

## STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

President Hamameh called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. on Friday, November 21, 2025, in the Boardroom at the Michael Franck building in Lansing, Michigan.

### Commissioners present:

David C. Anderson, Treasurer	Elizabeth A. Kitchen-Troop
Hon. Karl A. Barr	Suzanne C. Larsen, Secretary
Darnell Barton	Joshua A. Lerner
Erika L. Bryant, President-Elect	James L. Liggins, Jr.
Aaron V. Burrell	James W. Low
Alena Clark	Ashley E. Lowe
Hon. Ponce Clay	Silvia A. Mansoor
Patrick J. Crowley	Gerard V. Mantese
Sherrie L. Detzler	Gerrow D. "Gerry" Mason
Robert A. Easterly	Nicholas M. Ohanesian
Jacob G. Eccleston	Hon. David A. Perkins
Nicole A. Evans	Douglas B. Shapiro
Lisa J. Hamameh, President	Danielle Walton
Thomas H. Howlett, Vice-President	

### Commissioners absent:

Hon. B. Chris Christenson	Thomas P. Murray, III
Claudnyse D. Holloman	Hon. Kristen D. Simmons
Elizabeth L. Luckenbach	

### Consent Agenda

The Board received the minutes from the September 19, 2025, Board meetings.  
The Board received the minutes from the October 15, 2025, Executive Committee meeting.  
The Board received the recent activities of the president.  
The Board received the recent activities of the executive director.  
The Board received Michigan Indian Legal Services (MILS) Board of Trustees Appointment.  
The Board received Model Criminal Jury Instructions.  
The Board received the FY 2025 financial reports through September 2025.  
The Board received Client Protection Fund Claims.  
The Board received Unauthorized Practice of Law Claims.  
The Board received Character and Fitness Nominations.

President Hamameh asked if any items needed to be removed from the consent agenda. There were none.

A motion was offered to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded and approved.

**President and Executive Director's Report:** Lisa Hamameh, President

### President's Report

President Hamameh summarized her presidency thus far. Ms. Hamameh encouraged Board members to be better educators and ambassadors of the State Bar.

President Hamameh read a letter that Peter Cunningham sent to Chief Justice Cavanagh on behalf of the Executive Committee with comments on the Phase I and Phase II JTC Equity Reports, which were prepared by the National Center for State Courts.

President-Elect Bryant shared her experience from this year's Great Rivers Bar Leaders Conference, which was held last month in Destin, Florida. Mr. Cunningham and President Hamameh were also in attendance. This group of bar leaders represents both mandatory and voluntary bars, who gather to discuss and exchange ideas, programs, and challenges of the legal profession. Each state bar presents a relevant topic to their bar, and the SBM led a discussion on how bars can increase board members' engagement.

### Supreme Court Commissions Update

#### Justice For All (JFA) Commission

President Hamameh reported that the JFA has not met since the last BOC meeting in September. Vice-President Howlett reviewed the work of the JFA for those new to the Board. The next JFA meeting is in December, so an update will be provided at the January meeting.

#### DEI Commission

President-Elect Bryant summarized the purpose of the DEI Commission. Ms. Bryant indicated that she serves on the judicial pathways sub-committee. The DEI Commission has not met since the last BOC meeting in September but will meet again in the first week of December.

#### Commission on Well-Being in the Law (WBIL)

Molly Ranns, Director of Lawyers and Judges Assistance, reported that the Commission on Well-Being in the Law met last week at the Hall of Justice. She summarized the three sub-committees and the work that they are doing.

Ms. Ranns gave an update on the Well-Being in the Law survey, which was conducted this past summer. There were approximately 40,000 attorneys who participated in this survey nationwide, which is the largest known survey of well-being for attorneys to have ever been conducted. The data from the survey is expected to be analyzed and available within the first quarter of 2026.

Kari Thrush, Assistant Executive Director, provided an update on the implementation of the Convene software, which staff hopes to have completed no later than the April 2026 Board meeting.

#### Member List Policy

Ms. Thrush shared that the Member List Policy was reviewed by the Executive Committee with minor edits and suggestions made to clarify inconsistencies between the Member List Policy and the Member Privacy Policy.

A motion was made to accept the changes to the language of this policy as provided to the Commissioners in the meeting materials. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

#### Cannabis Law Update

Darin Day, Director of Outreach, summarized the financial deficit that the Cannabis Law Section has encountered as a result of their recent fall conference. The section currently has an estimated negative balance of approximately \$13,000. The full financial picture will not be known until January, and another update will be provided at the January Board meeting.

### Staff Update

President Hamameh introduced Tanisha Davis as the new Clerk of the Representative Assembly. Clerk Davis was elected to the position after the September meeting.

Robin Eagleson, Director of Lawyer Services, introduced the new Practice Management Counsel, Ms. Savannah Polimeni. Ms. Polimeni most recently practiced at Garan Lucow Miller where she was a civil litigation attorney.

Ms. Thrush announced three new hires: Mr. Brian Burgess has been hired as the Director of Research and Analytics. He comes to SBM from Colorado State University where he was a Research Fellow. Ms. Felicia Thomas was recently hired as Assistant Executive Director (Counsel). Ms. Thomas previously worked at The Management Center in Washington, D.C. She will be replacing Ms. Kathy Gardner. Lastly, Ms. Amy Owens was recently hired as Senior Executive Assistant. Ms. Owens has over 20 years of experience supporting senior-level administrative support. She was hired to replace Ms. Marge Bossenbery who will retire at the end of the year. All three of these new hires will be formally introduced at the January meeting.

### SBM Program Presentation - Ethics

Alecia Chandler, Director of Professional Responsibility, reviewed the work of the Ethics team and the SBM staff members who make up this team. Ms. Chandler described the numerous programs that the Ethics department handles, such as the Ethics helpline, webinars, seminars, Bar Journal articles, and presentations.

### **Discussion: Challenges & Opportunities for the Profession and Justice System**

#### Continuing Legal Education in Michigan

President Hamameh read a resolution that the State Bar received from the Michigan Judges Association urging the Michigan Supreme Court and the State Bar of Michigan to adopt a mandatory continuing legal education requirement for Michigan attorneys. A lengthy discussion on the topic followed.

#### **Representative Assembly (RA) Report:** Nicole A. Evans, Chairperson

Chair Evans shared that the next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2026, in Lansing. The leadership team of the Representative Assembly has been busy making committee chair appointments, as well as committee member appointments; they have also been discussing RA roles and ways to encourage collaboration on committees. The RA leadership team held a retreat in October, where they discussed visions and goals for the year.

Chair Evans informed the Board that at last count there were 39 vacancies in numerous districts across the state. In the past six weeks, 11 of those vacancies have been filled. There will be multiple districts which will have contested elections in the upcoming election cycle.

The special issues committee of the RA is working on a proposal regarding MIDC attorneys being removed for violations of professional conduct and working to remove them from active cases. On October 22, 2025, the MSC issued administrative order, 2024-07, which is a proposed amendment to Rule 6, addressing the nomination and election of members of the Representative Assembly, including their terms and vacancies. The comment period is open through February 6, 2026.

**Young Lawyers Section (YLS) Report:** Jacob Eccleston, Chairperson

Commissioner Eccleston provided the report for the Young Lawyers Section. Mr. Eccleston shared that the section had their annual retreat shortly after the September Board meeting. Other recent events include National Trial Advocacy Competition, which was held on October 24-26 in Detroit. There were 15 teams who participated in this event this year. The section held a Trunk or Treat in Southfield, where they handed out candy and provided legal advice to attendees. Upcoming events include a holiday outreach party in Detroit on December 13. There is also an Urban Alliance High School event where students work with providers to get high school students in and learn about the law before they make the commitment of law school. The YLS Summit is scheduled for March 27, 2026, at the Henry Ford Museum. NTAC is scheduled for November 6-8, 2026.

## COMMISSIONER COMMITTEES

**Public Policy:** Erika L. Bryant, Chairperson

President-Elect Bryant provided the report for the Public Policy committee.

Court Rules

**1. ADM File No. 2020-08: Proposed Amendments of MCR 1.109, 2.104, 2.107, 2.119, 3.203, and 5.105**

The proposed amendments of MCR 1.109, 2.104, 2.107, 2.119, 3.203, and 5.105 would, subject to an opting-out procedure, clarify the use of electronic service when MiFILE is not available in the court or for the particular case type.

A motion was offered and seconded to support ADM File No. 2020-08 with two amendments: (1) while parties represented by counsel should be required to *opt out* of electronic service, parties proceeding pro se should be required to *opt in* to electronic service; and (2) subrule (C)(5)(c) should be amended to strike “24 hours” and insert “72 hours.” The motion was approved.

**2. ADM File No. 2023-23: Proposed Amendments of MCR 3.942 and 3.972**

The proposed amendments of MCR 3.942 and 3.972 would, in delinquency and child protective proceeding bench trials, require the court to make findings of fact and conclusions of law and allow for the equivalent of a directed verdict.

A motion was offered and seconded to support ADM File 2023-23. The motion was approved.

**3. ADM File No. 2023-39: Proposed Amendment of MCR 7.215**

The proposed amendment of MCR 7.215 would eliminate the requirement that parties provide copies of unpublished opinions cited in briefs filed in the Court of Appeals.

A motion was offered and seconded to support ADM File 2023-39 with an amendment that MCR 7.21(C)(1) should read: “A party who cites an unpublished opinion must provide the docket number and date of decision as part of the citation.” The motion was approved.

Legislation

**1. HB 4840 (Lightner) Courts:** business court; types of cases heard by the business court; revise. Amends sec. 8031 of 1961 PA 236 (MCL 600.8031).

A motion was offered and seconded that this legislation is *Keller*-permissible. The motion was approved.

A motion to support HB 4840 was offered and seconded. The motion was approved.

2. **SB 330** (McMorrow) Courts: juries; exemption from jury service; expand. Amends sec. 1307a of 1961 PA 236 (MCL 600.1307a).

A motion was offered and seconded that this legislation is *Keller*-permissible. The motion was approved.

A motion was offered and seconded to support SB 330 as introduced and to communicate to the bill sponsor that the State Bar would also support legislation to expand the proposed jury service exemption beyond hospice patients to encompass other individuals in a period of bereavement. The motion was approved.

**Strategic Planning and Engagement Committee (SPEC):** Thomas H. Howlett, Chairperson  
Vice-President Howlett summarized the purpose of the Committee. He also described the three sub-committees and their functions as they pertain to the jurisdiction of the full Committee.

Mr. Howlett spoke about the success of this year's presidential inauguration and awards luncheon held in September at the Detroit Marriott in Troy, which had 323 attendees, and received a net promoter score of 51.

#### **Partnership Programs**

Ms. Eagleson shared the negotiated revisions to the iStorage preferred partner program that have occurred since the last Board meeting. Recent contract modifications include encrypted hardware data storage.

A motion was offered and seconded to support the proposal as presented in the Board materials. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Eagleson shared that the State Bar has 25 current partner programs, which have produced over \$200,000 in non-dues revenue in the past year.

The Great Lakes Legal Conference (GLLC) workgroup has been discussing options for the future of conference. Historically, there have been three components to the GLLC: continuing legal education primarily for northern Michigan and U.P. attorneys, a Board of Commissioners meeting, and the Bar Leadership Forum (BLF). Discussions have included ending the continuing education component; hosting an annual board retreat; and hosting a separate event with programming specific for section leaders, and local and affinity bar leaders. The workgroup is working with staff and expects to bring recommendations to SPEC and the Board in January.

Ms. Raymer and Mr. Howlett provided a historical summary of the new website overhaul. The next step in the project is to issue a request for proposals in early December with proposals due early in 2026.

#### **Finance and Audit:** David C. Anderson, Chairperson **Financial Report**

Treasurer Anderson shared that the State Bar of Michigan is within the audit period.

There are currently 47,222 total members, which includes 938 new attorneys. SBM is currently \$1.65 million better than budget. The Committee expects significant payouts for the Client Protection Fund in FY 2026.

**Professional Standards:** Suzanne C. Larsen, Chairperson

Secretary Larsen indicated that their first meeting of the Bar year was earlier this week. All potential action items were approved on the consent agenda.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PROFESSION**

**Comments or questions from Commissioners**

Vice-President Howlett acknowledged Commissioner Ponce Clay, who was recently appointed to the 36<sup>th</sup> District Court bench by Governor Whitmer.

Commissioner Mantese shared that he has been visiting high schools in Michigan, giving presentations about the legal field and the Rule of Law. He encouraged fellow Commissioners to contact him if they are interested and he will provide them with detailed information about what is included in his presentations. Commissioner Eccleston expressed interest in meeting and discussing this opportunity with Commissioner Mantese. It was also suggested that this be shared with the Straker Bar and other affinity Bars across the state.

**Comments or questions from the public**

None.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m.