

**MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
OF THE  
STATE BAR OF ARIZONA**

**October 17, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Samuel J. Saks, President, Tempe; Doreen N. McPaul, President-Elect, Gilbert; Kelsi Lane, Vice President, Tempe; David J. Johns, Flagstaff; Amy P. Hernandez, Tucson; Cedric Dave, Public Member, Chandler; Cortez W. Smith, Public Member, Casa Grande; Heather Baker-Mushkatel, Sun City; Justice Kathryn King, Supreme Court Liaison, Phoenix; David B. Rosenbaum, Phoenix; Mignonne Hollis, Public Member, Sierra Vista; Russell Duerksen, Chino Valley; Louis S. Fidel, Tucson; J. Damon Ashcraft, Phoenix; Rebecca Baker, Phoenix; Preston L. Pollock, Globe; Thomas Ryan, Chandler; Chloé R. Woods, Phoenix; Jena Decker-Xu, Phoenix; Jimmie Dee Smith, Yuma; Robert J. McWhirter, Phoenix; Rachel Romaniuk, YLD President, Chandler; David K. Byers, At-Large Member, Scottsdale; Denis M. Fitzgibbons, Casa Grande; D. Christopher Russell, Secretary-Treasurer, Sierra Vista; Ted Schmidt, Tucson; Interim Dean Jason Kreag, Ex-Officio Member, UofA.

BOARD MEMBERS WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES: John W. Graham, Scottsdale; Jack Lunsford, Phoenix; Dean Stacy Leeds, Ex-Officio Member, ASU.

STAFF: Joel England, Chief Executive Officer; Jessica Iennarella, Chief Financial Officer; Trish McCarty, HR Director; Maret Vessella, Chief Bar Counsel; Amy Rehm, Deputy Chief Bar Counsel; Noah Coakley, Chief of Staff & Director of Community Impact; Genna Barela, Manager of Board Operations; Deanna Commack, Executive Assistant; Maggie Duran, Legal Administrative Assistant; Chris Wyatt, IT Support Specialist; Richard Palmatier Jr., Assistant General Counsel; Patricia Seguin, Legal Services Manager; Lori Maxwell, Chief Information Officer.

GUESTS: None.

**1. Call to Order**

President Saks called the meeting to order at 8:59 a.m.

**2. Call to the Public**

President Saks made a Call to the Public and hearing nothing, moved on to the next item on the agenda.

**3. CEO's Report**

Joel England informed the Board that budgets will be finalized to be presented in December. The organization is working on several board priorities, many of which came from the retreat. We are assembling a Young Lawyer Bridge Task Force to look into ways to improve transition from law student to practice ready lawyer. We are establishing a lawyer referral working to explore ways to improve the lawyer referral process and better address legal desert areas. We are putting together a group to consider how to improve our relationship with the legislature. The Board of Legal Specialization (BLS) will improve its application process and marketing efforts. There is an upcoming Rule of Law Day event on February 12, 2026. Joel will conduct two interviews for the General Counsel position and will have a decision as to who to make an offer to the following Monday. Joel will continue to have check-in meetings with Board members.

#### 4. Rules Review Committee

David Johns presented.

- a) Proposed New Civil Jury Instruction – Adult Protective Services Act  
There is currently not a set of civil jury instructions for Adult Protective Services Act cases.

**MOTION** to approve Proposed New Civil Jury Instructions for Adult Protectives Services Act cases made by Cedric Dave  
Seconded by Thomas Ryan  
Motion carried unanimously.

- b) Proposed Petition to Amend Rule 32(a)(2), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.  
**Based on Past President Ted Shmidt’s formed Rule of Law Task Force. The Task Force recommended a simple modification to the State Bar’s mission statement to add the phrase “promoting confidence in the rule of law.”**

**MOTION** to approve Proposed Petition to Amend Rule 32(a)(2), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. made by Ted Schmidt  
Seconded by Rachel Romaniuk.  
Motion carried unanimously.

#### 5. Consent Agenda

President Saks asked if there were any matters that needed to be removed from the Consent Agenda and hearing nothing.

**MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda made by Denis Fitzgibbons  
Seconded by Bob McWhirter  
Motion carried unanimously.

- a) Approval of September 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
- b) Approval of Resignations in Good Standing  
Approval of Reinstatement of Member(s) suspended for Non-Compliance with Annual Membership Fees and/or Trust Account Compliance (Rule 32(c)(10) and/or Rule 43, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.)
- d) Approval of Reinstatement of Member(s) suspended for Non-Compliance and MCLE Requirements (Rule 45, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.)
- e) Workers’ Compensation Section – Bylaws Revision
- f) Family Law Executive Council/Section –  
Bylaws Revision
- g) Proposed Comment to R-24-0035, Petition to Amend Rules 91(m) and 91.1(c), Ariz. R. Fam. L. P.

#### 6. Appointments Committee

- a) BOG Process Update  
Kelsi Lane provided an overview of the Appointment Committee’s process for appointments.
- b) Arizona Supreme Court Committee on Character and Fitness

**MOTION** to approve the nomination of the following public members in ranked order, to the vacancy on the Committee on Character and Fitness to the Arizona Supreme Court to replace Joya J. Dunbar made by Mingonne Hollis.

1. Sybil Taylor Atch, Phoenix College;
2. Hannah Mosley, Phoenix VA Hospital

Seconded by Rebecca Baker

Motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION** to approve the nomination of the following attorney members in ranked order, to the vacancies on the Committee on Character and Fitness to the Arizona Supreme Court to replace Amy L. Foster, and Jennifer S. Rock made by Damon Ashcraft.

1. (Monte) Craig Murdy, Rader Mayrose, LLP;
2. Erika Morgan Weiler, Schutt Law, PLC;
3. Gregory Larson, Larson & Simpson PLC

Seconded by Bob McWhirter

Motion carried unanimously.

- c) Arizona Supreme Court Committee on Examinations

The application deadline is November 14th. Kelsi Lane requested assistance in the recruitment for attorney positions. The Board discussed the type of candidate the Committee is seeking.

- d) City of Peoria Judicial and Public Defender Advisory Board

There was one applicant for the Peoria resident vacancy. However, the applicant is a non-Peoria attorney resident.

**MOTION** to reaffirm the nomination of Yvette Ashworth from May 2025 to one of the vacancies to Peoria's City Council for its ultimate selection made by Chris Russell.

Seconded by Tom Ryan

Motion carried unanimously.

- e) City of Tempe Judicial Advisory Board

There was a large pool of candidates. There is a ranked list to fill one expired term.

**MOTION** to approve the nominations of the following ranked slate to the Tempe City Council to replace the unexpired term of Hon. (ret.) James J. (Jim) Sampanes (due to resignation) made by Tom Ryan

1. Edith Rudder, CHDB Law, LLP;
2. Shannon Burns, Office of Public Advocate;
3. Gregory Larson, Larson & Simpson, PLC;
4. Esteban Escobedo, Law Offices of Esteban Escobedo

Seconded by Rachel Romaniuk

Motion carried unanimously.

- f) Board of Legal Specialization – Board

There are three vacant public member positions on the Board of Legal Specialization.

**MOTION** to reaffirm the May 2025 nominations of public members Anna Thomasson and Lindsay Norenberg, and to nominate Hannah Mosley as an additional public member, for the three currently open public member positions, with all nominees to be considered unranked, made by Bob McWhirter.

Seconded by Rebecca Baker

Motion carried unanimously.

### **7. 2026 Budget Process Update**

Chris Russell thanked Preston Pollock for his work. Jessica Iennarella gave an update on the draft of the budget for 2026. HRSC and FAC approved the benefits package so open enrollment deadlines can be met. Estimating \$52K surplus, which meets budget memorandum. The final 2026 Operating Budget will be presented to the Board for approval at December's Board meeting, after having been reviewed by the Finance and Audit Committee and the Executive Council.

### **8. Access to Justice Committee Updates**

Noah Coakley gave recognition to the State Bar's Public Service Center, Fee Arbitration Program, Client Protection Fund, and Conservatorship Program for their work. The programs combined helped 4,500 Arizonans. He informed the Board of the Stand-Up event and the phone bank event through ABC. 128 consumers called in. He gave an update on future events, including an event in Wilcox for the State Bar to help people gain access to legal services.

The committee is seeking to identify connectors to empower them to gain access to legal resources. The committee created two sub committees for this. The committee is working on a project called Legal Bridge. The board discussed and made suggestions. The committee is also working on branding and marketing.

### **9. Correspondence/Reports**

#### a) Arizona Bar Foundation Board

Joel England gave an update. Mignonne Hollis, Heather Baker-Mushkatel, and David Rosenbaum's seats are set to expire at the end of the year. Mignonne Hollis and Heather Baker-Mushkatel are interested in serving again. Board members were encouraged to apply for the vacant seat. The board discussed the type of candidate the Arizona Bar Foundation Board is seeking. The vote for all three seats will take place at the board meeting in December.

### **10. ADJOURNED** at 10:14 a.m.