MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The Maine State Bar Association promotes the honor, dignity and professionalism of lawyers, advances the knowledge, skills and interests of its members, and supports the public interest in a fair and effective system of justice.

Antitrust Statement

The Maine State Bar Association (MSBA) is organized to promote the honor, dignity and professionalism of lawyers; advance the knowledge, skills and interests of its members; and support the public interest in a fair and effective system of justice. The MSBA, its officers, Board of Governors and employees shall not, and do not, play any role in the competitive decisions of its members or their employees, or in any way restrict competition in any aspect of the legal profession. By adoption of this statement of policy, the MSBA makes clear its unequivocal support for the fair and effective policy of competition served by the antitrust laws and its uncompromising intent to comply strictly in all respects with those laws.

Members Present: Babcock, Bishop, Burbank, Cloutier, Day, Deschuytner, Dunitz, Faunce, Hall, Herman, Johnson, McDonald, McNally, Saufley, and Stitham.

Members Absent: Columber, Cramer, Haddow, Kreckel, Peterson, Tebbets, and Willey.

The President called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Item 1. Discussed Membership Committee recommendation to establish a membership dues category for Public Service Sector attorneys.

In response to the Board’s charge for the Membership Committee to review membership categories and dues structure, Chair Bishop reported that the Committee recommends the addition of a Public Service Sector membership dues category at an annual rate of $160. Chair Bishop requested the special meeting because the Committee would like to implement this new dues category immediately, as the dues renewal cycle began on September 1 for FY 2020-2021.

The definition of the Public Service Sector dues category would follow the definition of the same representative on the BOG in our bylaws: attorneys working full-time for governmental entities (federal, state, county, municipal); legal services organizations; military; and, accredited law schools or universities. Historically, these groups of attorneys have chosen not to belong to the MSBA typically because of the cost of membership and/or unneeded benefits. However, ED Armstrong reported that there is plenty room for growth in this category. According to the Board of Overseers demographics from last year, there are approximately 556 government attorneys, 26 law school professors, 130 legal
services attorneys, and 17 military attorneys registered to practice law in Maine. She indicated that although we would lose some money as members switched from the standard rate category of $265 to the new rate of $160, we should see an increase in the number of new Public Service Sector members to offset the loss.

Governors raised concerns about the reaction of solo and small firm attorneys who pay the standard member rate, as well as reaction from rural county attorneys. ED Armstrong pointed out that this has been the sticking point in the past for why we have never implemented a lower rate for this group of attorneys, but noted that solo and small firm attorneys typically require more of the services MSBA provides than those in the Public Service Sector. Governor Deschuytner also reasoned 1) dues waivers can be requested by any member annually, and 2) solo or small firm attorneys can write off their dues to their businesses, whereas many of the attorneys that fall into the new category would not be able to do so. A motion was made, duly seconded, and a majority voted in the affirmative to accept the Membership Committee's recommendation to create a membership dues category for Public Service Sector attorneys (as defined by the bylaws) at an annual rate of $160.

Chair Bishop also reported that the Committee agreed to run a one-time promotional rate for attorneys who have never been a member of the MSBA, or haven't been a member in the last five years. Those individuals can join the MSBA for FY 2020-2021 for $110. The promotion expires on November 30.

Adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela P. Armstrong
Executive Director