

Approved Benchers Public Minutes

Five Hundred Twenty Fourth Meeting of the Benchers of the Law Society of Alberta (Law Society)

October 7, 2025

In person in Calgary, AB, and by videoconference

ATTENDANCE

Benchers Stacy Petriuk, KC, President
A. Danielle Bourgeois
Glen Buick
Arman Chak
Stephanie Dobson
Adam Drew
Kene Ilochonwu, KC
Levonne Louie
Jim Lutz, KC
Scott Matheson
Bud Melnyk, KC
Kelsey Meyer
Sharilyn Nagina, KC
Afshan Naveed
Mary Ellen Neilson
Sandra Petersson, KC
Erin Runnalls, KC
Ron Sorokin, KC
Nicole Stewart
David Tupper
Maira Váně, KC
Grant Vogeli, KC

Regrets Louise Wasylenko, CPA, CMA



ATTENDANCE

Executive Leadership Team	Elizabeth Osler, KC, CEO and Executive Director
	Cori Ghitter, KC, Deputy Executive Director and Director, Policy and Education
	Sarah Klein, General Counsel
	Nadine Meade, Chief Financial Officer
	Kendall Moholitny, Director, Regulation and Professionalism
	Andrew Norton, Chief Information Officer and Director, Business Operations
Staff	David Weyant, KC, President and CEO, Alberta Lawyers Indemnity Association (videoconference)
	Barbra Bailey, Manager, Education
	Nancy Bains, Tribunal Counsel & Privacy Officer (In person)
	Catherine Bennett, Executive Assistant to the CEO & Executive Director
	Reed Bjerkseth, Support Staff, Business Technology (In person)
	Crystal Blain, Indigenous Initiatives Advisor, Education (In person)
	Colleen Brown, Manager, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement (In person)
	Christal Chapman, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Counsel, Education
	Jennifer Freund, Policy & Governance Counsel
	Jonathan Griffith, Practice Advisor and Equity Ombudsperson (In person)
	Karen Hansen, Legal Counsel, Regulation Projects (In person)
	Julie James, Coordinator, Governance (In person)
	Calvin McCarron, Support Staff, Business Technology (In person)
	Andrew McGrath, Support Staff, Business Technology (In person)
	Noria Neuhart, Policy Counsel (In person)
	Michael Oxman, Education Counsel
	Erica Pridham, Manager, Conduct & Membership Legal Services
	Christine Schreuder, Supervisor, Governance (In person)
	Rebecca Young, Education Counsel
	Karly Walker, Coordinator, Governance (In person)
Guests	Loraine Champion, KC, Executive Director, Alberta Lawyers' Assistance Society
	Sarah Coderre, Vice President, Canadian Bar Association (CBA) Alberta
	Carsten Jensen, KC, Law Society of Alberta representative to the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (In person)



ATTENDANCE

Christine Laing, Executive Director, Pro Bono Law Alberta

Secretary's Note: All Benchers and Executive Leadership Team attendees were in person unless otherwise stated. All staff and guests attended via videoconference unless otherwise stated. The arrival or departure of Benchers during the meeting are recorded in the body of these minutes.

Call to Order and Introduction

Ms. Petriuk called the public meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. and welcomed Sarah Coderre new CBA Alberta Vice-President and Christine Laing, new Pro Bono Law Alberta, Executive Director, to their first Benchers meeting.

1. Land Acknowledgment (agenda item 5)

Mr. Melnyk provided a Territorial Indigenous Land Acknowledgment statement.

2. Opening Remarks from the President (agenda item 6)

Ms. Petriuk reported that she had the privilege of attending the Supreme Court of Canada 150th anniversary where discussions centered around upholding the rule of law and the importance of judiciary and regulator independence.

3. Adoption of the Agenda (agenda item 7)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

Ms. Petriuk noted that the Benchers approved the public agenda with the October 7-8, 2025 Consolidated Benchers meeting agenda as the meeting started *in camera* before the public meeting convened. She asked if there were any amendments or changes to the agenda and there being none, the agenda was adopted as presented.

4. Strategic Plan Progress Update (agenda item 8)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

The Law Society's Strategic Plan is a three-year plan that covers the period of January 2024 to December 2026. The Strategic Plan Report provides a detailed update on the work done since January 2024 to support and progress the strategic goals. Key pieces of work are listed under each objective and are denoted as either completed, in progress or not yet started.

5. President and President-Elect Vacancies – Rule Amendments (agenda item 9)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

Ms. Freund provided an overview of the materials and highlighted that vacancies in the office of President and President-Elect are a rare occurrence. While there is some direction in the *Legal Profession Act* (Act) regarding the use of an Acting President when the President is not available, generally, when permanent vacancies occur, there

is silence in both the Act and the Rules as to how those vacancies should be addressed. The Law Society would like to fill in this gap with new Rules so that there is clarity on the process when a vacancy occurs and consistency in the future about how they are addressed.

A Benchers requested a typographical correction to Rule 27.1(2)(b) of the Rules of the Law Society (Rules) to replace 'reminder' with 'remainder'.

Secretary's note, red font is used in the motion below to reflect the requested typographical correction above.

Motion: Sorokin/Stewart

That the Benchers amend the *Rules of the Law Society of Alberta* to:

- (a) adopt proposed new Rule 27.1 to establish the process to address a vacancy in the office of President,**
- (b) adopt proposed new Rule 27.2, *as corrected*, to establish the process to address a vacancy in the office of President-Elect, and**
- (c) amend subrule 28(3) to correct a cross-referencing error by striking out "section 24(3)" and inserting "subsection 24(4)" in its place and to remove unnecessary language by striking out "the office of the President becomes vacant and".**

Carried

6. Complaint Dismissal Appeals Guideline and Rule Amendments (agenda item 10)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

Ms. Freund provided an overview of the Complaint Dismissal Appeals Guideline and Rule Amendments memo and explained that the recommendations from the Complaint Dismissal Appeals (CDA) Working Group (WG) are to improve CDA processes and provide clarity. If approved, the Tribunal Office will monitor the impact of the changes to assess further improvements.

Ms. Runnalls recognized the significant burden of complaint dismissal appeals on Benchers and staff, and expressed support for the CDA WG's work in making a balanced recommendation to Benchers.

The Benchers discussed the proposed motions and requested that (b) and (d) regarding the Tribunal Office's authority be considered separately.

Motion Lutz/Chak

To divide the question to remove paragraphs (b) and (d) from the proposed motion, to be considered separately.

Carried by 2/3

The Benchers debated whether it is appropriate that the Tribunal Office have authority as stated in (b) and (d) of the proposed motion.

Motion: Lutz/Chak

To amend the motion as proposed to strike out the “Tribunal Office” and insert the previous wording “The Chair of the Appeal Committee” in (b) and (d) from the proposed motion.

Mr. Lutz moved to withdraw his motion to amend.

Carried

The Benchers debated further about whether to include (b) and (d) in the proposed motion as the second part of the divided question. Support was expressed for the Tribunal Office’s authority as proposed and a request was made to consider the following two motions concurrently as proposed.

Motion 1: Runnalls/Buick

That the Benchers amend Rule 86 as follows:

- (a) to strike out “in the form specified by the Society” in clause (1)(a) and clause (3)(c) and insert “in a form acceptable to the Executive Director” in its place;**
- (b) to strike out “The Chair of the Appeal Committee” in subrule (2) and insert “The Tribunal Office” in its place and**
- (c) to strike out “subrule” in subrule (2) and insert “clause” in its place;**
- (d) to insert a new subrule (4) as follows: “The Tribunal Office may extend the time under clause (3)(c) in appropriate circumstances.”;**
- (e) to separate the two sentences in former subrule (4) into subrule (5) and subrule (6)**
- (f) to strike out “three member” in newly renumbered subrule (5) after “sit in” and before “panels” and insert “of one or three members” after “panels” and before “appointed”;**
- (g) to insert “When a three-member panel is appointed,” at the start of new subrule (6) and remove the capitalization of “one member”;**
- (h) to renumber former subrule (5) as subrule (7) and to strike “three” from this subrule;**
- (i) to renumber former subrules (6) through (8) as subrules (8) through (10);**
- (j) to insert “panel” into newly renumbered subrules (8) and (10) after “Appeal Committee”, and**
- (k) to strike “, if any,” from subrule (10).**

Motion 2:

That the Benchers amend the Complaint Dismissal Appeals Guideline, as proposed, to improve processes and flow, as well as enhance clarity for readers.

Carried by 2/3**7. Model Code Consultation – Duty to Report (agenda item 11)**

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

Ms. Freund explained she and Mr. Griffith both sit on the Federation of Law Societies of Canada's (Federation) Model Code Liaison Working Group. She described the Federation's consultation process and explained that proposed amendments to the Duty to Report were made to the Model Code to provide clarity for lawyers, including when to self-report. Ms. Freund identified both potential positive impacts and areas of concern with the proposed amendments. Mr. Griffith provided the Practice Advisors' perspective about the need for clarity.

Motion: Sorokin/Stewart

That the Benchers adopt the October 7, 2025 letter to the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (Federation) Standing Committee on the Model Code of Professional Conduct, in response to the Federation's *Consultation Report – Draft Amendments to Duty to Report Rule 7.1-3: Model Code of Professional Conduct*, and submit it to the Federation.

Carried

Secretary's note: The meeting recessed for lunch at 12:40 p.m.

8. Limited Liability Partnership and Professional Corporation Rule Amendments (agenda item 12)

Secretary's note: The public meeting reconvened at 1:20 p.m. All Benchers were in attendance unless otherwise indicated in the body of the minutes below.

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

Ms. Freund reported that requests from various law firms regarding partnership additions to their limited liability partnerships (LLPs) identified a lack of clarity around the legislation and Rules for LLPs. Because of this lack of clarity, it was determined that a detailed revision of the Rules relating to LLPs was needed. She noted that the proposed Rule amendments do not impact the proposed Rule amendments related to the Business Process Update amendments that were agreed to previously by the Benchers. Additionally, there are some minor amendments for clarity required in the Rules for Professional Corporations (PC).

*Ms. Váně rejoined the meeting at 1:24 p.m.
Mr. Tupper rejoined the meeting at 1:27 p.m.*

The following motions were considered concurrently:

Motion 1: Sorokin/Stewart

That the Benchers amend Rule 1 clause (1)(k) by inserting a hyphen in "extraprovincial" so that it reads "extra-provincial".

Motion 2:

That the Benchers amend Rules 153.1 and 159.01 by striking out

“Senior Manager of Business Operations, Membership and Compliance Counsel, Manager of Membership, Supervisor of Membership, Manager of Customer Service, Supervisor of Customer Service and Counsel”

and inserting

“Manager of Membership and Customer Service, and Supervisor of Customer Service, and lawyers employed or contracted by the Society to review applications and other materials under this Part”

in its place and by renumbering Rule 159.01 as 159.1.

Motion 3:

That the Benchers amend Rules 159.1 through 159.7, as proposed.

Motion 4:

That the Benchers amend Rule 154 by

- 1. striking out clause (1)(c), by striking out “; and” at the end of clause (1)(b) and adding “and” at the end of clause (1)(a), and**
- 2. striking out the wording of subrule (2) and inserting “Upon request, the Society shall disclose to any person the name of a professional corporation.” In its place.**

Carried by 2/3

9. Business Contact Information Rule Amendments (agenda item 13)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting.

Ms. Freund reported that the Membership department requires correct, up-to-date and individualized contact information be provided. The Membership department is requesting amendments to Rule 42 to try to add more specificity and clarity to the requirements for individualized business and personal email addresses.

The Benchers’ key discussion related to the use of personal emails. Ms. Pridham clarified that the Law Society only contacts lawyers’ personal emails as a last resort and if a lawyer does not have a personal email address they will not be required to create one. She explained the difficulty of contacting a lawyer if they leave their place of business without a personal email address on file and highlighted that lawyers with only an individualized business email will lose access to that email when their employment ends.

The Benchers recognized a need for an individualized business email address rather than using a shared general email address to receive sensitive information but raised concerns with a requirement to provide an individualized personal email address.

Motion: Sorokin/Petersson

That the Benchers amend Rule 42 by:



- (a) inserting “individualized” before “business email address” in clause (4.1)(c);
- (b) inserting a colon after “their” in subrule (5)
- (c) reformatting subrule (5) after “their:” to add clauses (a), (b), and (c) to list the three information items described in the subrule;
- (d) striking out “and” at the end of clause (5)(a) and inserting a comma in its place;
- (e) adding “, and” at the end of clause (5)(b);
- (f) striking out “along with a” at the beginning of clause (5)(c) and “if the member or student-at-law does not have a business email address” at the end of clause (5)(c); and
- (g) inserting “current individualized” at the start of clause (5)(c).

Motion to Amend: Stewart/Dobson

That the Benchers amend the motion by removing clauses (e), (f) and (g).

Carried

Ms. Petriuk called the question on the original motion as amended.

Motion as Amended

That the Benchers amend Rule 42 by:

- (a) inserting “individualized” before “business email address” in clause (4.1)(c);
- (b) inserting a colon after “their” in subrule (5)
- (c) reformatting subrule (5) after “their:” to add clauses (a), (b), and (c) to list the three information items described in the subrule;
- (d) striking out “and” at the end of clause (5)(a) and inserting a comma in its place.

Carried by 2/3

10. Reinstatement and Credentials and Education Project Presentation (agenda item 14)

Documentation for this item was provided with the meeting materials.

Ms. Freund presented a preview of upcoming Rule and Reinstatement Guideline (Guideline) amendments proposed for the Reinstatement process and Ms. Neuhart presented a preview of upcoming changes to the work of the Credentials and Education Committee (CEC). These are both projects that were approved by the Benchers on March 14, 2024.

Reinstatement

Ms. Freund reported the current Reinstatement process is overly complex and cumbersome with referrals to multiple committees with potentially inconsistent outcomes. Additionally, the Guideline for this process was rescinded in 2016, leaving no clear guidance for Benchers, lawyers or staff which results in insufficient transparency around the process. The project working group is working to redesign the process to make it transparent, easier to follow, and have referrals to only one committee, a Reinstatement Committee. These improvements require Rule amendments, as well as the development of a new Guideline for the Reinstatement Committee.

Credentials and Education

Ms. Neuhart presented the Credentials and Education Policy Project work and noted the Benchers approved it as a high priority item in March 2024. The work of the CEC has changed considerably over the last two decades with more focus on complex applications and appeals. New legislation such as the *Fair Registration Practices Act* and the *Labour Mobility Act* also have an impact on the work of CEC as outcomes and timelines must be monitored and reported to the Government. The current CEC Guideline was last updated in 2008 and is significantly out of date. The project working group is working to update the Rules and the Guideline for CEC to modernize them and adapt them to the current reality of the CEC's work.

A Bencher expressed gratitude for the initiative and added clarity.

11. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Update (agenda item 15)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting. No verbal report was provided.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) met twice (June and September) since the May 1, 2025 Bencher's meeting. The EDIC is working on – the review of the Articling Placement Program and the draft Reconciliation Framework. The materials provide an update on the ongoing work on both these projects since the May 1, 2025 Bencher meeting.

12. Lawyer Competence Committee Update (agenda item 16)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting. No verbal report was provided.

The Lawyer Competence Committee (LCC) held four meetings since the May 1, 2025 Bencher meeting. During that time, the LCC discussed varying perspectives and feedback on potential opportunities relating to lawyer competence that relate to the law degree, pre-call/bar admission and post-call stages of the lawyer competence continuum. The second day of the October 7-8, 2025 Bencher meeting will be an education session on these topics with the Benchers getting an overview of the LCC work in this area and proposed next steps. In addition, the LCC also considered additional initiatives to support lawyer well-being.

13. Policy and Regulatory Reform Committee Update (agenda item 17)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting. No verbal report was provided.

The Policy and Regulatory Reform Committee (PRRC) met twice since the May 1, 2025, Benchers meeting (August and September).

At these meetings, the PRRC reviewed proposed amendments to the LLP and PC Rules; a proposed response to the Federation of Law Societies' current consultation on amendments to Rule 7.1-3 which address the Duty to Report; viewed a presentation that previewed the Reinstatement and Credentials & Education Rule and Process Amendments; and, the Business Contact Information Rule Amendments.

All decision items were reviewed by the PRRC and are recommended to the Benchers for adoption.

14. CONSENT AGENDA (agenda item 18)

Documentation for this item was circulated with the materials prior to the meeting. No requests were made to remove any items from the consent agenda and the following 12 motions were approved concurrently.

Motion: Petersson/Louie

May 1, 2025 Public Benchers Meeting Minutes

That the Benchers approve the May 1, 2025, Public Benchers Meeting Minutes.

May 7, 2025 Public Special Benchers Meeting Minutes

That the Benchers approve the May 7, 2025 Special Benchers Meeting Minutes.

2027 Benchers Meeting Dates

That the Benchers approve the following 2027 Board meeting dates:

March 4-5, 2027

May 13-14, 2027

October 5-6, 2027

November 4, 2027 – Benchers Budget Review virtual meeting

November 25-26, 2027

All meetings will be held in Calgary unless otherwise indicated, or, if necessary, at such other date and time and place (or means) as the CEO and Executive Director of the Law Society may determine.

Update to Membership Rules

Motion 1



That the Benchers amend Rule 47(e) by striking out

“the employees holding the positions of Senior Manager of Business Operations, Membership and Compliance Counsel, Counsel, Manager of Membership, Supervisor of Membership, Manager of Customer Service, Supervisor of Customer Service”

and inserting

“(i) the employees holding the positions of Manager of Membership and Customer Service and Supervisor of Customer Service,

(ii) lawyers employed or contracted by the Society to review applications and other materials under this Part, and

(iii)”

in its place.

Motion 2

That the Benchers amend Rule 107.2 by striking out

“the employees holding the positions of Senior Manager of Business Operations, Membership and Compliance Counsel, Manager of Membership, Supervisor of Membership, Manager of Customer Service, Supervisor of Customer Service”

and inserting

“(a) the employees holding the positions of Manager of Membership and Customer Service and Supervisor of Customer Service,

(b) lawyers employed or contracted by the Society to review applications and other materials under this Part, and

(c)”

in its place.

Alberta Lawyers Indemnity Association (ALIA) Rule Amendments

Motion 1

That the Benchers amend clause 149.7(1)(a) by striking out “149.7(1)” after “subrule” and inserting “149.9(1)” in its place.

Motion 2

That the Benchers amend clause 149.8(3)(c) by striking out “149.7(4)” after “subrule” and inserting “149.9(4)” in its place.

Motion 3

That the Benchers amend subrule 149.9(1) by striking out “, using” and inserting “by completing” in its place in clause (a) before “the Member Transaction and Filing Self Report”; by adding “, using the form approved by the ALIA President and Chief Executive Officer” to clause (a); and by striking out “form and” from clause (b).

Motion 4

That the Benchers amend clause 165.1(2)(b) by adding “or ALIA,”.

Rules 31.1 and 31.2 Rule Amendments

That the Benchers amend Rules 31.1 and 31.2 to strike “Chapter 6, Rule 6.01(3)” from subrules 31.1(4) and 31.2(5) and insert “Chapter 7, Rule 7.1-3” in its place.

Alberta Lawyers Indemnity Association (ALIA) Deductible Rule Amendment

That the Benchers amend subrule 151(3) to

- (a) insert “if any,” after “with interest,”;**
- (b) strike out “may be added to and” after the newly inserted “if any,” and insert “will be” in its place; and**
- (c) add “and be subject to subrules 147(2) and 165(2)”.**

Trust Accounting Rule Amendment

That the Benchers amend subrule 119.28(2) by

- striking out “or” after subclause (a)(i);**
- renumbering subclause (a)(ii) as subclause (a)(iii); and**
- inserting “(ii) a payment to any other person which has been authorized under clause 119.21(1)(c), or” after subclause (a)(i) and before the newly renumbered subclause (a)(iii).**

Carried

15. EXTERNAL REPORTS (agenda item 19)

The following external agency reports were circulated with the materials prior to the meeting:

15.1 Alberta Law Reform Institute Report

15.2 Alberta Lawyers’ Assistance Society Report

15.3 Canadian Bar Association Alberta Report

15.4 Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education Report

15.5 Legal Education of Society of Alberta Report

15.6 Pro Bono Law Alberta Report

16. Other Business

There was no other business, and the public meeting adjourned at 2:19 p.m.