficits have dramatically decreased based on corrections. The Clerk's office has cut their hours to 3 hours a day due to budget cuts and there is a hiring freeze. The new courthouse is still the number one priority for the County.
- 7.10 Bigelow House & Community Connections (Marie) – No report.
- 7.11 SPSCC Paralegal Program (Marie) – The Law Library Board is looking into setting up an internship with the SPSCC Paralegal program. The paralegals would staff the kiosk and help people find forms. SPSCC Paralegal Program Director would like to hear any concerns about their program.

8. Section Reports

- 8.1 Family Law (Meredith Gerhart) - We just had our October monthly meeting yesterday. The meeting was somewhat quickly overshadowed by the potential implications of the new proposed budget cuts. It was clear that our judicial officers were genuinely and profoundly concerned about what the proposed budget cuts will mean for us as practitioners, for them as the bench, but most importantly for the members of the public that we serve on a daily basis. During the second part of our meeting, we had a number of our Title 26 GALs present on

some tips and tricks that practitioners can use to improve relations between attorneys and guardians as litem. The general theme of the presentation was "return to civility." We won't be having a November meeting because the second Tuesday of the month falls on Veterans Day, which is a federal holiday. I let the members know that I don't plan on hosting a meeting that day and they shouldn't plan on attending one. Our next meeting will be our December potluck at FJC.

- 8.2 Pro Bono (Jenna Norden) – Jenna said Sound Legal Aid is collaborating with Timberland Library to have lawyers in the library once a month in different locations.
- 8.3 Young Lawyers (Devin Kohr & Peter Lindgren) – There was a Swearing in Ceremony in October.
- 8.4 Criminal Law (Rosemary Fitzgerald & Jenna Norden) – The Family and Juvenile Court will be doing a monthly luncheon in January on Urinary Analysis (UA) with the UA company the drug court uses. The CLE will be on Zoom.
- 8.5 Real Estate, Land Use, and Environmental Law (?) – No report.
- 8.6 Diversity and Inclusion (Susan Pai) – Johanna Martinez is now leading the mentorship program. I am working directly with Thurston County Superior Court (TCSC) Administrator, Kirsten Jensen, regarding hanging an existing but enlarged photograph of all the TCSC judges in prominent locations at both TCSC buildings. This photo will showcase the diversity of the TCSC bench. I met with WA Supreme Court Justice Steven Gonzalez a couple of weeks ago and will be meeting with Chief Justice Debra Stephens in December regarding commissioning a portrait of Justice Mary Fairhurst and hanging it in a prominent location at the Temple of Justice. We are seeking members to volunteer to steer a book club for D&I members or plan CLEs. Marie asked Heather to send the Board the Proposal that Susan sent to Washington Women Lawyers.

9. **Additions to agenda**

- 9.1 Annual Meeting & Dinner – Heather shared that she went and looked at the Heritage Room and said it will be a great location for our annual meeting and dinner in May 2026. It's fun to try a new venue.

10. **Announcements**

- 10.1 Bill thanked John for providing the food and his office for the meeting and thanked everyone for giving up part of their Saturday for this meeting.

- 11. **Date/location of next meeting:** December 10, 2025, hosted by Jenna Norden & John Kesler at John's Office

- 12. **Adjourn** 11:26 a.m.