CGJA Chapter Officers Meeting

September 30, 2026

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks – CGJA President Gary Cooper

Sharon DeBenedetti introduced Gary Cooper, President of the Civil Grand Jurors' Association (CGJA).

Gary welcomed the Chapter Officers and expressed his appreciation for their continued dedication and contributions to their local Chapters and CGJA. He acknowledged the important role Chapter leadership plays in supporting the organization and expressed his pleasure with the strong attendance and level of participation at the meeting.

2. Welcome of CGJA's Newest Chapter – Modoc County

Marsha Caranci welcomed and recognized the members of the newly established Modoc County Chapter of CGJA. She expressed appreciation for their commitment to forming a local Chapter and becoming part of the statewide organization.

3. Chapter Liaison Program – Connecting and Supporting Our Chapters

Members of the Chapter Relations Subcommittee (CRS) provided an overview of the Chapter Liaison Program and its ongoing outreach efforts to all CGJA Chapters.

Each CRS liaison is assigned approximately three Chapters and serves as a resource and point of contact for Chapter officers. Liaisons reach out to Chapter presidents approximately three times per year to maintain communication, discuss issues or challenges related to Chapter operations, and offer guidance and assistance when needed.

The program is designed to strengthen relationships, encourage open communication, and ensure that Chapter officers have a familiar and accessible resource within CGJA. Liaisons also help connect Chapters with information, resources, and support available through the statewide organization.

4. Annual Conference – Chapter Officers' Meet and Greet

Martha Saldana-Wolf provided an overview of the Chapter Officers' Meet and Greet planned in conjunction with the upcoming CGJA Annual Conference.

The gathering will provide Chapter presidents or their designated representatives an opportunity to meet in person, many for the first time, as communication among Chapter leaders has traditionally taken place through Zoom meetings or telephone conversations.

The Meet and Greet is scheduled for the conclusion of the first day's conference activities, prior to the evening dinner. Additional information regarding the time and location will be provided to Chapter presidents.

5. Developing a Chapter Website

Barbara Sommer provided a presentation on the development of a website for the Yolo County Chapter. She shared her experience in creating a website that is simple in design yet effective in communicating information about the Chapter and its activities.

Her presentation demonstrated that a Chapter website need not be complex to serve as a useful resource for Chapter members and the community.

6. Chapter Tax Filing Requirements and Combined Membership Renewal Program

Michael Hofman addressed tax filing requirements for CGJA Chapters, emphasizing the importance of maintaining compliance with applicable tax regulations.

He reminded Chapter officers of their responsibility to meet filing requirements, particularly for Chapters that collect membership dues and maintain bank accounts or conduct other financial activities. He encouraged Chapters to verify their current tax-exempt status.

Michael also discussed CGJA's Combined Membership Renewal Program, encouraging Chapters to consider participating. The program allows members to renew both their CGJA and local Chapter memberships through a single payment. CGJA collects the combined dues and subsequently distributes the appropriate membership fees to each participating Chapter. This process simplifies membership renewal for members and reduces the administrative responsibilities of individual Chapters.

7. Civil Grand Jury Reports – "Success Stories" Program

Michael Hofman and John Bradley introduced *Success Stories*, a CGJA program designed to highlight the positive impact of Civil Grand Jury reports on local communities.

The program encourages Chapters to identify Civil Grand Jury reports that have resulted in meaningful changes or improvements within their counties and to submit them for consideration. The Public Relations Success Subcommittee will review and vet the report findings, the evidence of directly-related subsequent actions and resulting community benefits, and draft brief 1-2 page summaries.

These success stories can serve as both valuable outreach and public awareness tools, demonstrating the importance and effectiveness of the Civil Grand Jury's work, as well for use in the training of that county's future juries.

Chapters were encouraged to review their county's past Civil Grand Jury reports for potential story candidates, to follow-up related news coverage to confirm examples with positive outcomes.

This program provides an additional opportunity for Chapters to support the work of their local Civil Grand Juries while increasing public awareness of their contributions to local government accountability and improvement.

8. 2026–2027 Civil Grand Jury Recruitment Experiences

Nancy Baumann facilitated an informative and engaging discussion among Chapter representatives regarding their experiences with the recruitment of Civil Grand Jurors for the 2026–2027 term.

Representatives from participating Chapters were invited to share a brief overview of their local recruitment efforts, including outreach activities, the number of applications received, and the number of alternates selected for their respective Civil Grand Juries.

The discussion provided an opportunity for Chapters to compare recruitment experiences and gain insight into the challenges and outcomes experienced in other counties.

9. Closing Remarks

Sharon DeBenedetti thanked the presenters and Chapter Officers for their participation and contributions to the meeting. She expressed appreciation for the continued commitment of Chapter leadership and the willingness of Chapters to share their experiences, successes, and challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon DeBenedetti
Chairperson, Chapter Relations Subcommittee - CGJA