

VIRGINIA STATE BAR
Bench Bar Relations Committee – Hybrid Meeting
Richmond, Virginia
2:00 pm
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

MINUTES

BBRC Meeting– Hybrid Meeting

- **Roll Call and Welcome**

Committee Vice Chair, Bruce Russell, welcomed those in attendance. Bruce Russell, Vice Chair stood in for the Chair Nupur Bal who was absent due to illness.

In Person

Also present in person: Judge Mary Hall, Anneshia Grant, Emily Russell Bitner, Molly Elizabeth Newton, Staff: Janet Van Cuyk, Deputy Executive Director (liaison), and Sylvia Daniel, Asst.to DED.

Remote attendees: Justice Cleo Powell, Judge Dominique Callins, Kelly Martin, Judge Lawrence Leonard, Michael Phelan, Bob Walker, Chidi James, VSB President, Stephanie Grana, VSB Immediate Past President

Members not Present: Judge Marla Decker, Judge McCallum, Michael Hollingworth, Mike York, President Elect

1. Old business.

- a. Sub-committee Report - Getting Judges Involved (Bruce)

This letter was drafted and discussed at our meeting in January 2024. We sent the letter out to the Committee for any additions or changes. Janet also did an edit of the letter. There were no additions to the letter. Bruce discussed the method of how the letter will be distributed such as distributing it to every Court and every Judge. He stated the Chief Justice will need to review and approve the letter. Justice Powell stated she would be happy to pass the final version on to the Chief Justice. She suggested a few edits at the meeting, in which the Deputy Director modified the letter to her specifications. Bruce invited a motion, a motion was made and seconded; a vote followed and was unanimous.

- b. Promoting Successful Programs

From our meeting in January, we were compiling a list of successful programs and then we would put them on the Bench Bar website for folks to be able to reference. We talked about programming that's referenced in the letter. We will get an update from Nupur at our next meeting.

- c. Writing a Newsletter Article

At our last meeting we invited liaisons from Young Lawyers and the Conference of Local and Specialty Bar Associations. They gave us an update on the activities they had with their committees. They also suggested that this group could possibly draft a letter to go into their newsletters or eblast that they send to their members. The letter would consist of what Bench Bar is doing. Bruce asked if there were any volunteers who would like to take on this action item.

Judge Callins volunteered to write the article and Anneshia Grant also volunteered to assist Judge Callins. They will collaborate and get back to the group at our next meeting. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have the list of the bars that are successful so that we could reach out to them. Janet and Sylvia will provide contact information for various bars.

d. 2024 Coffee with the Judges

(VSB Annual Meeting, June 1, 2024, 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.)

This event was moved up earlier due to the jackalope festival being held at the same time. However, since we changed our date, they had a conflict and have followed us. The jackalope event will be happening at the same time. Justice Powell mentioned for future planning, it would be great if the Bar could move the Annual Meeting back to the original weekend. The new date this year is the weekend before the Court's June Session. Bruce stated we will pass this on to the BAM committee. Unfortunately, Bruce and Nupur will both be out of the Country during this year's Annual Meeting. Stephanie volunteered to host the Coffee with Judges, and hopefully Ed Weiner can also join Stephanie again this year.

2. New Business President-Elect Appointments

a. Rotating Office

- Chair: Nupur Bal rotates off 6/2024 - feedback for new Chair and Vice Chair
- Anneshia Grant term also ends 6/2024

b. Members seeking to be reappointed for new term:

- Judge Decker
- Rob Walker

Bruce decided to discuss this order of business at our next meeting when Nupur returns.

3. Other Business

Future Planning Topic. Bruce asked were there any additional topics that needed to be discussed. The topic of the judicial evaluation survey was mentioned. It was raised that we need to spread the word that attorneys should complete the evaluation surveys that they receive. The General Assembly does use these surveys and Justice Powell stressed the importance of completing this survey. The Chair asked if it would be useful to have a small subcommittee to take a look at it as it pertains to our committee and perhaps report on it at our next meeting. Janet advised the group of having a subcommittee vs having two people working on this due to FOIA regulations. The Chair stated that the members can think about this topic on their own. And then suggest to the BAM committee that they would like to have a topic such as this on the Agenda at a future Annual Meeting. Justice Powell stated there is a model for this with a panel of legislators, committee members and judges that typically speaks at the Judicial Conference.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair invited a motion to adjourn. A motion was made and seconded; a vote followed and was unanimous.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at 2 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned 2:33 p.m.

DRAFT