

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

Board Members attending: *In person:* Amie Clifford, Karen Huelson, Mary LaFave, Leah Montgomery, Nancy Olah, Jasmine Smith, Richele Taylor, and Sheila Willis; *via phone:* Allyce Bailey, Emily Boatwright, Austin Bruner, Bhumi Patel, Margie Pizzaro, Johanna Valenzuela, and Ayesha Washington.

Board Members absent, excused: Ashley Cuttino, Jackie Edgerton, and Laura Paton.

Board Members absent, unexcused: N/A

Others in Attendance: *In person:* Mikki Lindler and Gale DuBose; *via phone:* Ashley Parr and Barbara Seymour

I. Call to Order

President Amie Clifford called the meeting to order at approximately 12:06 p.m. Everyone in attendance briefly introduced herself.

II. Consent Agenda

Nancy noted that the Governance Committee had modified the Committee Report form and Region Report form and distributed them to all. The new forms were designed to be easier to complete and understand. All Committee Chairs, Subcommittee Chairs, and Region Representatives were encouraged to submit reports in a timely fashion in advance of Board meetings so that all reports requiring no action or special recognition can be included on the Consent Agenda. The deadline for reports will be moved to a week before the Board meetings so that the meeting materials can be distributed earlier to Board members.

Included on the Consent Agenda for this meeting were reports from the following Committees, Subcommittees, and Regions:

- Awards Committee (*Sheila Willis, Chair*),
- Conference Planning Committee (*Johanna Valenzuela & Stephanie Nye, Co-Chairs*),
- Governance Committee (*Nancy Olah, Chair*),
- Membership Committee (*Jessica Gooding, Chair*),
- Membership - Military Subcommittee (*Kathy Smith, Chair*),
- SCOTUS Admissions Ceremony (December 16, 2019) – *Amie Clifford*,
- Upstate Region (Greenville) – *Regional Rep. Ashley Parr (Greenville)*,
- Midlands Region – *Regional Rep. Karen Huelson*, and
- Old English Region – *Regional Rep. Nancy Olah*.

After a brief discussion, the minutes from the March 7, 2019 Board meeting were also moved to the Consent Agenda. Ayesha made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mary and was unanimously approved by the Board.

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

III. President's Report – Amie Clifford

Amie discussed the success of the State House Day events, noting that it attracted some new folks (members and non-members) and brought back some of our “older” members who had not participated in SCWLA events in a while. The State House Day CLE program coordinated by Johanna, Stephanie, Karen, Richelle, Amie, and Mikki was very well received. The attendees enjoyed all the presentations and appreciated the opportunity to hear from and talk to the legislators and the Governor. Amie noted Richelle’s hard work on the Governor’s Proclamation for us, and commented on the Governor’s recognition of and respect shown for her during his presentation at the State House Day CLE program. Another highlight of the day was the recognition from the floor of the Senate by Senator Shealy of those members who walked over from the CLE to the State House. Many attendees expressed a desire for SCWLA to continue offering the event in the future.

Amie reported SCWLA had only secured a few sponsors, but that it due to our action and inaction – SCWLA’s mailing was very general, did not reach all on the distribution list, did not mention any of our upcoming events, and there has been no follow-up. She mentioned the need to staff and utilize the Advisory Board to plan for the long-term financial stability of the organization.

Amie noted that there were several people who worked very hard on the State House Day events. She recognized Johanna, Stephanie, Richelle, Karen and Mikki for their work and recognize them all as award-winning “Rock Stars.”

IV. Treasurer's Report – Ashley Cuttino

The current financial reports were discussed, with the expenses for the State House Day events noted. There were questions about the funds for the annual Awards Reception and the Special Projects line item.

V. Executive Director's Report – Mikki Lindler

SCWLA currently has 934 active members, and only active members will now appear in SCWLA’s online directory. When Mikki pulled her administrator’s list, it includes 977 inactive members. Mikki has begun sending personal emails to some of the inactive members and 34 have already responded and re-joined SCWLA. The sustaining membership category has been removed as an option from the membership application page. An active membership push is being planned, with hopes that we will hit 1000 by the end of the year.

Karen said the availability of the online directory to the public made it available for use in marketing. Amie mentioned that there will be additional cost and work to make the directory only open to members. Mary suggested that perhaps we should consider allowing members the option

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

to opt out (so that their information does not appear on the website). Amie indicated that we already have that option, because members can elect to remove contact information and other identifying information and just have their name included as a member. Karen mentioned that someone at one of the Midlands Regions lunches took photos of the sign-in sheets.

VI. Committees

- Bylaws Committee (*Julie Moose, Chair*)

There was no report.

- Long Range Planning Committee (*Ayesha Washington, Chair*)

Ayesha said that the Committee had nothing to report at this time.

- Nominating Committee (*Sheila Willis, Chair*)

There was no report.

- POWER Committee

- Community Outreach Subcommittee (*Allyce Bailey, Chair*)

Allyce reported that no activities had yet occurred, but they were working on future projects. Everyone congratulated Allyce on her pregnancy.

- Professional Development Subcommittee (Online Book Club) (*Margie Pizarro, Chair*)

Margie reported that she was still trying to figure out how the online book club would work. Margie thanked Sheila for her assistance as an advisor (but not a co-chair), and commented that the book club needs more people, because only two members have signed up so far. Margie also asked people to contact her with suggestions, and Mikki indicated that we could highlight the book club in an upcoming newsletter, and ask the regional representatives to encourage members to sign up. Amie also congratulated Margie on her election to the Board of the Charleston County Bar.

- Legal Services Subcommittee (Expungement Clinics) (*Gale Dubose, Chair*)

Gale reported that she had submitted a report, which was included in the materials. She informed the Board members on the planning that has occurred for the expungement CLE programs, and the assistance provided by the Appleseed Legal Justice Center. The Subcommittee has an action item to be taken up when the Board reached its new business. Amie also reported that SCWLA's grant

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

application had been submitted to the South Carolina Bar Foundation. The request was for \$12,250 to cover the \$25 fees for obtaining copies of criminal records, and the expungement fees for up to five (5) clients at each clinic. (The cost is \$310.00 per expungement.)

- Judicial Subcommittee (*Barbara Seymour, Chair*)

Barbara reported that the Subcommittee was still working but had no updates to report.

- Legislative Subcommittee

Amie reported that they are still looking for a Chair for this Subcommittee. She will continue to provide the legislative updates for the newsletter until a Chair is in place.

- Recognitions Subcommittee (*Austin Bruner & Carolyn Matthews, Co-Chairs*)

Austin has received the names of new committee members from Mikki. She asked the Regional Representatives, Board members, and Committee and Subcommittee Chairs to let her know about recognitions and awards received by SCWLA members so that they can be compiled for inclusion in our newsletter. Both she and Amie will reach out to the American Bar Association to try to obtain a list of and details about all the awards the ABA presents.

- Media/Communications Committee (*Rebecca Farmer, Chair*)

Amie reported that Rebecca had just agreed to serve as Chair of the Committee and there was no report at this time.

VII. Regions

Amie informed the Board that Kristin Nichols had agreed to serve as Regional Representative Coordinator.

- Grand Strand Region – *Regional Rep. Bhumi Amit Patel*

Bhumi provided an oral report on the Region.

- Low Country Region – *Regional Rep. Hannah Gallagher*

There was no report.

- Pee Dee Region – *Regional Rep. Susan Firimonte*

There was no report.

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

- Sea Islands Region – *Regional Rep. Emily Boatwright*

Emily reported that she had submitted a report, which was included in the materials, but had an action item to be taken up when the Board discusses new business.

- Upstate Region (Spartanburg) – *Regional Rep. Elizabeth McFarland (Spartanburg)*

There was no report.

VIII. Old Business

- Two Open Board Positions – Election (*Sheila Willis*)

Two open seats on the Board exist because of (1) the resignation of Julie Moose from the Board, and (2) the elevation, by Board vote at the first Board meeting of the year, of Ashley Cuttino to serve the unexpired term of Treasurer (Ayesha Washington having been elevated from that position to that of President-Elect upon the resignation of Mary-Beth Pfister). An announcement was made to the members earlier in April and the following members submitted their name for consideration for election to these seats, which expire at the end of the 2019 calendar year:

- Samantha Albrecht,
- E. Belicia Ayers,
- Amanda N. Bruton,
- Lisa Claxton,
- Jenny Desch,
- Virginia “Ginny” M. Dupont,
- Amber Holt,
- Elizabeth Laffitte Hutton,
- Grant Burnette LeFever,
- Mary E.A. Lucas,
- Mary Beth Pfister,
- Laura W. Robinson, and
- Tasha B. Thompson.

The Board discussed the candidates in terms of their geographic locations, practice areas, SCWLA involvement, and potential strengths. Several Board members expressed their excitement over so many SCWLA members being interested in running for these two open Board seats.

After a brief discussion about the ability of Board members to vote by proxy (with the decision being that votes by proxy were not allowed under the Bylaws for this purpose), votes were submitted by written ballot for those present at the Board meeting and by email by those

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

participating by telephone. Nancy collected the original and run-off votes and reported that Elizabeth Laffitte Hutton and Mary Beth Pfister were elected. Amie will notify them, and Sheila will notify those who were not selected and encourage them to become more involved and consider putting their names up for election in the fall.

- SCWLA Foundation (*Mary LaFave & Sheila Willis*)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

Mary concluded her report by informing the Board that the Foundation has been filing their taxes.

- SCWLA Seal and Logos (*Amie Clifford*)

Amie said at the last meeting she had shared the circular logos with her theme of “Women Lawyers Make A Difference” – two with SCWLA’s logo and one without – and the State House Day logo she had designed and had Apex Graphix finish for SCWLA, but she had failed to ask the Board to approve the use of such. She also shared a Law Day logo she had asked Apex Graphix to create. She asked the Board to approve the use of all these logo designs. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.



SOUTH CAROLINA WOMEN
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Buttons with the different logos had been ordered (in different colors) and were available for purchase. In the quantity purchased, the cost to SCWLA was approximately \$0.50/button. SCWLA would be selling the small buttons for cost to the Regions and Committees if they wished to give them to their members. They would be sold to members and others for \$1.00 (small size) and \$1.50 (large size).

- SCWLA Website (*Mikki Lindler*)

Mikki said that she nothing to add to the earlier discussion about the online directory.

IX. New Business

- Sponsorship/Partnership/Donation Requests
 1. Richland County Bar Association (\$500) – Supreme Court Beautification Project (*Amie Clifford*)

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

The Richland County Bar approached SCWLA about contributing to its Supreme Court Beautification Project, which is a statewide collaboration with the Judicial Department, statewide County Bars, the South Carolina Bar, private attorneys, and others to replace asphalt with permeable concrete pavers, provide additional lighting, and establish shade trees in the parking lot of the Supreme Court to beautify it, improve safety for the Court, reduce stormwater runoff from the parking lot, eliminate pooling of rainwater in the parking lot, and prevent water from entering the basement of the Court. Sheila said that there is no pressure, and the Richland County Bar is soliciting donations because the State has a schedule for addressing building concerns and it is about ten years behind schedule. Amie reported that when the Richland County Bar President Kristen Horne contacted her, she did not initially mention a dollar figure, but when she told Kristen that SCWLA had only allocated \$1,000 for the year for sponsorships, Kristen emailed back and said \$500 will be great. Jasmine asked how the project related to the mission of SCWLA, and everyone agreed that it did not. Amie noted that SCWLA adopted sponsorship guidelines to guide the Board, and that relevancy to or connection to our mission or members is needed. A motion was made that we not sponsor or donate to the project. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

2. Sea Islands (\$400) (*Emily Boatwright*)

Emily requested approval for the Sea Islands Region to use \$400 of its budget to have SCWLA sponsor a table at the May 4th Wild Women's Tea Party, a fundraising and recognition event of the Lowcountry Legal Volunteers. A table for eight is \$400. She said that it will be easy to fill the table with SCWLA members, will show a good presence of female attorneys, and will encourage members to come to the next meeting. She said that it will tie in with the expungement project.

Emily made a motion to sponsor the event. The motion was seconded and approved.

It was noted that the seats should be offered to SCWLA members and, only if none of the members were able to attend, then with potential SCWLA members.

Amie reminded all the Regional Representatives and Committee and Subcommittee Chairs that all sponsorships of or partnerships for purposes of outside events, both those requiring the expenditure of SCWLA funds and those that do not, must be approved by the Board, using the previously mentioned guidelines adopted by the Board.

3. Expungement Clinics (non-monetary) (*Gale DuBose*)

Gale said that her sponsorship request was not a monetary one, but concerned recognizing partners or co-sponsors of the Expungement Clinics we want to hold in all of the Regions. Gale explained that Bridget Brown, with Appleseed Legal Justice Center, has volunteered to do all the training (except for one in Florence, which will be done by a member or members of South Carolina Legal

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

Services (“SCLS”) in its Columbia Office). Bridget and SCLS will also be helping us set up the actual expungement clinics in the fall. In addition, we anticipate working with the South Carolina Bar Pro Bono Program (to ensure we have insurance coverage for our volunteers) and the Solicitors’ Offices (that process expungements) for the clinics. We would like to work with these different entities and identify them as partners or co-sponsors for this project.

Ayesha asked if there will clearly defined roles for the partnerships. Gale said she was anticipating a more informal arrangements to be covered by letters setting out the roles or responsibilities, but that was up to the Board. Ayesha asked if these would be long-term relationships, and Gale replied that it was strictly for the expungement clinic project, but it might lead to future opportunities for collaboration.

Amie said that these partnerships and/or co-sponsorships will help both SCWLA and the other entities. For example, Bridget works on grants at Appleseed and partnering with us on this project will help satisfy the conditions of that grant. Partnering with these other entities will also, hopefully, allow us to obtain the criminal histories of the clients at a reduced cost. She said there really was not a down side. Ayesha agreed they were great partnerships, but just wanted the additional information about the relationships.

Karen said that she agreed with the proposal. She asked about the expungement CLEs – will they be the same in every region, will they have the same course number, and will there be set, standard fee for members and non-members. Gale will be talking to the Regional Representatives, but they plan on the CLE being 1.5 – 2.0 hours, with SCWLA (not the Regions) applying for accreditation one time for the multiple representations. The Midlands Region is planning on making theirs a lunch program, but it is up to each Region to decide how they want to conduct the CLE. The Regional Representatives will be responsible for ensuring the attendees sign in and forwarding the sign-in sheets and evaluations to Mikki to retain (as per CLE Commission requirements).

Mary said that the Membership Committee has not been able to conduct its normal lunch program at the law schools because of the schools’ schedules. We’ve had some gains in membership directly because of Mikki’s outreach, but perhaps the Committee could use part of its budget to sponsor members to attend the expungement CLEs or other SCWLA events, and perhaps create sort of a scholarship for which members could apply. Amie said that that was a great idea, and maybe, once that is solidified, it could be included in the newsletter.

Karen moved to approve the sponsorship/partnership request of the Legal Services Subcommittee for its Expungement Clinics Project. The motion was seconded and approved.

- Other

Sheila reported that she had submitted our organization’s summary to the National Conference of Women’s Bar Association to be included in their materials of the history of their member

SCWLA Board Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2019

In Person Meeting (Offices of Nexsen Pruet, Columbia, South Carolina)

organizations. She thanked Amie and Mikki for getting that done. Sheila will be Vice-President of that organization next year.

X. Upcoming SCWLA Events

Amie reminded everyone about the SCWLA Movie Night event – the screening of the documentary Saint Judy – that had been moved to May 1. Flyers for the event were distributed.

XI. Next Board Meeting

Everyone was reminded that the next Board meeting will be held on June 27 in Columbia.

XII. Adjournment

All business being concluded, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:07 p.m.