



LAW SOCIETY

Newfoundland & Labrador

11 DECEMBER 2023 IN-PUBLIC BENCHERS' CONVOCATION

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER TERM CONVOCATION OF THE BENCHERS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HELD AT THE OFFICES OF THE LAW SOCIETY AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE ON MONDAY, THE 11TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2023, COMMENCING AT 9:30 A.M.

The following Benchers were present:

Elective Benchers: Scott Worsfold, President
 Gladys Dunne, KC, Vice-President
 Suzanne Orsborn, Past-President
 Lauren Chafe
 Brenda Duffy, KC
 Derek Ford
 Greg French
 Valerie Hynes, KC
 Michael Ladha, KC
 Carey Majid, KC
 Sheilagh Murphy, KC
 Dean Porter
 Jonathan Regan
 Alex Templeton
 David Williams
 Doug Wright
 Rod Zdebiak

Appointed Benchers: Ross Elliott
 Linda Harnett

Regrets: Glenda Reid
 Allan Skanes

Law Society Staff: Brenda B. Grimes, KC
Aimee N. Rowe

The President stated that a notice of the Benchers' Convocation was provided to all Benchers in accordance with the Rules of the Law Society. A quorum of Elective Benchers and Lay Benchers being present, the President declared the Convocation regularly constituted.

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting and formally acknowledged that the Island of Newfoundland is the ancestral homeland of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq.

2. Excusal of Benchers unable to attend Convocation

On Motion by Sheilagh Murphy, KC and seconded by Alex Templeton: that Benchers unable to attend Convocation be excused. CARRIED.

3. Motion to move any Agenda Item to the In-Camera Agenda

There was no motion.

4. Adoption of Agenda

On Motion by Brenda Duffy, KC and seconded by Michael Ladha, KC: that the Agenda be adopted. CARRIED.

ITEMS FOR DECISION/DISCUSSION

5. Strategic Planning Work Plan

General Discussion

The Executive Director, Brenda B. Grimes, KC, noted that any changes to the Strategic Work Plan were highlighted in yellow. She pointed out that the Access to Justice Committee has advised that a draft webpage for the Law Society's website relating to limited scope retainers is underway and will be available at the Benchers' Meeting in February.

With respect to the initiative to advocate for increased technology in Court operations, the Access to Justice Committee has advised that it has prepared a draft questionnaire which will also be presented to Benchers in February.

With respect to the initiative to consider how to address boundary violations, the Director of Professional Responsibility has been tasked with developing a procedure for the complaints process with a particular focus being to incorporate processes for reports of boundary violations and harassment and to seek proposals for the development of specific training for the staff and committee members involved in the complaints process. Further information on these items will be forthcoming.

Finally, she noted that there has been provision in the Budget for conducting strategic planning sessions in 2024.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6. President's Report

A report was provided.

The President noted that he had productive meetings with the Chief Judge and the Chief Justices. He added that Chief Justice Fry expressed an interest in training on the use of pronouns, which Bencher, Carey Majid, KC has agreed to provide.

Ms. Majid noted that the Equity and Diversity Committee is working with Dalhousie Pro Bono on 2 projects, one of which is a script for the use of pronouns before the Courts.

There were no questions arising.

7. Education Committee Report – Transfers under NMA and Notice of Resumption of Practicing Status

A report was provided. There were no questions arising.

CONCLUDING MATTERS

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Adjournment

The President noted that Benchers would move to the *in-camera* portion of the meeting and that the public portion of the Benchers' Meeting was adjourned.

On Motion by Alex Templeton and seconded by Ross Elliott: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

SCOTT WORSFOLD