

California Grand Jurors' Association Board of Directors Meeting

August 25, 2026

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, Gary Cooper, Robert Finlayson, Jim Glover, Karen Jahr, Lori Macdonald, Karen Michael, Lou Panetta, Richard Rogers, Barbara Sommer, and Jon Tonsing.

Absent: Dan Freeman Herbst (excused), Larry Herbst (excused)

Quorum is present.

Others present: Nancy Baumann (MCRC), Lloyd Bell (ACC), John Bradley (PRC), Marsha Caranci (TC), Mike Hoffman (MCRC), Loydyne Lane (Asst. Treas.) and Martha Saldaña-Wolf (AC).

B. Agenda and Comments

B-1 Approved Agenda, 08-25-26.

B-2 CGJA Member Comments – none.

C. Consent Items

C-1 Approved Regular Board Meeting Minutes, 06-23-26.

D. Officer and Committee Chair Reports

D-1 President's Report (Cooper) – announced that Karen Jahr would serve as Interim Chair of BPRC.

D-2 Officer Reports

Vice President (Herbst) – absent.

Treasurer (Rogers) – it has been a busy time. All bills are paid except for a few remaining trainers. Cash flow is good and July receivables were healthy.

Secretary (Sommer) – no report.

D-3 **Legal and Legislative Resources Committee (LLRC)** – for a couple of years the committee has been seeking an attorney to solicit an opinion from the State Attorney General regarding the definition of “prison” with respect to civil grand jury oversight. Tonsing reported that Katherine "Kit" Elliott, Mendocino Interim County Counsel, has forwarded a legal brief authored by Bob Phibbs and Tonsing to the Office of the State Attorney General.

D-4 **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** – Bradley has renewed our Constant Contact subscription for \$755, saving thirty percent by renewing for a full year in advance. Responding to a question, he said 30-40 Eblasts were sent last year, totaling about 37,000 emails.

- D-5 **Membership Relations Committee (MCRC)** – Hofman said we have 1,059 Introductory Members (without Inyo County). He suggested that the lower number this year was due to there being fewer grand jury applicants leading to fewer alternates being trained. Data show 191 holdovers in this year's juries (about 10%).
- Along with Bradley (PRC) and Finlayson (GJE), he continues to work on the "Success Stories." He will discuss them at the next chapter officers' meeting. The committee is also working on the volunteer culture breakout session for the annual conference. Contact him if you would like to see a description.
- The new chapter (Modoc) brings the total to 25. Modoc is adopting the combined membership program.
- Chapters are needing help with financial paperwork to the government. Rogers suggested that the MCRC and FC create a library of helpful documents. Hofman is working on a procedures document for CGJA and will also work on chapter information.
- Also in the works is a membership renewal marketing initiative – perhaps a video.
- D-6 **Training Committee (TC)** – Rogers thanked the committee's "behind the scenes" volunteers. They were vital to the very successful training season. Cost came in a little under budget. The Curriculum Subcommittee is working on the Report Writing Workshop materials. The workshops begin in late October and continue through January.
- Caranci reported the major loss of Bob Phibbs as a trainer, just as the season was beginning. Several members of the committee stepped into fill the gap. She reiterated the value of local chapter member's attending the training sessions (and bringing treats or providing lunch). It provides a good opportunity for the sitting jurors to meet chapter members.
- D-7 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Rogers said there had been a glitch with Treasury Direct which was resolved in a couple of weeks. In the process the committee learned that the form reassigning the treasurer, i.e., transferring control of the account from Travis Gibbons to Richard Rogers, had been received and was being processed.
- D-8 **Nominations and Elections (NEC)** – Tonsing said 325 E-ballots and six mail ballots were sent in August. They are due back on September 15. So far, 27% of the E-ballots have been cast (the usual final return is 30-35%). The committee will send vote reminders. Hofman raised the issue of validating the vote: Should it be the county of current residence or the county in which grand jury service took place? Hofman, Tonsing, and Panetta will meet to address the issue.
- D-9 **Awards Committee (AC)** – Saldaña-Wolf said the committee has put the Volunteer of the Quarter discussion on the back burner for the next few months and is focusing on number of volunteer service years. The committee feels that long-term volunteers should get special recognition at the five-year intervals. Five-year volunteers will receive certificates. Eight people will receive the twenty- and ten-year awards, with thirteen at the five -year mark. She will be approaching the board next month for a \$500 increase in the AC budget for this recognition.

- D-10 **Annual Conference Committee (ACC)** – Bell reported that the conference program is being adjusted to include presentation of Certificates of Affiliation to Modoc and Yolo County chapters.

There are currently 53 conference registrants, with a target of 90, which he feels will be met. At the September board meeting, he will present a list of locations for next year's conference. Asked about location selection, he said the committee seeks to provide an accessible location and prefers the Hilton Embassy Suites. The committee investigated Doubletree as an alternative, but it was more expensive. The central part of the state is where most of our members live.

Panetta made the point of having to forward conference information to chapter members who were not CGJA members and suggested that others do that as well. Hofman said that chapter presidents were included on the publicizing Eblast list.

Bell raised the issue of using AI to summarize the conference breakout sessions. There was a discussion about the benefits and potential hazards of doing so. The decision was to check it out with one volunteer for a session at this year's conference to see how it goes.

- D-11 **Bylaws & Policy Review Committee (BPRC)** – Jahr said the committee would be reviewing revisions to the Mother Lode Chapter's by-laws next week and would have those for the next board meeting.
- D-13 **Technology Committee (Tech)** – Panetta said everything is working. There was an issue with payments for conference registration which Elevation was able to clear. Web activity statistics show that our site is being used more.
- D-14 **Grand Jury Effectiveness Committee (GJE)** – Finlayson said the committee is working on its procedures. They have had no recent contact with the State Archivist. He is working with Hofman (MCRC) on the "Success Stories."

E. Action Agenda

E-1 Approved the Modoc County Chapter's application for affiliation.

[Motion made by Hofman, seconded by Jahr.]

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

E-2 Approve Report Library Beta Test Plan – motion pulled by author.

- F. **Director Comments** – Cooper described being contacted by a *San Francisco Standard* reporter and being asked to comment on a San Francisco grand jury report. He declined and noted the attempt to generate controversy about the report.

Jahr read Policy Manual section **21.00 Communications Policy and Matrix** indicating that the only appropriate respondent to such inquiries is the board of directors.

21.00 Communications Policy and Matrix						
CGJA Outside Communications						
Communication Item	Originator	CGJA Unit Review	CGJA Info to Board	CGJA Unit Approval	Sent Via	Sent to*
Correspondence on other sensitive matters	Any	Board	N/A	Board or designee	mail (normally)	Targeted designee

Also from the policy manual, **22.00 Policy on Responses to Inquiries**

- A. Inquiries to directors, officers, or others. Any time someone contacts a CGJA officer, director, committee chair, or committee member seeking information regarding grand jury practices, grand jury law, or other general information about the California grand jury system, the person receiving the inquiry shall immediately respond to the inquirer that their inquiry is being forwarded to the appropriate party for response, and shall then forward the inquiry to either the LLRC Chair, the TC Chair, or the PRC Chair (or all three if appropriate).

If the inquiry has to do with CGJA as an organization, the person receiving the inquiry shall either respond or forward the inquiry to the appropriate committee chair or officer. All such communications shall be copied to the CGJA Directors if substantive in nature.

G. Adjournment (4:23 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Sommer, Secretary