

Washington State Chapter of the FBA Monthly Meeting

March 8, 2021 Minutes

1. Attendance:

Susan Pitchford presided, convening the WebEx meeting at 12 p.m. and concluding at 12:50 p.m. Also in attendance were Diane Butler, Joan Brady, Cynthia Rios, Scott Mannakee, Brenda George, and Cynthia Cartwright.

2. Approval of Minutes: Brenda moved to adopt the February minutes and Cynthia C. seconded; minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Officer Report:

a. President's Report – Susan Pitchford

Susan reported on membership dues discussions with National. She was able to speak with National Membership Director Dominic Alcid, who authorized a 30% discount for any new FBA member who chooses to join our chapter on August 15, 2021 or later. The logistics of the discount will be provided through a code that can be entered electronically on the FBA website at that time, and will apply to the October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022 dues year. This was welcome news as it exceeded the 20% discount our Board had agreed to pursue.

Unfortunately, Dominic did not have authority to grant a discount for existing FBA members, such as the approximately 40+ who are currently assigned to the WA Chapter, or existing FBA members of other chapters who agree to transfer to our newly formed State chapter. A discount for existing members must be approved by the National Board. Dominic is sending paperwork and Susan will then submit a formal request to the National Board for the additional discount. Susan is hopeful this will be on the April agenda of the National Board, and is reaching out to Board members she knows to alert them of the request. During Susan's prior tenure with the OR chapter, they made a similar request for a discount from National but the OR chapter was not a brand new chapter and the request was denied.

Diane Butler inquired about how best to invite new members to join, since the discount will not be put into place until August 15. Susan suggested that we invite prospective new members to reach out to someone on our Board. That person can invite the prospective members to join our calls and any events as "guests" at this point in time, without formally joining the national FBA until August 15. The consensus was that this would be a good way to engage prospective members.

Susan has finalized formal invitation letters to go to the Western District of WA judges. A similar letter is nearly ready for distribution to the Eastern District of WA judges; however, the Eastern District is less user-friendly in its lists of judicial officers so Diane (and her staff) want to double-check to make sure that they have included all eligible judges without inadvertently omitting anyone.

Diane inquired whether the judicial letter will be modified for judges who are existing members of the FBA, such as Judge Tollman. Susan agreed that this is an important distinction to attend to, and will follow-up by cross-referencing existing judicial FBA members.

- b. President-Elect Report – Diane Butler has continued to work on obtaining the IRS non-profit letter for 501(c)(6) status, and will also look into what is required to file a 990 tax return for our entity. The bank wants the IRS letter in hand as well as our bylaws in order to open an entity account.

Diane further reported on membership and marketing ideas from both the National FBA and other organizations with which she is involved. For example, the FBA suggested 30-second videos wherein a member might talk about the benefits of the FBA to him/her before tossing an “FBA stress ball” out of the video frame and appearing to enter the video frame of the next member. Diane also discussed a creative idea from another organization wherein virtual video “banquet tables” (typically happy hour/social format) would allow participants to “take a virtual seat” at any table with an open seat, allowing folks to “mingle” in the virtual world by “moving” from table to table.

- c. Secretary’s Report – Joan Brady reported on a conversation with Carl Gilmore, a Seattle-based but now mostly-retired attorney who sat on the FBA Foundation Board for 12 years. Carl was not able to provide current contacts, but provided additional historical reference regarding past attempts at establishing a WA chapter. Joan also referenced a Jackson Lewis contact that Past National President Hon. Michael Newman provided that she will pass along to the Board. Joan will reach out to Seattle-based career law clerks in the near future in hopes of gaining greater insight into the best approaches to growing our membership, and hopefully convincing a few of her fellow clerks to join.
- d. Treasurer - Meliha Jusupovic - No report. Diane will reach out to make sure that our monthly meeting time/date is not an obstacle since she hasn’t yet been able to attend.

4. **Liaisons:**

- a. WD Representative – no report

- b. ED Representative – no report
- c. Tribal Liaison – Brenda and Cynthia Cartwright plan to work together to get a letter sent out to the NW Tribal Ct. Judges Association, and other tribal law organizations. Brenda and Cynthia both spoke about timing the letter to coincide with the upcoming Indian Law conference in April. Brenda identified as a potential challenge the fact that the Indian Law conference is the sole “National” event, albeit a very good one. A brief discussion was held concerning the importance of tribal representatives to help ensure that our WA chapter reflects their interests beyond the National annual conference.

Diane noted that - assuming the first Native American Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, is confirmed - that may be an opportune time to use LinkedIn to congratulate her and simultaneously point out that we are the first FBA Chapter to have a Tribal Liaison serving on our FBA Chapter Board.

- d. Diversity & Inclusion Liaison’s Report – Cynthia Rios reported that they are awaiting final approval from National for the survey, preamble and essay materials for the Hon. Constance Baker Motley Diversity, Equity and Inclusion competition. Cynthia R. also reported on her recent follow-up conversation with Darrel J. Gardner, who serves as one of our 9th Circuit VPs. Darrel declined to take on the Membership Chair role for our Chapter, but had several good ideas on how best to obtain mail/email lists, including through the Clerk of Court’s list. Cynthia R. will continue to follow up on that idea and on utilizing the WSBA membership list.
 - i. Affinity Bar Liaison appointment – National has asked each Chapter President to appoint a Liaison. After discussing with Susan, Cynthia R. agreed to serve in this role also.
- e. New Lawyers Liaison - Brenda George’s first attempts to contact law students met with a few scheduling hurdles, but she plans to follow-up to try to get mutually agreeable dates on the calendar. Susan suggested that in order to reach out to “younger lawyers” without re-inventing the wheel, she may want to contact the National New Lawyers division. Susan will provide that contact info for Brenda to follow-up.

5. Committees and Projects: no reports other than as stated above.

- a. Programming
- b. Membership
- c. Communications - Greg McLawsen was unable to attend the meeting but reported that he continues to work to establish a Listserve.

6. **New Business:**

- a. Leadership Training / Midyear - <https://www.fedbar.org/event/summit21/> - register by March 10. Susan strongly encouraged all to attend this free training if possible. Traditionally, in -person meetings have restrictions on how many folks can attend, typically allowing 2 delegates per chapter with limited reimbursement of travel expenses. The training is excellent and the virtual format allows anyone interested to attend.

- b. Next Meeting – **April 12, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. by Webex**