

California Grand Jurors' Association Board of Directors Meeting September 23, 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, Robert Finlayson, Travis Gibbons, Jim Glover, Larry Herbst, Karen Jahr, Richard Rogers, Barbara Sommer.

Absent: Juliana Jones, Dan Freeman (excused), Lou Panetta (excused).

Quorum is present.

Others present: Loydyne Lane, Asst. Treasurer; Lloyd Bell, Chair (ACC); John Bradley, Chair (PRC); Michael Hofman Chair (MCRC); Directors-elect: Lori Macdonald, Karen Michael and Jon Tonsing.

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, 08-26-25: Cooper.

C-2 Acknowledged other documents in 09-23-25 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) – welcomed Directors-elect.

D-2 **Officer Reports**

Vice President (Herbst) – reiterated need to get action items into the regular packet mailing rather than leaving them to the supplemental mailing.

Treasurer (Gibbons) – It is budget time. The Finance Committee (FC) will use the following schedule:

Oct. 6 (at the latest) - September year-to-date actuals will be sent to the responsible chair/member.

Oct. 24 (at the latest) - Committee inputs to the FC are needed.

Nov. 11 - FC review and approval

Nov. 16 - FC input to Board packet (16 Nov),

Nov. 25 - Board approval.

Jan. 5 (at the latest) - budget input to CGJA Financial System.

Herbst raised the issue of insufficient detail in the budget information, making it difficult for committee chairs to keep track of specific budgeted amounts and expenditures. Finance Committee members, Rogers and Caranci acknowledged the problem and said the committee was continuing to work on it. Hofman, also a FC committee member, said the problem should be alleviated next year with the submission of a more detailed budget at the end of this year.

Rogers pointed out that items can be added. However, the line item then shows up for all committees.

Secretary (Sommer) – no report.

D-3 **Legal and Legislative Resources Committee (LLRC)** – no report.

D-4 **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** – Bradley provided the rationale for the “Talking Points” document. The outreach tool is designed to be tailored locally. He wants to present it at the annual conference.

He noted the additional item of interest being the potential Wikipedia article. He pointed out that once posted, the article would no longer be under our control (as designed by Wikipedia).

D-5 **Membership Relations Committee (MCRC)** – Hofman reported that the Santa Cruz chapter has been completely resuscitated. Dar Swenson has become co-chair (along with Sharon Debenedetti) of the chapter relations committee. They are doing a lot of work. We now have 345 members, up from 303 at the end of the year and 282 at this time last year. There were 44 introductory to full member conversions this year, compared to 3 last year. He attributes the increase to our training and communication activities. The committee is updating relevant webpages and they hope to have that done by the chapter officers meeting on Nov. 19.

D-6 **Training Committee (TC)** – Rogers said the committee has nearly finished preparation of its materials. Caranci said the reporting writing workshops were the committee’s largest area of growth. An increasing number of counties are signing up their entire juries, as opposed to just the editorial committees, for the training.

D-7 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Rogers said the committee continues to review the changes from QuickBooks Online (QBO) to QuickBooks Enterprise (QBE). Hofman has been working on a procedures manual for QBE.

D-8 **Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC)** – Herbst said this year’s voting participation was about 40%, compared with past years ranging from 30-35%. He described the New Director’s Orientation that involves a slide presentation done by Zoom lasting about 1-1/2 to 2 hours, usually in January. Current directors and committee chairs are invited to attend as well.

D-9 **Awards Committee (AC)** – Sommer reported that the committee has selected a winner of the Rolando Service Award. It has also selected a winner of the Best Grand Jury Report award. There will not be a Best Media Coverage Award this year. There was only

one nomination for a single media report – good coverage, but not thought to be sufficient for the award.

- D-10 **Annual Conference Committee (ACC)** – Bell said the annual conference planning is completed and on track. Details are in the minutes.

Annual conference registrations stand at 72 as of today. Our original plan called for 60. Five weeks to go! So far, 17 seated jurors have registered to attend. Hotel sleeping room reservations have surpassed the contracted room block. Embassy Suites has committed to honoring the \$156 negotiated rate through October 3, the contracted cutoff date, for Sunday night stays. After October 3, the Sunday night rate will be \$179. Reservations should be made online for Sunday only stays.

Unfortunately, the original Saturday night room block has been exhausted, and the \$156 rate is no longer offered. Current rate for Saturday night is \$349. Those requiring Saturday evening accommodations must call the hotel.

- D-11 **Bylaws & Policy Review Committee (BPRC)** – Herbst reported that the committee has approved the Santa Cruz chapter bylaws. He pointed out that using the CGJA template is quite simple for the chapters and makes BPRC's job much easier. The committee has the PRC and TC procedures to review.

- D-13 **Technology Committee (Tech)** – Herbst summarized the website statistics. He talked about the website transformations that need to be made should we develop the dual membership concept. A new membership form needs to be designed.

- D-14 **Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup (GJE)** – Finlayson said that Josh Franco would be at the conference and give a brief update. Committee members meet with the State Archivist on Oct. 3. Jay Lark is working on a proposal with that office to develop a uniform grand jury report submittal system for counties.

E. Action Agenda

- E-1 **Approve LLRC response letter to the request from M.K. O'Donnell regarding CGJA information claimed to be covered by the Public Records Act** – informational (passed by Executive Committee action on August 27, 2025).

- E-2 **Approve the budget, location, and dates for the 2026 Annual Conference and authorize the CGJA President to sign the contract.**

[Motion made by Bell, seconded by Glover.]

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

- E-3 **Approve distribution of "Talking Points" document.**

[Motion made by Bradley, seconded by Finlayson.]

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

- E-4 **Approve MCRC implementation of combining payments for CGJA and chapter dues.**

[Motion withdrawn by Hofman]

- E-5 **Accept and approve all electees to the CGJA Board.**

[Motion made by Finlayson, seconded by Caranci.]

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

F. Director Comments – none

G. Adjournment (4:20 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Sommer, Secretary