

California Grand Jurors' Association Board of Directors Meeting September 24, 2024

MINUTES

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

The roll was taken, and the meeting began at 3:00 p.m.

Directors present: Marsha Caranci, Gary Cooper, Karen Deeming, Bob Finlayson, Travis Gibbons, Jim Glover, Larry Herbst, Juliana Olinka Jones, Lou Panetta, Richard Rogers, Barbara Sommer.

Absent: Karen Jahr (excused), Shirley Boracci (excused), Diane Lloyd.

Quorum is present.

Others present: Committee Chairs: Lloyd Bell (ACC) Don Freeman (FC), Mike Hofman (PRC); Asst. Treasurer: Loydyne Lane.

B. Agenda and Comments

B-1 Agenda Approval: Board members unanimously approved the agenda.

B-2 CGJA Member Comments – none.

C. Consent Items

C-1 Approved Regular Board Meeting Minutes, 08-27-23: Cooper.

C-2 Acknowledged Committee Minutes and other documents in 09-24-24 meeting packet: Cooper.

D. Officer and Committee Chair Reports – see committee minutes in packet for details on current activities.

D-1 **President's Report** (Cooper) – addressed the issue of court websites having a direct link to CGJA. He described the ease with which he was able to do so in San Joaquin County by simply contacting the court officer. He will follow up on that with the MCRC and PRC.

Please let him know if there is anything you would like him to mention in his presidential address at the annual conference.

D-2 **Officer Reports**

Vice President (Herbst) – pointed out our need for volunteers and suggested creating an *ad hoc* "Volunteer Recruitment Committee" made up of current standing committee chairs. After some discussion, he agreed that the matter will be taken up again after the annual conference during which time committee chairs will have an opportunity to recruit new members.

Treasurer (Gibbons) – It is time for the 2025 budget requests from the standing committees. He will send out a request on Nov. 9, along with the September financial reports. He suggested that before that date, chairs contact their vendors to find out expected costs for 2025. The Finance Committee will meet on Nov. 12 to review the requests, which will then come to the November BOD meeting for approval.

He reviewed the CD and Treasury Bill investments. He has opened an online account with "Treasury Direct" and is considering a ladder of 4, 8, 13 and 17 week investments. The Finance Committee will be working on this. At present, Gibbons is the only one with access to the account and will set up a backup. Panetta asked if all the investment were going to treasuries. Gibbons said it will depend on the federal policy on interest rates. Will probably juggles back

and forth between CDs and treasuries. It is very easy for him to work with the latter online. Freeman pointed out that previously, CDs paid more interest than treasuries but that was no longer the case. However, long-term CDs (1 to 1/1/2 years) generally have higher interest rates than long-term treasuries. The latter are easy and safe investments.

Secretary (Sommer) – no report.

- D-10 **Annual Conference Committee (ACC)** – Bell reported that the conference program is finally complete with the addition of a presentation by Josh Franco who will speak about the attributes of effective grand jury reports (Monday morning).

Breakout sessions are set. One session added on strategies for recruiting grand jury members. The revised program, along with other pertinent data, will be sent to all soon.

Here is the committee list and leader plan for “CGJA Needs You” where chairs present committee objectives in speed dating format:

Annual Conference - Lloyd
LLRC/BPRC - Karen
PRC - Juliana
MCRC - Marsha
Training - Richard
Finance – Dan
Awards – Joann
Technology – Lou & Larry

Seven minutes each session. Attendees will be asked to sit in on a session, then circulate clockwise at the sound of the whistle. Committee name tents will be placed on individual tables.

Bell will provide instructions to those of you who have a part in the overall program ahead of time to keep things moving along.

We currently have 70 registrations and 17 dinner guests (total of 86 dinners) There is space reserved for 75 conference attendees, and a total of 90 for dinner. He is working on more space.

The hotel has extended their offer of the CGJA sleeping room rate until midnight October 4 (\$209). Act now. No guarantee they will extend it further.

Bell has reserved space in the hotel dining area for a Saturday evening dinner (on your own) for those not wishing to scavenge dinner on the economy. Order off the menu – room/credit charge.

Lunch will be provided at the Sunday morning retreat. Turkey and roast beef sandwiches provided courtesy of CGJA to enable a working lunch. Vegetarians contact him right away!

All of this info will be forthcoming from Bell ahead of the conference.

Action item E-3 was taken up at this point (see below).

- D-14 **Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup (GJE)** – Finlayson said the group continues to work on the database. Prof. Franco will update us at the annual conference. Herbst asked about the students’ volunteer number (substantial). Finlayson said they were all students at Cuyamaca College where they get course credit. At some point the project may be extended to other

community colleges. Franco and the committee members are monitoring the quality of the data entries.

- D-3 **Legal and Legislative Resources Committee (LLRC)** – no report.
- D-4 **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** – Hofman described the recent conference eblasts, created with input from Bell, Jones and Panetta. The mailing did stimulate some membership applications. Nevada County has used the new logo on promotional materials. The committee has updated its procedures incorporating the new logo use guidelines and adding information about the media spokesperson. Those are being reviewed by the BPRC. The civil grand jury blog posting procedure has been updated. He has written an article “Why I Volunteer” featuring Laura Griffin, which will be published in the October *Journal*. He would like to continue to focus on “behind the scenes” volunteers.
- D-5 **Membership Relations Committee (MCRC)** – Cooper said they have added a new leader, Sharon DeBenedetti, heading the chapter relations subcommittee. There will be a regular column in the *Journal* titled “Chapter Connections.” A chapter officers meeting is scheduled for November.
- The membership renewal season plan is in place. Please see the letters that were included in the packet. If you have any input, please advise Caranci, Hofman or Cooper. The letters will be sent in a series before the end of the year. Hofman stated that out of 332 members, only 145 need to renew (i.e., others carried over) and we have a new lifetime member.
- D-6 **Training Committee (TC)** – Rogers said the report writing workshops are underway and we are halfway through scheduling next season’s training sessions. On October 7 all the trainers will meet to go through the curriculum. Training will continue through January. The in-person Train-the-Trainers session will be in May. A survey went out today to trainers to get their feedback on the past year. The committee takes the feedback very seriously. The trainer mentoring program overseen by Bob Phibbs has been very well received.
- D-7 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Freeman reviewed the action taken on shifting from CDs to treasury bonds. The committee recommends holding \$50,000 in the Chase savings/checking account (see Action item E-2 below). It will revisit cash flow in the months following the change and report back to the board in January. Panetta asked about accrual accounting and will discuss it further with Freeman.
- D-8 **Nominations & Elections Committee (NEC)** – Deeming said the election went smoothly and reported the vote count which will be published in the *Journal*. The committee will put together a slate of officers for the board. Panetta said the Monterey chapter tellers are willing to serve again.
- D-9 **Awards Committee (AC)** – Sommer reported that both a best grand jury report and best media coverage award will be presented at the annual conference.
- D-11 **Bylaws & Policy Review Committee (BPRC)** – Herbst said they have dealt with some policy changes. There are only three active members, and the committee is much in need of someone with nonprofit corporate law expertise.
- D-13 **Technology Committee (Tech)** – Panetta said things are going well. The blog conversion was easy using Facebook tools. Committee member, Carina Lister, will take over responsibility for it. Herbst did background work on website billing. We have a number of separate licenses to be dealt with. Herbst reviewed the website statistics.

E. Action Agenda

E-1 Adopt amendments to the CGJA Policy Manual sections 1.40 B, 2.20 C, and 6.50.

[Motion made by Herbst, seconded by Jones.]

Herbst detailed the proposed changes: chapters use of the logo, approval process for associate members, and committee roster to the database manager.

The motion passed, 10-0-0, by hand vote.

E-2 Approve establishing a minimum end-of-month cash balance in our CGJA Chase checking and savings accounts of \$50,000

[Motion made by Freeman, seconded by Panetta.]

The motion passed, 9-0-0, by hand vote.

E-3 Approve the budget, location, and dates for the 2025 Annual Conference

[Motion made by Bell, seconded by Herbst.]

Bell pointed out that the annual conference has not been held in Southern California for about ten years. He described the options and the negotiations with San Luis Obispo. The 2025 cost will be below this year's. Herbst said this was the first time the cost has gone down since 2019. Bell suggested the board consider defraying some conference costs for next year.

The motion passed, 11-0-0, by hand vote.

F. Director Comments - none

G. Adjournment (4:14 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Sommer, Secretary