



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
Alberta Branch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

MINUTES

March 10, 2021 12:00 pm

Via Videoconference

In attendance:

Adebanke E. Adediran	David Hiebert	Sandra Meyer
Susannah S. Alleyne	Hannah Hunter-Loubert	Adam Norget
Maureen Armitage	Kene Ilochonwu	Leanna Elisabeth Dejneka Olson
Jordan Birenbaum	Heather J. Innes	Randall Osgood
Lucille R. Birkett, Q.C.	Michelle Karasinski	Lindsay Arthur Parcells
C. Rebecca Brown	Anita Klapwyk	Sandra Petersson
Chelsy Castro	Tracy Knight	Justice Johanna C. Price
Loraine C. Champion	Benjamin Kormos	Will Scott Randall II
Manroop Chatha	Bianca Kratt	Aizlynn Regan
C. Yvonne Chenier, Q.C.	James L. Lebo, Q.C.	Bradley D. Regehr
Tiro Clarke	Amanda M. Lindberg	Rupak Sarma
Cory Dawson	Sierra Jean Lopetinski	Lisa Semenchuk
Olufunke Fasunon	Lindsey Louro	Kimberly Shenton
Chandra L. Flett	Maria Mach	Erik Thompson
Frank Friesacher	Indra Maharaj	Jim Thompson
Jillian Gamez	Justice Ola Malik	Sylvie L. Vigneux
Mark T. Graham	Elaine Manor	Catherine M. Wall
Stacey E. Grubb	Natalie McGrath	Stephanie Wanke
Dr. Joanna Harrington	M. Jenny McMordie, Q.C.	Yvonne M. Williamson
Robert G. Harvie, Q.C.	Beverley P. Mendoza	Nerissa Young
Lee-Anne Hateley	Aldo Argento	

1. Welcome

CBA Alberta President David Hiebert

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved: Amanda Lindberg

Seconded: Robert G. Harvie, Q.C.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes of February 5, 2020 AGM

Moved: M. Jenny McMordie, Q.C.

Seconded: Tiro Clarke

Motion carried.

4. Introductions

CBA Alberta President David Hiebert

a. Board and Executive Committee

- David Hiebert (President), Bianca Kratt (Vice President), Amanda M. Lindberg (Treasurer), Indra Maharaj (Secretary), Frank Friesacher (Past President), Aldo Argento, Sarah Coderre, Jillian Gamez, Professor Jassmine Girgis, Robert G. Harvie, Q.C., Patrick Heinsen, Michelle Karasinski and Adam Norget (Directors)

b. Special Guests

- CBA Alberta Past Presidents: Lucille R. Birkett, Q.C., James L. Lebo, Q.C. (also Vice Chair, CBIA Board of Directors), Justice Ola Malik, M. Jenny McMordie, Q.C.
- Other guests: Loraine Champion (Executive Director, Alberta Lawyers' Assistance Society), Chandra L. Flett (CBA National Board Member), Justice Johanna C. Price (former CBA Alberta Secretary, Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta), Bradley Regehr (President, CBA National Board of Directors) Jim Thompson (Lawyers Financial Alberta representative)

i. Greetings from CBA National President Bradley Regehr

- Brad brings greetings on behalf of CBA National and acknowledges Chandra Flett, CBA National Board member from Alberta.
- When COVID-19 hit, the primary focus of the CBA was the members – determining what tools and information they needed, and how to provide this in the most effective way possible.
- CBA National created a COVID resource hub (<https://www.cba.org/Membership/COVID-19>), which is regularly updated with news and resources from the courts and the justice system.
- After the cancellation of many in-person conferences, the national Immigration Law Section held the first virtual conference last spring, with two other virtual symposiums taking place last fall. This spring, all Section conferences will be held online.
- Thanks to the staff and volunteers at all offices for providing COVID-specific programming, particularly early in the pandemic, and for the creativity in finding solutions to the challenges of the pandemic.
- The pandemic had the benefit of kick-starting the modernization of the justice system in Canada, for which the CBA has long advocated.
- In April 2020, CBA struck a national taskforce which brought together members and stakeholders in the justice system to look at the changes made in response to the pandemic. Thank you to Alberta member Patricia Hebert for appearing before the taskforce to talk about access to justice.
- The taskforce released their report at the CBA national AGM in February, titled "No Turning Back" (available online at www.cba.org/NoTurningBack).
- The report makes 18 recommendations, including making remote proceedings permanent especially for uncontested, shorter and less complicated matters (which has been addressed in the recent Bill C-23), the importance of safeguarding personal information and sensitive data in a digital setting, and the need for triage and exploring the best ways to handle certain matters.
- The report has already been presented at the joint Supreme Court/Department of Justice action committee on court operations, and requests for future presentations have been made by the chief judges and justice of Canada and the Canadian Council of Administrative Tribunals.
- Nationally, the CBA ended 2020 with a surplus due to lack of travel and took advantage of the federal employment relief programs.
- The budget for the current fiscal year anticipated a 20% reduction in membership and revenue due to COVID-19, but national membership numbers

are up over last year, showing the CBA value to members in bad times as well as good.

- 2020 also brought a global reckoning on anti-racism and discrimination, which Brad has been very outspoken on.
- Incidents of systemic racism and police violence against Indigenous and racialized Canadians are still occurring, and Brad intends to continue conversations about the problems these communities have with the justice system. Without these conversations, we will not be able to move on from the past into a more equitable future and continue the work of Reconciliation.
- One of Brad's key priorities is advancing the CBA's response to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- Work that the CBA has already done on the Calls to Action includes The Path: Your journey through Indigenous Canada professional development program, the podcast on trauma-informed lawyering, and a forthcoming toolkit for firms wanting to engage in reconciliation. Brad also speaks with Indigenous guests on the Calls to Action related to the legal profession in his podcast series "Conversations with the President", and episodes of other CBA podcasts also look at the topic of reconciliation.
- Diversity is an ongoing priority for the CBA, as is having a judiciary reflecting the people that it serves. National wrote a letter to the Justice Minister about this point and have since met with Minister David Lametti's office to discuss appointing more Black, Indigenous, and other racialized judges to the federal bench. Brad has also recently met with national affinity organizations where this topic was front and centre.
- In February, the Prime Minister announced appointments to the independent advisory board which will recommend a list of replacements for Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella who is retiring this year. The CBA nominee to the advisory board is OBA board member Signa Daum Shanks, who is a Métis lawyer from Saskatchewan and professor at Osgoode Hall Law School.
- Another priority for this year is promoting outreach to young lawyers and law students. Brad is expecting to do a session on March 22 with young lawyers from the Quebec Branch where he will discuss about the CBA's TRC work and Indigenous legal issues. This session is open to all young lawyers across the country.
- In February, the new CBA national CEO Simon Coakley began. Brad thanks CBA Alberta Executive Director Maureen Armitage for her valuable participation in the CEO search.

5. President's Report 2019-20

CBA Alberta President David Hiebert

- Despite the pandemic, the legal profession has a lot to be thankful for, including technological advances in justice system, and the opportunity to meet with many other branches virtually during this time.
- David extends his sincere thanks to CBA Alberta volunteers and Section leadership.
- CBA Alberta has been engaging with other stakeholders in the legal profession over the past year, particularly on the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic.
- We undertook a research project to support CBA Alberta advocacy efforts, first a public opinion poll on support for justice initiatives, then an economic analysis on the return on

investment generated by investing in the justice system. This research has shown us that Albertans want the government to invest in the justice system, and that it makes economic sense to do so, and will be used to inform our spring 2021 advocacy campaign.

- This work has also been supported by the Agenda for Justice Committee, chaired by past president Jenny McMordie, Q.C. This committee also maintains the backgrounds that speak to the need for support of the justice system.
- The 2020 Access to Justice Week had to shift to a fully virtual event, but the Access to Justice Committee, co-chaired by Deborah Book and Jeff Surtees used the platform to promote access to justice work taking place across the province.
- In 2020, the board created the Lawyer Advocacy Committee, co-chair by Adam Norget and Jassmine Girgis, to more specifically address issues of importance to our members directly related to the practice of law. The committee conducted a survey of members last fall and is currently developing an action plan for this spring.
- David acknowledges those Sections that have been actively contributing to our advocacy efforts over the past year.
- The Automobile Insurance Review working group, which provided input to the government during the auto insurance review consultation process.
- The work of the Legislation & Law Reform Committees, chaired by Omolara Oladipo (north) and Bernard Roth (south), is currently ongoing. These committees review and comment on all the bills that are put before the legislature.
- In the past year, the board has put additional effort into engaging with CBA Alberta members on their needs, wants and priorities not only during the pandemic but moving forward as well. To this end, the CBA Albert used a new tool called ThoughtExchange, which is a tool that allows for online, crowdsourcing, focus group-type feedback, and allows participants to engage with the feedback of others. David encourages all members to participate in ThoughtExchange feedback if they have the opportunity, as member feedback is very important to the work of the association.
- Last spring, the CBA Alberta began roundtable discussion groups with law firm leadership from large and mid-size CBA partner firms. This was an opportunity for law firm leaders to connect, and for the CBA Alberta to learn about how we can help.
- Law Matters transitioned from print to a digital publication (www.nationalmagazine.ca/LawMatters), which now gives us the opportunity to deliver content and engage with members in a timely manner. David extends his thanks to the Editorial Committee co-chairs Jessica Robertshaw and Angela Saccomani, Q.C. for their work on this project.
- The board created a mentor task force led by Michelle Karasinski, and new mentor programming will be coming this fall.
- The 2020 Leadership Forum webinar series was held throughout the fall, which focused on the opportunities to rethink the way we do things as a result of the events of 2020, and included a well-received panel discussion on equality, diversity and anti-racism in the legal profession, organized by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which is chaired by Lulu Tinarwo and Sania Chaudhry.
- The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee is also planning a series of webinars for later this spring, and more information will be forthcoming to members soon.
- In spring 2020, CBA Alberta launched Communities as a pilot project, a virtual networking platform for members. The project is currently in phase two with select users, and we are now ready to invite more members to engage in the platform.

- CBA Communities can be accessed on the CBA Alberta homepage at the top of the page using your CBA member login credentials.
- The platform was originally piloted by the south Wills and Estates and south Young Lawyers Sections, and while Communities does have forums for many Sections, it is open to all CBA members to participate in.
- David invites all members to join Communities and participate in discussions.
- The 2021 Distinguished Service Awards, jointly presented with the Law Society of Alberta, had to be delivered virtually. The 2021 award winners are Susan Billington, Q.C. (service to the profession), Cyril Gurevitch, Q.C. (service to the community), Steven Penney (service to legal scholarship), and Jean Munn, Q.C. (pro bono legal service). A recap of the event can be watch online here: https://youtu.be/I_Ijp5XIXew.
- CBA Alberta board elections will begin in April. Four board positions are open, including south director (outside Calgary), north young lawyer, and two director-at-large positions. The secretary position is also open, and this year the candidates must reside in north Alberta. Nominations will be open from April 1 – 26, and more information is available on the CBA Alberta website at www.cba-alberta.org/Elections.

6. Treasurer's Report

CBA Alberta Vice President Bianca Kratt

- Presentation of 2019-20 Financial Statements
 - The full audited statements are available: https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=ab_ab21agm01o at the “Agenda and Supporting Docs” tab.
 - The auditors provided a clean audit report, noting no deficiencies. There were no changes in accounting policies or material differences in significant management estimates for doubtful accounts, legal contingencies, amortization, or impairment assessments.
 - CBA Alberta ended the 2019-20 fiscal year with \$3,176,755 in net assets and \$944,000 in restricted funds, representing 6 months operating budget in case of business closure.
 - Revenue for the 2019-20 fiscal year was \$2,119,577 and expenses were \$1,761,689 resulting in a net surplus of \$303,240.
 - The impact of the pandemic on revenue was largely alleviated as most membership revenues are collected at the beginning of the year (September – November).
 - Section revenue was down because of the pandemic as all Section meetings were made available to CBA Alberta members for no charge from mid-March through June. As meetings moved online, expenses also decreased.
 - Online advertising dropped because of the pandemic.
 - Newsletter advertising also decreased as Law Matters was transitioned online.
 - All told, there was a 3% decrease in revenue that was met by a 7% decrease in expenses, largely in personnel and administrative expenses as travel and office expenses were reduced due to the pandemic.
 - Special projects that incurred expenses included the launch of CBA Communities, the advocacy research project, contribution toward national membership programming including membership automation and additional member intelligence research, expansion of the mentor program, and sponsorship of the Youth Leaders in Law Conferences through the EDI Committee.
 - Members should note that section expenses shown are direct expenses only for Section meetings, Section executive meetings and travel, and do not include the overhead

expenses including office rent, staff, and webcasting equipment, which are included in administrative and personnel expenses.

- The CBA Alberta approach is to be prudent with expense and to watch changes in revenue carefully. This approach led to a more favourable year than originally projected.
- It will also guide the board as it considers the changes necessary to assist members to adjust new realities post-pandemic and as the board plans to use reserves to enhance member value going forward.

b. Approval of 2020-21 Auditor

Moved: Bianca Kratt

Seconded: Indra Maharaj

Motion carried.

7. Presentation by Chelsy Castro

Balancing on the SeeSaw: Skills for Succeeding as a Lawyer While Being Human

See presentation online here: https://www.cbapd.org/details_en.aspx?id=ab_ab21agm02o

8. Adjournment – 1:51 PM

Moved: Frank Friesacher

Seconded: Chandra Flett

Motion carried.