

## **Washington State Chapter of the FBA Monthly Meeting**

### **April 12, 2021 Minutes**

1. **Attendance:** Susan Pitchford presided, convening the WebEx meeting at 12 p.m. and concluding at 12:54 p.m. Also in attendance were Diane Butler, Meliha Jusupovic, Joan Brady, Cynthia Rios, Scott Mannakee, and Darrel Gardner.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Upon motion, the March minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Officer Report:**

- a. President's Report – Susan Pitchford reported that “snail mail” letters have been going out to all federal judges in the Eastern and Western Districts of Washington under her signature. The letters promote topics of interest to the judiciary, such as the FBA's Issues Agenda on funding for the federal courts, new federal judgeships and caseloads. Susan originally planned to send duplicate letters via email, but elected not to do so in order to be sensitive to some judges' privacy concerns, as judicial emails are not published publicly. She has drafted prospective member letters to go out soon – those letters promote upcoming CLEs as an FBA benefit.

Susan received an update from National FBA Membership Director Dominick Alcid confirming that new members will be able to sign up with a 30% discount code that will be “active” by 8/1/21 and allow for marking “AFTER 10/1/2021.” Existing FBA members are not eligible for the discount.

- i. Leadership Training / Midyear (attended by Diane, see full report below)
- ii. Government relations / Capitol Hill Day – May 3-7, 2021. This traditional in-person event will be virtual this year, and will be attended by Darrel Gardner, Diane, and Brenda George. Diane will reach out to see if it would be feasible and beneficial to partner with other Chapters in some of the virtual meetings. Diane also has agreed to serve as the Government Relations Liaison for our chapter moving forward.
- iii. Federal Litigation Section partnership for Civil Rights CLE – this upcoming CLE is being organized by the Cleveland Chapter, which put out a call for other chapters to join. Susan responded affirmatively on behalf of our Chapter. Susan suggested that such partnerships might be a great way for our small chapter to offer additional CLE benefits.

Susan added that she recently noted that Justice Montoya-Lewis was speaking to an OR women lawyers group, and suggested that Justice Montoya-Lewis might be a great future speaker in a joint venture with

another bar association. Others agreed that finding common “partnership” ground with other chapters within the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit might prove useful.

- b. President Elect’s Report – Diane Butler reported on her attendance at the recent Leadership Training, which focused on Board Governance and acting as a unified whole. One takeaway from one of the CLEs was that Diversity and Equity issues are “a movement not a moment.” In terms of membership building and marketing, the training focused on how to use tools like a “monthly focus” to help with professional development. The “lunch with a judge” programs were also discussed as a popular benefit and effective driver of membership.

In other news, Diane is still waiting to hear back on the IRS application. Bank of America had initially stated she would need the IRS letter before establishing an account. However, it is unclear whether that is true, or whether that requirement applies only to organizations that fall under the 501(c)(3) provision of the tax code. Ordinarily, bar associations fall under the 501(c)(6) provision, which has less stringent requirements. Darrel Gardner confirmed this understanding, and conveyed his own past experience on setting up a bank account for a similar organization. Diane will circle back on this issue and report back next month.

Diane has reviewed the requirements for the 990EZ filing due on April 15, 2021 and believes we qualify for the simple version of the form since most amounts are “0” at this time. She graciously offered to submit the form on our chapter’s behalf.

- c. Secretary’s Report – Joan Brady reached out to a couple of law clerks in the Western District and was able to speak directly with Beth Adomitis, another career law clerk. Beth advised that the WDWA is the most “critical” of all “judicial emergency” districts nationally due to the number of vacancies. As a result, judges and their law clerk staffs are completely swamped, particularly around National reporting deadlines (3/31 and 9/30). Beth advised she could help spread the word about the FBA but only after the March deadline. Joan will reach out again in April.
- d. Treasurer - Meliha Jusupovic reported she is happy to help in any way possible with other needs of the Chapter, including with membership growth. She worked as a paralegal prior to becoming a Seatac-based maritime lawyer. Her current Treasurer responsibilities are minimal until such time as (1) our Chapter establishes a bank account (possibly contingent on IRS letter, TBD);

and (2) our Chapter receives funds from National (contingent on existence of bank account).

4. **Liaisons:**

- a. WD Representative (none yet selected)
- b. ED Representative (none yet selected)
- c. Tribal Liaison – Cynthia Cartwright (no report, unable to attend)
- d. Diversity & Inclusion Liaison and Affinity Bar Liaison Report – Cynthia Rios reported that she is still waiting National’s response/approval for the preamble, survey, and writing contest details.  
Regarding membership, Cynthia noted that we do not have a Nationally sanctioned “logo” for our chapter, and will contact National to see if they can assist with that. Otherwise, Susan has been using a simple version that she will share. Cynthia reached out to the WDWA District Court Executive/Clerk of Court William M. McCool to see if she can obtain their cm/ecf list of practicing attorneys. She plans to make the same request with the EDWA Clerk. She also has a call set up with 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit VP Laura Conover on April 15, 2021 to discuss membership issues. Darrel Gardner will join that call.
- e. New Lawyers Liaison - Brenda George (no report, unable to attend)

5. **Committees and Projects:**

- a. Programming (no report)
- b. Membership (see above)
  - i. Communications - Greg McLawsen was unable to attend, Susan has reached out and will report back in May.

6. **New Business:**

- a. Next Meeting – May 10, 2021 WebEx at noon
- b. Other