

California Grand Jurors' Association Board of Directors Meeting

August 26, 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, Robert Finlayson, Dan Freeman, Travis Gibbons, Jim Glover, Larry Herbst, Richard Rogers, Barbara Sommer.

Absent (excused): Karen Deeming, Karen Jahr, Juliana Olinka Jones, Lou Panetta,

Quorum is present.

Others present: Loydyne Lane, Asst. Treasurer; Lloyd Bell, Chair (ACC); John Bradley, Chair (PRC); Michael Hofman Chair (MCRC); Jon Tonsing, Member.

B. Agenda and Comments

B-1 Agenda Approval: By acclamation.

B-2 CGJA Member Comments – none.

C. Consent Items

C-1 Approved Regular Board Meeting Minutes, 06-24-25: Cooper.

C-2 Acknowledged other documents in 08-26-25 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) – reported on the situation with the Alameda chapter whose position in championing a ballot initiative violates our prohibition on getting involved in civil grand jury matters and participation in political issues. A major problem is that even though they have a disclaimer on their website, the CGJA logo and link is displayed, i.e., we are “one click away.” They have promoted their position at regional chapter gatherings and have support from the Santa Clara County chapter. Cooper has discussed the matter at length with Sandy McCabe, the chapter president. As there is no indication that Alameda will change its position, we will begin the disassociation process. Herbst (BPRC) will research necessary steps with particular attention to “separating with cause.”

D-2 Officer Reports

Vice President (Herbst) – no report

Treasurer (Gibbons) – recognized Joann Landi for her efforts in getting out the invoices for the current training program. Reimbursement for trainers is moving along, using Zelle in some cases. Rogers requested that a calendar be established for billing and paying so that trainers could be advised about when to expect payment. Gibbons said that will be done on a weekly basis.

Secretary (Sommer) – reminded committee and workgroup chairs to update their rosters.

D-3 **Legal and Legislative Resources Committee (LLRC)** – no report. Tonsing said the committee is seeking a sponsor for material to be submitted to the Attorney General's office. Finlayson described an anomalous situation in Contra Costa. The chapter received a complaint about a grand jury report on the Clayton City council. The chapter responded that they had nothing to do with the report and could not get involved. He forwarded the information to the LLRC chair.

D-4 **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** – no report.

D-5 **Membership Relations Committee (MCRC)** – Hofman said current membership was substantially higher than this time last year with 339 members compared with 289. Thirty-nine introductory members joined this year, in contrast with seven last year. He felt the increase was due to two factors: our training program and the professional quality of our communications.

The committee is large and strong. They are reaching out to chapters and beginning work on recognizing volunteers with CGJA. Succession planning is underway. The Santa Cruz chapter has reemerged and is completely restructured.

D-6 **Training Committee (TC)** – Rogers said the trainers completed a successful training season. Report writing workshops begin in mid-October, continuing until the end of January. The onboarding process for ten new trainers went well and all ten are still with us. The total number of trainers is 38 and we are in good shape for the future.

D-7 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Freeman referenced the abbreviated reports: Annual Conference, Training, and "all others." Training accounts for 83% of our expenses, the Annual Conference 4%, the move to QuickBooks Enterprise (QBE) 7%, leaving 6% as everything else. We saved money on the QBE conversion and may therefore be able to schedule another outside review.

There was an extended discussion about the need for easily read financials, best accomplished using Excel (which is easily manipulated), versus the built-in security of QBE, whose reports are not as easily understood by lay readers. It was also important that individual committee reports be available to chairs and board members. The solution has been Michael Hofman's development of a template which allows for a direct download of data from QBE without any manipulation, into a more legible Excel format. As a control, the FC chair will check monthly that the figures in Excel coincide with those in QBE. Herbst pointed out that an extended investigation by the Tech Committee, reviewing every step from Stripe (our payment processor) with Hofman, convinced the former that the template procedure delivers as described.

D-8 **Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC)** – Herbst reported that the committee's work for the election is finished; 332 electronic ballots were sent, 7 mail-in. Reminders to non-voters will be sent on two occasions before the voting ends on Sept. 15.

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

D-10 **Annual Conference Committee (ACC)** – Bell stated that the committee has finalized the program for 2025, and all information has been posted on the webpage. They are currently working to finalize the printed program.

Standing committee chairs need to submit their written annual reports by September 30. We are still missing quite a few. Please don't make us chase you!

We currently have 45 conference registrations, trending ahead of where we were last year at this time. Kudos to the PRC for their assistance with Constant Contact reminders to our members and those who have registered to attend.

Sleeping room nights for Saturday, Oct 25 are nearly exhausted. The Saturday block of rooms was doubled from what was requested one year ago, but the hotel has booked a huge Cal Poly event that evening. If you still need a room for Oct 25, you will need to call **Heather Bedia, Monday through Friday, 8 AM – 5 PM, directly at 805 547-6407** as that option is no longer available when booking on their website. There is no issue in obtaining a room Sunday night.

Bell recently queried the board about holding next year's conference in Sacramento on Nov 1-2, 2026, due to space limitations at the hotel, instead of one week earlier (Oct 25-26). Based on feedback, he plans to submit those dates, the proposed contract, and budget for the 2026 conference at the September board meeting.

- D-11 **Bylaws & Policy Review Committee (BPRC)** – Herbst said the committee has two sets of committee procedures to review: Training and PRC. The Santa Cruz Chapter is in the process of revising its by-laws.
- D-13 **Technology Committee (Tech)** – Herbst reported that on the website, 1,800 total visits constitute an all-time high.
- D-14 **Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup (GJE)** – Finlayson said that the workgroup continues its dialogue with the State Archivist. That office is very interested in improving county submissions of grand jury reports. They have a phone conference scheduled on October 3.

E. Action Agenda

- E-1 **Approve MCRC proposing the draft concept included in the board packet to the chapters for their input and, if the response is favorable, fine-tuning it in time for the October/November renewal campaign.**

Hofman outlined the concept of one-stop shopping for dues payment to CGJA and to each chapter, and the committee's desire to assess chapter interest in some combination thereof. There was a brief discussion of possible concerns and objections.

[Motion made by Hofman, seconded by Herbst.]

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

Director Comments – none

G. Adjournment (4:25 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Sommer, Secretary