

California Grand Jurors' Association Board of Directors Meeting

February 25, 2025

MINUTES

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

Directors present: Shirley Boracci, Marsha Caranci, Gary Cooper, Karen Deeming, Travis Gibbons, Jim Glover, Larry Herbst, Karen Jahr, Lou Panetta, Richard Rogers, Barbara Sommer.

Absent: Juliana Olinka Jones (excused), Robert Finlayson.

Quorum is present.

Others present: Committee Chairs: John Bradley (PRC), Don Freeman (FC), Mike Hofman (MCRC), Loydyne Lane (Asst. Treasurer)

B. Agenda and Comments

B-1 Agenda Approval: Board members unanimously approved the agenda after noting that item E-3a, Chapter Name Change Guidelines, should have been included as an information item rather than attached to an action item.

B-2 CGJA Member Comments – none.

C. Consent Items

C-1 Approved Regular Board Meeting Minutes, 01-28-25: Cooper.

C-2 Acknowledged Committee Minutes and other documents in 02-25-25 meeting packet: Cooper.

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

D-1 **President's Report** (Cooper) – said he will be working on the succession plan. Please send him your suggestions. We will hold the spring retreat on Zoom. Committee chairs are expected to attend.

D-2 Officer Reports

Vice President (Herbst) – no report.

Treasurer (Gibbons) – he has finished trainer 2024 reimbursements, paid the \$2,039 insurance invoice, renewed the Zoom license for the year, prepared the tax information. He outlined anticipated costs for the next few months. Interest from CDs and T-bills goes into the general fund. Freeman added that the \$6,800 investment interest earned last year will grow to \$10,000 in 2025, if current rates hold up. The Treasury terms have been timed to meet the needs of our program.

Secretary (Sommer) – no report.

D-3 **Legal and Legislative Resources Committee (LLRC)** – Jahr addressed the information item distributed earlier today regarding a request to the Attorney General (AG) asking for clarification of the term “public prison.” Grand juries are tasked with reviewing public prisons in their counties. It is unclear as to whether that includes state facilities, i.e., prisons and conservation camps. There also is the question of whether “local detention facility” includes juvenile hall. We cannot ask for an opinion directly from the AG.

However, a county counsel can. The LLRC is seeking an appropriate county counsel willing to forward the document we have prepared, seeking clarification. A question arose about the distinction between “inquiry” and “investigation.” An inquiry refers to a preliminary exploration to determine if a full investigation is merited.

- D-4 **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** – Bradley pointed out the 84% open rate for the February Journal and described recent eBlasts. Our Constant Contact bill is coming due. We save 30% by paying annually rather than monthly. Two counties are interested in using our logo (San Mateo and Solano). He described the process of selecting public outreach activities to be developed and used over the next two years. There was a brief discussion about a PSA with an outdated CGJA logo on it.
- D-5 **Membership Relations Committee (MCRC)** – Hofman said we have 290 members. The committee continues to work on renewal messaging. The name change guidelines (see E-3a in the board packet) will be helpful in working with chapters. There are several considerations due to the wide range of chapter names. Updated bylaws are needed in many cases. He suggests doing so every three years as good nonprofit practice. The BPRC wants to avoid being overwhelmed and suggests moving on a one-to-one basis when dealing with bylaw revision.

The committee is considering splitting the chapter formation guidelines into two documents. One for chapters handling money, e.g., dues, expenses, donations and such, and the other for those who do not.

He described the regional meeting in Alameda. There continues to be some ambiguity about possible advocacy that might violate nonprofit regulations. The chapter has created a “ballot initiative” website.

- D-6 **Training Committee (TC)** – Rogers said this season there were 44 report writing workshops – a record number. There were 63 potential trainers identified. We have ten so far for the next season, including four lawyers. There is also an increase in the number from the southern part of the state. The Train the Trainers (TTT) session is scheduled for spring. Slides and text for training have been revised and are more concise and direct. They will serve as a manual for use during the rest of the year.

They experimented with AI but did not find it useful at this point.

- D-7 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Freeman detailed the proposed move from online QuickBooks to Enterprise QuickBooks. He pointed out the various hazards of our current accounting system. A change will cut down on errors and formalize the effort. It adds a quality review by an outsider and will close the books each quarter. We will acquire interface software that will reduce the manual input of credit card data by using templates that can be automatically fed into QuickBooks for credit card processing. The target date is June 1.

- D-8 **Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC)** – Panetta listed the committee members. See current roster and other info at

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/p6v5ych8wt99cua2kssr6/h?rlkey=p4163hajwbs6jzj2kmlo8frdm&st=gqiwu94p&dl=0>

Up for re-election are Deeming, Freeman, Jahr, Jones, and Rogers. Caranci terms out.

D-9 **Awards Committee (AC)** – no report

D-10 **Annual Conference Committee (ACC)** – no report.

D-11 **Bylaws & Policy Review Committee (BPRC)** – Herbst said Fresno chapter bylaws have been approved. Monterey is next, with additional information having been requested. Marin is under initial review and Contra Costa has not yet been started.

D-13 **Technology Committee (Tech)** – Panetta said he will create a new Zoom password. Contact him if you need it for a scheduled Zoom meeting.

D-14 **Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup (GJE)** – no report.

E. Action Agenda

E-1 Ratified the appointment of Dan (Don) Freeman as Director for the central region

[Motion made by Cooper, seconded by Herbst]

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

E-2 Approved of up to \$600 in travel expenses for Lou Panetta to speak at a conference in Visalia.

[Motion made by Caranci, seconded by Rogers]

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

E-3 Approval of Chapter Guidelines

The guidelines need refinement, particularly about guardrails (i.e., staying within the bounds of nonprofit regulations) – see page 4 of E-3b in packet.

Suggested options:

- Continue developing the guidelines as “best practice” advice, while clarifying what cannot be done.
- Incorporate the guidelines into chapter bylaws, bypassing the need for a separate document, i.e., fold them into the chapter bylaws template.
- Provide broad guidelines and reference CGJA’s bylaws to provide the guardrails.

Herbst pointed out that we need to consider two key questions beforehand. How do these guidelines fit with approved and existing chapter bylaws? Once the guidelines are approved, how will they be described and distributed?

The motion was tabled. Board members were asked to submit their comments and suggestions to Hofman (mikeh@moyhofer.com) by **Thursday, March 6** (end of day).

E-4 Approval by Board of Directors to spend up to \$15,000 for unplanned projected costs associated with finance process improvements.

Freeman broke out the detailed expenses within the amount requested. A commitment will lead to an ongoing expense of about \$3,800 per year. Caranci recognized the need for a better accounting system but expressed concern about the ongoing expense. Freeman described the ways in which that might be reduced, if necessary, e.g., not having the consultant. Hofman said server costs could be reduced.

[Motion made by Freeman, seconded by Glover]

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

F. Director Comments – none

G. Adjournment (5:14 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Sommer, Secretary