

California Grand Jurors' Association Board of Directors Meeting
January 25, 2022
MINUTES

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

Directors present: Shirley Boracci, Bob Finlayson, Travis Gibbons, Larry Herbst, Lou Panetta, Henry Rible, Barbara Sommer.

Absent: Marsha Caranci (exc.), Bernadette Cheyne, Janet Clark (exc.), Tim Hafner, Diane Lloyd, (exc.),

Quorum is present.

Others present: Committee Chairs: Lloyd Bell, ACC and FC; and Jerry Lewi, PRC.

B. Agenda and Comments

B-1 Agenda Approval: Board members unanimously approved the agenda.

B-2 CGJA Member Comments - none

C. Consent Items

C-1 Approved Regular Board Meeting Minutes, 11/23/21: Panetta

C-2 Acknowledged Committee Minutes and other documents in 01/25/22 meeting packet: Panetta Board unanimously approved the consent items and the minutes.

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

D-1 **President's Report** – Panetta pointed out the MCRC needs help and requested that board members send him names of possible committee members. Herbst requested that the desired skill set be described, and more specifics added, such as expected time commitment, meeting times, etc. Panetta and Boracci will discuss creating that with Lloyd.

D-2 **Officer Reports**

Vice President (Herbst) – no report.

Treasurer (Gibbons) – the approved budget information has been entered into QuickBooks. Training is responsible for a \$66,000 profit. This will drop considerably when on-site training is resumed. Panetta suggested we favor zoom training where possible. Boracci mentioned many in her county preferred zoom meetings. Subsequent discussion brought forth advantages such as improved communication (can see faces associated with names), no need for travel and a considerable reduction in cost (no travel or lodging reimbursements).

Secretary (Sommer) – no report.

D-7 **Finance Committee (FC)** – Bell said that the meeting minutes capture all of the issues.

One cautionary comment about our current financial posture: Over the past two years our CGJA balance sheet bottom line has more than doubled primarily because Covid interrupted normal training activity. This resulted in greatly reduced training expenses. With training

anticipating a return to “normal” for 2022, directors are cautioned that CGJA probably will not continue to experience such growth of funds in the future.

Herbst mentioned that we are a non-profit and should keep income balanced with expenses. We could have charged less for Zoom training. He added that the treasury has benefitted from the recruitment efforts of the MCRC. Bell responded that we do have value and need funds to meet that value. Gibbons echoed Herbst regarding the membership input into finances. He added that there was an unusual number of life memberships this year and a large 2-year signup. Next year’s income may be less.

Panetta thanked the committee for its well-organized financial package and complimented Chair Bell on doing a great job.

- D-10 **Annual Conference Committee (ACC)** – Bell said that committee is ahead of the game and are now fine tuning the conference. The minutes gives good info about where they are in their planning. The biggest change from 2019 is incorporating the usual early-morning MCRC meeting into the annual conference program itself with a dedicated block of time.

Herbst asked about contingency plans for an online conference. Bell pointed out that was what they had been doing for the last two years. If a change from in-person is needed, the required events have priority and then steps are taken to reduce the time allotment. There was additional discussion about zoom alternatives. Bell pointed out the financial requirements of room, food and beverage commitments made when setting up the conference.

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

- D-4 **Public Relations Committee (PRC)** – Lewi reported that Juliana Jones will become the CGJA blogger. Herbst said she posted on the scrolling blog without issue.

- D-5 **Membership Relations Committee (MCRC)** – Boracci said there are currently 338 members. We may lose IMs in June and July. The committee is working on enticing them to join as regular members.

There was discussion about updating the chapter formation guide. The task is too formidable for the committee to address at present. Panetta will review it, suggesting that some members of the Monterey chapter may be able to help.

- D-6 **Training Committee (TC)** – Gibbons said the minutes were complete. Panetta added that five counties were starting January service, some in person and some online.

- D-10 **Awards Committee (AC)** – Sommer reported that the committee sent a letter to chapter and association presidents alerting them to the Certificate of Special Recognition Award.

- D-11 **Bylaws & Policy Review Committee (BPRC)** – no report.

- D-13 **Technology Committee (Tech)** – Herbst reviewed the website statistics. November use was strong, December’s about average for December.

He again brought up the frequent accessing of the volunteer form. It was suggested that there might be a need for more specific information be added to the online committee descriptions. He will follow up on that. Panetta wondered if, in fact, the filled-out volunteer form was being forwarded. He will test it.

Herbst will resume trying to reconnect the blog to Facebook.

Gibbons and Finlayson brought up the problem of trainees not being able to use the grand jury report search function on the website. Herbst explained that the problem was with Google not our website. The Google custom search engine sits on a Google server and Google is not providing good support. Panetta said he has not had any problem when demonstrating it during training sessions. The problem seems to arise when jurors try it on their own. Herbst will attempt to contact Google about it.

D-14 **Grand Jury Effectiveness Workgroup** – Finlayson said they are still working on the criteria for an effective report and are trying to build a model. They are looking at a database provided by Rich Knowles. Hopefully they will have a report for the next board meeting. They plan to start collecting the more readily accessible and quantifiable data such as number of reports, number of recommendations, etc.

D-15 **Diversity Study Workgroup** – Sommer referred directors to the report included in the packet. There was a discussion about actual grand jury diversity statistics. Sommer pointed out that although the state is now requiring courts to report such numbers (see attachment to the diversity report), there is little indication that they are doing so. The directors who are trainers pointed out diverse grand juries in San Bernardino, Imperial, and Santa Clara counties.

Panetta suggested that the workgroup collect diversity data from the courts to determine who is doing a good job, and then to find out what they do. See what works. Sommer expressed concern about jeopardizing relations with the courts. Panetta suggested that Sommer and he meet with Caranci to find contacts.

E. Action Agenda

E-1 **Create a Grand Jury Awareness Workgroup, appoint Lou Panetta as chair, allocate \$1,200 per month for six months for media consultant.**

[Motion made by Panetta, seconded by Gibbons]

Rible asked about the goals of the action. Panetta described the three aspects of the proposal in more detail. Finlayson said it should include social media guidelines for chapters. Panetta said that would be included in the toolkit segment. Finlayson asked how we might measure its effectiveness. Panetta said that was difficult and we would need to figure it out.

The motion passed, 7-0-0, by hand vote.

E-1 **Approve updated book, *California's Civil Grand Juries* for release by posting on website. Approve message to members.**

[Motion made by Lewi, seconded by Boracci]

The motion passed, 7-0-0, by hand vote.

F. Director Comments

Finlayson said that Contra Costa Grand Jury is seriously considering implementation of a volunteer clerk program modeled on that of Santa Cruz.

Herbst described a conversation with a SLO chapter member who teaches at the community college level. He brought up the possibility of providing a segment on the grand jury (as has been considered

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by CGJA in the past). The response was there was not sufficient time in the already crowded curriculum to, at best, devote more than an hour to it.

Panetta said he would chair the NEC and was seeking both director and member committee members. Sommer volunteered as director from the central area. He needs suggestions for member participants.

G. Adjournment (4:37 PM)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Sommer, Secretary