



THE CANADIAN
BAR ASSOCIATION
Alberta Branch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

DRAFT MINUTES

March 16, 2022 12:00 pm

Via Videoconference

In attendance:

Adam Norget	Heather Walsh	Michael Alexander Kirk
Aldo Argento	Indra Maharaj	Michael R. McKinney, Q.C
Amanda Lindberg	Israel Waive	Michelle Karasinski
Angela V. Saccomani, Q.C	James L. Lebo, Q.C	Nerissa Young
Aniedi I. Davidson	Jennifer Freund	Nicholas Konstantinov
Benjamin Hall, C.I.C.C	Jillian Gamez	Nicole Cargill
Bianca Kratt	Justin Edward Kingston	Patrick James Heinsen
Bradley Regehr	Kasey Gardner	Robert J. Normey
Bryanna Jean White	Kristen P. Clarke	Sandra Meyer
Cameron Smith	Kyle Kawanami	Sania Chaudhry
Chani Samresh	Lee-Anne Hateley	Shannon Belvedere
Christopher Ghesquiere	Lenci J. Kadavil	Tamara R. Prince
David Hiebert	Leonard S. Mandamin	Tara Iles
Donna Cheryl Purcell, Q.C	Lucille R. Birkett, Q.C	Thomas Kannanayakal
Ejeme I. Okhiria	Lungile Tinarwo	Tiro Clarke
Frank Friesacher	M. Jenny McMordie, Q.C.	Tracy C. Brown
Graeme K. Maitland	Maureen Armitage	Wayne A. Barkauskas, Q.C
Gregory A. Harding, Q.C	Melissa N. Burkett	Xaverie Maclennan

1. Welcome

CBA Alberta President Bianka Kratt

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved: Graeme K. Maitland

Seconded: Sania Chaudhry

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes of March 10, 2021 AGM

Moved: Tiro Clarke

Seconded: David Hiebert

Motion carried.

4. Introductions

CBA Alberta President Bianka Kratt

a. Board and Executive Committee

- Bianca Kratt (President), Amanda M. Lindberg (Vice-President), Indra Maharaj (Treasurer), Kyle Kawanami (Secretary), David Hiebert (Past President), Aldo Argento, Sarah Coderre, Jillian Gamez, Patrick Heinsen, Michelle Karasinski, Adam Norget, Israel Waive and Sania Chaudhry (Directors)

b. Special Guests

- Chair of Canadian Bar Insurance / Lawyer Financial - Jim Lebo, Q.C , Michael McKinney, Q.C – National Board member from Alberta
- Other guests: CBA Alberta Past Presidents - Bradley Regehr, Frank Friesacher, Gregory A. Harding, Q.C., James Lebo, Q.C., Lucille R. Birkett, Q.C., M. Jenny McMordie, Q.C., and Wayne A. Barkauskas, Q.C.

i. Greetings from CBA National President Stephen Rotstein via a video message

- Stephen Rotstein brings greetings from Toronto via a video message, and acknowledges Michael McKinney, Q.C, National Board member from Alberta, Branch President - Bianca Kratt, Vice President – Amanda Lindberg and Past President – David Hiebert.
- Special greetings to members of the Executive Committee, Executive Director – Maureen Armitage and other staff members.
- Thanks all the CBA Branch Chairs who serve National section executives and have an important role to play as a conduit between the local and national members.
- Members are reminded to add their contributions to the governance of the CBA by applying for Board committees and sub-committees and for positions on National Section committees.
- Stephen looks forward to connecting in-person again soon. The incredible work, involvement in sections or Committees give members the wonderful opportunity to sharpen their skills, and give back to the profession.
- Be it for networking opportunities or to gain a competitive advantage in their area of practice, involvement in Branch Sections or Committees offers members the chance to build their profile, enhance their communication skills and their reputation.
- Priority during Stephen’s term as President continues to be to strengthen our community of lawyers and make sure members have the educational materials and practical tools that they need to succeed in virtual or hybrid world, now and in the future. And to encourage lawyers to use their skills and knowledge to volunteer and give back.
- Stephen’s podcast, conversations with the President, has conversations about mental health and well-being in the legal profession with highly accomplished and inspiring guests. The Justice of the Court of Queen’s Bench of Alberta, the Honorable Michele Hollins, shared her personal story with honesty and candour during an interview. We also shared wonderful stories of volunteerism and action.
- The CBA’s advocacy priority for this year is transformation of the justice system with sustainable changes to ensure equal access to justice which includes greater diversity on the Bench. We encourage the government to do more and we encourage lawyers from equity seeking groups to apply for judicial appointments.
- The situation in Ukraine is extremely concerning and the CBA is condemning this act of aggression by Russia and calling for respect of international humanitarian law. Our immigration section announced a pro bono initiative, modeled on the one it launches’ late last year to help vulnerable Afghans find their way into

Canada. We are also asking the federal government to prioritize immigration applications for Ukrainians.

- We recently released a report on pay equity in the legal profession, the results of the roundtable discussion organized by the CBA's Women's Lawyers Forum last year. The goal of the roundtable was to gather qualitative data on Canadian lawyers' experiences, perceptions and opinions about gender and pay equity in the legal profession.
- Almost two years in the pandemic, our membership is as strong as ever. CBA members value the services, the professional development, the networking opportunities and the other advantages of belonging to the largest association of legal professionals in the country.
- The CBA will continue to work for improvements in our justice system and into the professional and personal lives of its members.
- Stephen would like to devote his time as President to strengthen our community and to continue to ensure that the CBA offers unparalleled value to its members.

5. President's Report 2020-21

CBA Alberta President Bianka Kratt

- Bianca extends her sincere thanks to CBA Alberta volunteers and Section leadership, who continued to step up and help CBA deliver outstanding programs and took up the mantle of advocating for the necessary changes in the administration of justice.
- CBA Alberta has been continuously in touch with several stakeholders on responding to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic.
- We undertook a research project to support CBA Alberta advocacy efforts with the government to gauge the level of support for justice initiatives and to make the case for the return on investment for supporting the justice system. The resulting report, A Win for All, was used as part of an influence campaign with government to highlight that Albertans support investment in the justice system, and it makes economic sense to do so.
- This work has also been supported by the Agenda for Justice Committee, chaired by Frank Friesacher. This committee also maintains the backgrounders that speak to the need for support of the justice system.
- The 2021 Access to Justice Week, led by Access to Justice committee Chairs, Jeff Surtees and Rob Bassett, coordinated with national efforts to build public awareness of the access to justice work across Alberta and the country.
- In 2021, the board created a Voice of the Profession Committee, co-chaired by David Hiebert and Adam Norget, to more specifically address those issues of importance to our members related to the practice of law. Look forward to seeing members of the committee at upcoming Section meetings to tell you more about their work and how you can contribute.
- The work of the Legislation & Law Reform Committees, chaired by Omolara Oladipo (north) and Bernard Roth (south), is currently ongoing. They work in the background reviewing all bills that go before the Legislature.
- Bianca acknowledges those Sections that have been actively contributing to our advocacy efforts over the past year by providing feedback to the courts and governments to protect access to justice throughout the pandemic and to prepare our justice system for a post-pandemic world.

- In the past year, CBA Alberta has continued to use the Thought Exchange tool to connect with members on their needs, wants and priorities. The Board uses that information in its strategic planning and to ensure that we deliver programs and initiatives that you as members value. Sections have used it to seek input into their meeting planning, we collaborated with the Canadian Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges to kickstart a discussion on overcoming obstacles faced by women in the profession, and as part of an offshoot of your New Years’ resolutions, we asked what would help you maintain your health and well-being in the profession. The feedback is very helpful to the Board and committees and therefore we invite you to continue to participate in our Thought Exchanges.
- We continue to hold semi-regular roundtable discussion group with the managing partners from our large and mid-size CBA Partner firms. This is an opportunity for these leaders to connect and for CBA to learn more about how we can support this segment of our membership.
- The Board’s Mentor Task Force, led by Michelle Karasinski, recently launched a pilot a program of mentor circles, matching groups of three Young Lawyers with two mentors to connect and share knowledge and experiences. We also look forward in 2022 to supporting events organized by the Indigenous Lawyers Forum and invite you to attend their events as a way to build community colleagues.
- Bianca acknowledges the work done by the editorial committee, led by Angela Saccomani and Daniel Jackman. In moving our Law Matters publication online, this group has provided an opportunity for more people to contribute to timely and interesting articles.
- Bianca highlighted the Cecilia Johnstone Award and reminded members to share their nomination before the deadline of April 30.
- The 2021 Leadership Forum series held throughout the year has been well-received. It continues to enhance member value by offering PD programs at no additional cost.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which is chaired by Lulu Tinarwo and Sania Chaudhry continues to put together an outstanding series of webinars focused on better understanding of issues surrounding inclusivity.
- Members should look out for information about upcoming PD opportunities, events included at no additional cost to members.
- CBA Alberta board elections will begin in April. Four board positions are open, including North director (outside Edmonton), South Young Lawyer, and two director-at-large positions. The secretary position is also open, and this year the candidates must reside in south Alberta. Nominations will be open from April 1 – 25, and more information is available on the CBA Alberta website at www.cba-alberta.org/Elections.

6. CBA Alberta Strategic Plan

CBA Alberta President Bianka Kratt

- Bianca shares high level Strategic plan of CBA Alberta which focuses on the work of the Board of Directors over the past year to help CBA members, and our profession, successfully move into the future, post pandemic
- The Board identified six elements that make up the practical vision of the Strategic plan namely:
 - Powerful Advocacy – Ensuring CBA Alberta’s advocacy is influential, responsive, principle-based and grounded in core values. CBA Alberta advocacy has an objective approach and is conducted through a clear, effective process to ensure measurable outcomes.

- Adaptive and Innovative Practice – Providing top-notch PD resources and events delivered across multiple channels that connect diverse communities. We will invest in leading digital infrastructure to deliver member programs and services and support innovative member practices, adapted to changed client needs
 - Committed Membership - Ensuring that CBA members are positioned to be exemplary leaders in the profession and within the CBA. We will continue to help them stay connected, engaged and informed.
 - Healthy Culture within the Profession – Our culture is refocused on civility and respect, embraces diversity to level the playing field
 - Wellness in Practice – Helping improve the well-being of members so that they can be their best, personally and within our profession
 - High Performance Board Leadership – The Board commits itself to high performance in leadership
- The Board has also set three strategic directions to help CBA Alberta achieve it’s vision through:
- Influential CBA - strategies that will focus on building effective advocacy practices and leveraging relationships with external stakeholders and internally by better engaging with our Sections.
 - Committed Membership – providing outstanding membership value by delivering continuing professional development in more ways, over more channels, and using leading digital infrastructure. Harnessing the strengths of volunteerism by learning member needs, understanding volunteer capacity and engaging sections to clarify their roles.
 - Building healthy culture – promoting well-being to members and amplifying the value of apprenticeship and mentorship for new lawyers. Promoting collegiality and civility as the cornerstone of our professional community while continuing to support a diverse, inclusive professional community. Improving equity by finding ways to level the playing field.

7. Treasurer’s Report

CBA Alberta Vice President Amanda Lindberg

a. Presentation of 2020-21 Financial Statements

- The full audited statements are available: [The Canadian Bar Association : 2022 CBA Alberta Annual General Meeting \(cbapd.org\)](https://www.cbapd.org/2022-CBA-Alberta-Annual-General-Meeting) .
- The auditors provided a clean audit report, noting no deficiencies. There were no changes in accounting policies or material differences in significant management estimates for doubtful accounts, legal contingencies, amortization, or impairment assessments. The auditor also asserted that the going concern assumption is appropriate for the Branch as there is nothing indicating an inability of the organization to continue at least 12 months.
- CBA Alberta ended the 2020-21 fiscal year with \$3,968,651 in net assets and \$1,075,000 in restricted funds, representing 6 months operating budget in case of business closure.
- Revenue for the 2020-21 fiscal year was \$1,828,096 and expenses were \$1,325,217 resulting in a net surplus of \$582,672.
- The continuation of the pandemic greatly impacted the Branch’s ability to deliver its planned activities, most notably in-person events, including Section meetings. This significantly reduced revenue, but the biggest impact was on the expense side. All told, there was a 14% decrease in revenue for 2020-21, which was met by a 25% decrease in

expenses. Because we had planned for a resumption of activities that never materialized, this resulted in a significant, and exceptional, surplus for the year.

- In addition to reduction of expenses for in-person meeting, governance and Sections, other decreases in expenses were mainly in the committee category as special projects were not undertaken this year, and the budget impact of printing and mailing the Law Matters publication were eliminated in favour of an online digital publication
- Special projects included Thought Exchange tool, advocacy research project, and mentorship program.
- Members should note that section expenses shown in the statements are direct expenses for meetings and Section executive meetings and travel, and do not include the overhead costs for running Sections, including office rent, staff and webcasting equipment, which are included in administrative and personnel expenses.
- The CBA Alberta approach is to be prudent with expense and to watch changes in revenue carefully. This approach in addition to the ongoing pandemic, which restricted our planned spending in in-person activities, led to a more favourable year than originally budgeted.
- As the Board has adopted a new strategic plan for the Branch, and the reserves give the Branch the resources to invest in the changes necessary to assist members to adjust to new realities post-pandemic, and to greatly enhance member value going forward.

b. Approval of 2021-22 Auditor

Moved: Amanda Lindberg

Seconded: Kyle Kawanami

Motion carried.

8. Presentation by The Honourable Leonard S. (Tony) Mandamin, IPC

Advancing Indigenous Justice: Stories from 40 years in law

See presentation online here: [The Canadian Bar Association : 2022 CBA Alberta AGM Keynote Presentation - Video \(cbapd.org\)](https://www.cbapd.org/presentation-video)

9. Adjournment – 1:42 PM

Moved: Justin Edward Kingston

Seconded: Frank Friesacher

Motion carried.