
**Approved Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of the Law Society of Alberta (Law Society)
held at the Law Society Offices
Calgary, Alberta
April 26, 2018**

Law Society President, Donald Cranston, QC, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on April 26, 2018 and confirmed a quorum of 20 members present. Notice of the meeting, an agenda, the Law Society's draft financial statements, and the Alberta Lawyers Insurance Association (ALIA) audited financial statements were sent to members via e-bulletin and to those without email addresses via Canada Post on April 12, 2018.

1 Approval of the Minutes

Don Cranston

The minutes of the April 6, 2017 Annual General Meeting were circulated to members in attendance at the meeting.

Motion:

To approve the minutes of the April 6, 2017 Annual General Meeting.

**Seconded
Carried**

2 President's Report

Don Cranston

The President reported the following:

Last year was the first year of the current Strategic Plan for the Law Society. The projects and initiatives undertaken, and the core programs delivered, are designed to achieve four key strategic goals:

- to be a model regulator;
- to build stakeholder confidence;
- to pursue access to justice and the rule of law; and
- to strengthen governance and culture.

Highlights from 2017:

Engagement with the Public and Alberta Lawyers

There were two important engagement projects in 2017.

Alberta lawyers were consulted throughout the fall regarding proposed amendments to the *Legal Profession Act* (the “Act”). The goal was to better understand the views, ideas and concerns of lawyers as the legal marketplace rapidly evolves.

Albertans were engaged to understand how they are accessing and using legal services, or if they are at all. This engagement confirmed that there are accessibility issues for many in the province.

This work to understand both lawyers’ and the public’s thoughts on legal service delivery is an important step in helping find ways to support lawyers who want to innovate how they deliver legal services.

Law Firm Management Assessment Tool

The Law Firm Management Assessment Tool was a collaborative project with the Law Societies of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, developed to evaluate practice management at the law firm level. This tool was used in a pilot project involving approximately 50 law firms of varying sizes, demographics and geographic settings. At the end of the pilot two evaluations were conducted and evaluation of this work is in progress.

Early Intervention

While working towards achieving strategic goals, core regulatory work must be maintained and proactive programs continue to grow. In the first year of the Early Intervention Program, intake and assessment processes improved, resulting in better identification of lawyers at risk who could benefit from tools to help them throughout the life cycle of their careers. New systems and processes are continually being implemented to better serve lawyers and the public.

In early 2017, a new online learning centre was launched providing an interactive and informative collection of resources for lawyers. The first course offers modules on key areas of practice related to sole and small firm practitioners, including practice management, trust accounting and client relations.

SoloNet is an online forum for sole and small practitioners to share professional knowledge, ideas and experience. This platform was redeveloped to accommodate the expanding online community using the service and, while the Law Society hosts SoloNet, the forum discussions remain independent and are not monitored.

Trust Safety

The mandate of the Law Society is to protect the public interest and one of the ways this is being done is by proactively engaging lawyers to provide support to ensure that they are meeting professional standards.

The Trust Safety Department continually looks for ways to improve the Trust Safety Program with the goal of having a strong working relationship with lawyers. By identifying issues earlier, support can be offered to lawyers or firms before underlying issues escalate.

The changes introduced to the Trust Safety Program in 2017 include the introduction of a Designated Filing Date (year-end) of December 31 for all annual reports and more than 90 per cent of Responsible Lawyers filed their annual reports by the deadline.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In 2017, important steps were taken in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, including hiring Koren Lightning-Earle as our Indigenous Initiatives Liaison to assist us in this work. Koren is building partnerships with key stakeholders, developing programs and providing cultural awareness training to staff across the organization as well as to the Benchers.

Bencher Election

Last November, nine new Benchers from a variety of practice settings were elected by the profession and will contribute to the work at the Bencher table for the next three years.

Closing

The 2017 achievements were notable and 2018 promises to continue building on those successes.

3 Business Arising

Don Cranston

There were no items of business arising from the 2017 Annual General Meeting.

4 New Business

Don Cranston

There were no new business items.

5 Adjournment

Don Cranston

A member of the Law Society requested the opportunity to ask a question and the Chair invited the member to proceed. The member inquired about the amendments to the Act. The Chair clarified that the Benchers cannot approve amendments; however, the Benchers approved motions for suggested changes to the Act and requested that the government consider those changes. The suggestions were communicated to the

government through a letter to the Minister of Justice. The government, not the Law Society, is responsible for drafting the wording for amendments to the Act. The Law Society understanding is that there is no space on the legislative agenda at this time. The member requested a copy of what was voted on and the Chair advised that the approvals are recorded in the February 22-23, 2018 public meeting minutes, which will be posted on the Law Society website once approved.

Motion:**To adjourn the April 26, 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Law Society.****Seconded****Carried**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.