



**9 DECEMBER 2024
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 9TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2024, COMMENCING AT 9:30 A.M.

The following Benchers were present:

Elective Benchers: Gladys Dunne, KC, President
Scott Worsfold, Past President
Rod Zdebiak, KC, Vice-President
Lauren Chafe
Johnathan Earle
Derek Ford
Greg French
Valerie Hynes, KC
Carey Majid, KC
Mark Mills
Sheilagh Murphy, KC
Jonathan Regan
Steve Scruton
Alex Templeton
John Whelan
David Williams

Appointed Benchers: Ross Elliott
Linda Harnett
Glenda Reid
Allan Skanes

Regrets: Doug Wright

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.

*Unless otherwise specified in the minutes, all motions were carried by a unanimous vote of Benchers.

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.

The President acknowledged former Bencher Dean Porter's appointment to the Bench and congratulated him on this accomplishment.

2. Excusal of Benchers unable to attend Convocation

On Motion by Alex Templeton and seconded by Sheilagh Murphy, KC: 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 Ross Elliott and seconded by Sheilagh Murphy, KC: that the Agenda be adopted. CARRIED.

ITEMS FOR DECISION/DISCUSSION

5. Strategic Planning Work Plan

General Discussion about Strategic Work Plan

The Executive Director referred Benchers to the existing Strategic Work Plan that is posted on the portal. She noted that some access to justice initiatives will likely be on the next work plan, but other priorities may be removed from the plan or reformulated.

She highlighted that strategic planning occurred in November and that Benchers would be presented with a report from the facilitator of the planning session, Allan Fineblit. The report is anticipated to be distributed before Christmas and placed on the February Benchers' Meeting agenda for discussion.

The report will help inform the next work plan, but Benchers may decide to include or omit any of the suggestions included in the plan. Once Benchers determine the appropriate initiatives, the Executive Director will help identify the resources that may be necessary to accomplish the initiatives. A final work plan will then be prepared for Benchers' consideration and approval.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6. President's Report

A report was provided.

The President noted that she had a busy Fall, highlighting the following:

- The Federation of Law Societies of Canada conference in Halifax;
- Meeting with the Chief Justices of the Courts (adding that no issues or concerns were raised by the Judges); and
- Attending the swearing in of recent King's Counsel appointments.

The President added that she was looking forward to attending the swearing in ceremonies of Judge Mike King and Justice Dean Porter.

The Vice-President noted that he and General Counsel attended a Zoom meeting with representatives from the Supreme Court relating to digital access and enhancements at the Supreme Court. He added that it was a quick but productive discussion.

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

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 Valerie Hynes, KC and seconded by Allan Skanes: that the in-public portion of the Benchers' meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

GLADYS DUNNE, KC