



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
HELD AT THE LAW SOCIETY OFFICES
500, 919 – 11 AVE SW
CALGARY, ALBERTA
APRIL 12, 2012**

Law Society President, Steve Raby, QC, called the meeting to order and announced a quorum of 20 members present.

1. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: To approve minutes of the Annual General Meeting held April 7, 2011.

Seconded
CARRIED

2. Reports

a) President

Steve Raby, QC

In 2011, the Law Society of Alberta had the benefit of the able leadership of Doug Mah, QC, President. The following were significant initiatives in 2011:

1. The Conduct Process initiative obtained amendments to the *Legal Profession Act* in December of 2011.
2. The Alternative Delivery of Legal Services Committee completed its work in 2011 culminating in a final report that will be delivered to the Minister of Justice and all relevant stakeholders.
3. The Governance Committee prepared a number of specific policies for adoption by the Benchers which are now included in a Comprehensive Governance Plan. There are a small number of outstanding matters to be dealt with in 2012.
4. Implementation of the Trust Safety program commenced on January 1, 2011. The 2012 Trust Safety Committee will recommend amendments to the Self-Report form and potentially some rule amendments based on feedback from the profession.
5. The Retention and Re-engagement Task Force will determine what steps the Law Society, as regulator, can take to assist in the retention of young lawyers and women in private practice and ensure that legal services are available to rural Albertans.

b) Executive Director

Don Thompson, QC

We continue to improve our administrative processes, including:

- Adopted a better process for planning budgets and the underlining business plans that form those budgets.
- Moved the Edmonton office to a new premises.
- Aligned the work of Law Society staff with the objectives in the Strategic Plan.
- Improved processes for dealing with complaints more efficiently.

3. Committee Reports**a) Conduct Committee**

Kevin Feth, QC

In 2011, 54 conduct panels were constituted, which directed 48 hearing committees and 25 hearings. Those 48 hearing referrals occurred during a time when the Conduct Committee was exploring alternate measures including the use of the Mandatory Conduct Advisory (MCA) to address formal conduct complaints.

In addition to the work of the Conduct Panel Task Force, the 2011 policy initiatives were as follows:

1. Obtained Bencher approval of revisions to the Appeal from Complaint Dismissals guideline to make the process more efficient.
2. Continued a pilot project involving attendance of a representative of the Executive Director at conduct panel meetings.
3. Improved the MCA process.
4. The passing of legislative amendments to facilitate the streamlining of the conduct process.

b) Credentials & Education Committee

Neena Ahluwalia, QC

In 2011, the Credentials & Education Committee engaged in the following work:

- Obtained feedback on the revised student recruitment rules and committing to reassess the rules. In 2012, a subcommittee was established to review the rules, and round table discussions will occur in Calgary and Edmonton at the end of April. A report from the subcommittee will go to the committee later this year and the matter will go back to the Benchers for a decision.
- Made recommendations to facilitate lawyers being licensed as foreign legal consultants.
- Continued work on policy guidelines on stale-dated degrees.

c) Finance Committee

Jim Eamon, QC

The 2011 activities of the Finance Committee are summarized as follows:

- Reviewed and approved the 2011 and 2012 Budget. The annual fee and assurance levy were not increased due to cost cutting and a deficit. The General Fund has a surplus and the Assurance Fund has a reserve balance.
- Ensured compliance of Law Society investments with the statement of investment policies and guidelines.
- Confirmed that insolvency proceedings of RBC Dexia did not affect Law Society's securities.
- Set the proposed fees for the CPLED program.
- Quarterly review of the internal financial statements of the Law Society.
- The Budget and Financial Affairs Subcommittee makes funding recommendations for several third party entities including, Pro Bono Law of Alberta, Assist, the Joint Library Committee, Legal Archives Society of Alberta and the Alberta Law Review. These organizations contribute to the Law Society's strategic objectives; they received almost two million dollars in directed contributions.
- Assurance claims arising from the last two or three years particularly relating to Real Estate transactions have increased.

d) Insurance Committee

Anne Kirker, QC

The 2011 activities of the Insurance Committee are summarized as follows:

- Approved an insurance levy of \$3,124/member, which was up \$224 from the prior year's levy of \$2,900. Increased investment losses in an adverse business economy and claims experience were the major factors impacting the 2011/2012 insurance levy. Market losses also reduced the available surplus, and as a result, ALIA was not in a position to subsidize the levy to the extent it has done in previous years.
- Obtained Bencher approval of the 2012 ALIA Business Plan and Budget.

e) Practice Review Committee

Sarah King-D'Souza, QC

Lawyers may be referred to Practice Review by the Conduct Committee, the Executive Director, or as part of a sanction after a finding of guilt at a conduct hearing.

A lawyer is referred to Practice Review if the lawyer conducts his/her practice in a way that is adverse to the best interest of the public, the legal profession, or both, and there is likelihood the conduct will continue or re-occur.

The objective of Practice Review is remedial, to assist the lawyer with general practice management skills so to experience less stress and optimally more a personally satisfying and sustainable law practice.

Lawyers directed to Practice Review receive a package of material. The following steps occur:

- They provide a "practice snapshot" which is a self-description of the lawyer's current practice and self-identified challenges.

- The snapshot along with other material is reviewed by the committee panel which makes directions as to next steps to the Practice Review Committee team, including that a Practice Assessment is needed.
- Two assigned lawyers undertake the practice assessment, and provide a report with recommendations practice review. A committee panel reviews the report, obtains feedback of the lawyer and makes long-term recommendations.

f) Professional Responsibility Committee

Rose Carter, QC

In 2011, the Professional Responsibility Committee worked on Alberta Code of Conduct. In 2012, the committee will complete its work on the Conflict of Interest Rule.

The committee deals with inquiries, questions and concerns raised by members of the Bar.

4. Old Business

None

5. New Business

None

6. Adjournment

5:24 pm

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