



COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The Society's Council met on Friday, January 26, at 9:00 a.m. via videoconference, and conducted the following business:

Consent Agenda: The following items were approved by way of a Consent Agenda:

- Criminal Standards Committee – Cultural Competence and Charter Application
- Law Office Management Standards Committee
- Cloud Computing
- Amendments to Standards 3,5, and 7 Fees
- Profession Responsibility Monitoring Report
- Revised Council Community Agreement
- Memo to Council Mi'kmaq Land Acknowledgement and African Nova Scotian Acknowledgement - Introduction
- Minutes of September 15, 2023 and December 8, 2023

Council Appointments:

- Members at Large: Patricia Jones and Glenn Hubbard
- Southwestern District: Colin Fraser and Sara Nicole MacIsaac

Committee Appointments:

- Real Estate Standards Committee: Raffi Balmanoukian and Tracey Kennedy
- Professional Responsibility Practices and Procedures Committee: Kim Turner, KC, Chair
- NS Legal Aid Commission: George Ash - Reappointed as Chair

Resignations:

- Council: Jamie Vacon
- Lawyers Fund for Client Compensation: David Hirtle and Melanie Young
- Membership Resignations:
 - Ms. Dena J. Bryan
 - Ms. Tamzin Dawn Gillis
 - Ms. Mamie Sarah McGinn

EDI Education: Marla Brown, Director, Equity and Access informed Council of a training program that Management participated in with EquitAbility: *Shaping Accessible and Inclusive Workplaces*, which was conducted by Placemaking 4G, a socially conscious recruiting firm.

Education and Credentials – Kim Turner, KC, Partner, Pink Larkin and Julia Hiltz, Pink Larkin, jointly presented the regulatory process for applications giving rise to issues of good character. Recommendations were provided with background to support the amendment of the current regulations.

Jennifer Pink addressed the Council with the rationale for a proposed increase in fees for articling applications, namely the cost of criminal background checks.

Real Estate Standards Committee

Rob McCleave presented a motion to Council to introduce Standard 2.4 Plans and Surveys. One of the mandates of the Committee is to review and update existing standards as appropriate and necessary. After the annual review, the Committee determined there should be a standard in place.

Family Law Standards Committee

Terry Sheppard prepared and presented the introduction of a new Standard 16 - Costs. With the expansion of the Family Division of Supreme Court, costs have become more common. One of the Committee's mandates is to review and update existing standards as appropriate and necessary. After the annual review, the Committee determined there should be a standard in place.

Criminal Standards Committee

Mark Scott proposed a new Bail Hearing Standard for introduction, to ensure lawyers are aware of their competency standards with respect to bail and denial of bail, and to increase awareness regarding the ability to seek bail, including whether a client should seek bail, proper expectations to be met, and efforts to ensure higher levels of trust within equity deserving groups. This new standard will go to DEC before going to member consultation.

Law Office Management Standards Committee

Jonathan Saumier presented a new standard for introduction on technical competence. Some aspects had been adopted in January 2020 under the code of conduct, which highlighted the required level of competence from a technological perspective. The new standard codifies this, and the committee felt it was a great way to bring it forward as a standard, with AI becoming pervasive in the practice of law, and to remind lawyers of the risks and benefits of the technology being used.

The equity committees reviewed the standard and noted there are resources and support that can be provided. The DEC is in the process of creating its Workplan and will create further education on this.

Annual Firm Report for Approval

Kate Shewan, Director, Finance and Administration, presented the Annual Firm Report. The Report is completed by the designated firm for each employer and is required under the Regulations.

There are minimal changes to the report this year including regular updates and updated links where resources are provided. One change of note relates to the emergency pandemic relief measures for client verification being discontinued. The Society is asking designated lawyers to discontinue the pandemic relief measure as of April 1, 2024, while providing updates and guidance on client identification options via the NSBS website.

Strategic Planning Update

Cheryl Hodder, KC, CEO provided an update on the strategic planning process. A further update will be provided at the March Council meeting for further input and direction.

In Camera: Council met In Camera.