

**STATE BAR OF GEORGIA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
February 6, 2026, 1 p.m.
The Partridge Inn
Augusta, GA**

Members Participating

Christopher Twyman, President; William “Bill” Gentry, President-Elect; Javoyne Hicks, Treasurer; Shiriki Jones, Secretary; Ivy Cadle, Immediate Past President; Veronica Cox, YLD President; Kenneth Mitchell Jr., YLD Immediate Past President; Thua Barlay; Bert Hummel; Joyce Gist Lewis; David Lipscomb; and Gary Spencer.

Members Absent

Virginia Josey, YLD President-Elect; and Martin Valbuena.

Staff Participating

Sarah Coole, Chief Operating Officer; Damon Elmore, Executive Director; Jenn McNeely, Director of Governmental Affairs; Bill NeSmith, Deputy General Counsel; Ron Turner, Chief Financial Officer; and Russ Willard, General Counsel.

Call to Order

President Chris Twyman called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. The members of the Executive Committee in attendance are indicated above.

Future Meetings Schedule

President Chris Twyman reviewed the Future Meetings Schedule, including the upcoming meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Governors.

Executive Committee Minutes

Secretary Shiriki Jones presented for approval the minutes of the December 5, 2025, Executive Committee meeting, which passed by unanimous vote.

Members Requesting Resignation

Pursuant to State Bar Rule 1-208, the Executive Committee approved the following resignation requests by unanimous vote: Jeffrey Lucio Cimbalo-233224, Timothy Howard Courson-190614, Dale J. Jackson-386315, Valerie Paige Peugh-574875, Kyle Donnelly Sherman-644713, John C. Stathas-677058, David Stone-959939, John Derek Wales-730785, Michael A. Young-782552.

Request to Waive Late Fees

The Executive Committee, by unanimous vote, approved a request to waive late fees.

Members Requesting Disability

Pursuant to State Bar Rule 1-202, the Executive Committee approved one request for disabled status by unanimous vote.

Proposed Rules Change

General Counsel Russ Willard presented the following proposed rules changes:

Rule 4-221. Hearing Procedures.

The proposed revisions to Rule 4-221 clarify and streamline disciplinary hearing procedures while preserving due process, including expressly recognizing the Special Master’s authority to manage disruptive conduct through warnings, adjournment, or written submissions. The amendments also update venue provisions by requiring venue at State Bar headquarters for nonresident respondents

whose alleged misconduct occurred outside Georgia, while retaining existing options for in-state conduct. Additional provisions address practical venue selection for incarcerated or otherwise restricted respondents and authorize non-final hearings to be conducted by video or telephone, promoting efficiency while maintaining venue requirements for final evidentiary hearings.

By unanimous vote, the Executive Committee approved the proposed rule change as amended, by changing “final evidentiary hearing” to “such hearing” at line 93 on the provided redline version.

Rule 4-227. Petitions for Voluntary Discipline.

The proposed revisions to Rule 4-227 streamline procedures for Petitions for Voluntary Discipline by requiring petitions seeking disbarment or voluntary surrender, when filed after a formal complaint, to be submitted directly to the Supreme Court of Georgia rather than to a Special Master. Procedures for all other voluntary discipline petitions remain unchanged. The amendments also provide a 30-day response period for the Office of the General Counsel and stay proceedings before the Special Master while such petitions are pending.

By majority vote, the Executive Committee approved the proposed rule change as amended, by changing “licenses” to “license” at line 71 on the provided redline version.

Proposed Satellite Office Policy

Chief Operating Officer Sarah Coole presented the Satellite Office Policy intended to align the Coastal Georgia and South Georgia satellite offices with the existing Conference Center policy. The policy standardizes eligibility, permitted uses, approvals, and operational requirements for satellite office use and reflects collaboration among staff to ensure consistency across facilities. The policy was brought forward for Executive Committee adoption consistent with prior practice for Conference Center governance.

By unanimous vote, the Executive Committee approved the proposed policy as amended, removing the Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism as an excluded group. The Executive Committee took the opportunity to approve the same change in the existing Conference Center Policy.

2026-2027 License Fee Recommendation to the Board of Governors and Other License Fee Items

President Chris Twyman presented the 2026-2027 license fee recommendation and other license fee items. The motion to submit the following recommendation to the Board of Governors for approval passed by unanimous vote:

1. License fee at \$294 for active members and \$147 for inactive and provisional members (an increase of \$24 for active members and \$12 for inactive members).
2. Center, Division and Section Dues (\$10 to \$50).
3. Clients’ Security Fund (\$15 per member per Rule 1-506).
4. Professionalism Fee (\$11/year).
5. Legislative and Public Education Fund Contribution (\$100 optional contribution).
6. Georgia Legal Services Program (\$400 suggested individual contribution/\$100 suggested contribution for young lawyers).

Executive Committee member Bert Hummel suggested adding a voluntary line item to the license fee notice for contributions for lawyers who are concerned about those who illegally solicit accident victims. This would ensure there are funds in the Office of the General Counsel’s budget to help protect the public against that type of solicitation.

Approval of the 2026-2027 Proposed State Bar Budget

The Executive Committee unanimously approved the 2026-2027 State Bar budget as proposed.

Senior Lawyers Division Dues Recommendation

President Chris Twyman proposed a recommended Senior Lawyers Division membership dues amount of \$25 to serve as a placeholder should the SLD Executive Committee be unable to convene prior to the Spring Board of Governors meeting, with the understanding that the Board of Governors may consider a different recommendation if one is provided by the SLD Executive Committee at the Spring Meeting. The Executive Committee unanimously approved the \$25 dues amount for the Senior Lawyers Division for the 2026-2027 license fee notice.

President's Report

President Chris Twyman reported on recent developments related to the Bar Center, noting progress toward positioning the facility as a long-term economic engine for the State Bar through strategic leasing opportunities. He emphasized the importance of attracting tenants to increase productivity and offset operating expenses. President Twyman advised that several leasing opportunities are in progress, including negotiations with the Latino Community Foundation and the Georgia Innocence Project, and that additional prospective tenants have expressed interest, though space requirements may present challenges. He also provided an update on the transition to a new parking operator, Universal Parking, with operations expected to begin in the near term and potential revenue impacts becoming clearer later in the year. President Twyman further noted that staff continues to work diligently on these initiatives and expressed appreciation for their efforts. He concluded by indicating that these developments align with broader financial and operational planning goals for the Bar Center.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Javoyne Hicks reported on the Bar's finances through November 2025. Financial performance remains in line with the approved budget, with expenses tracking as expected and no material issues to report. She highlighted ongoing work on the electrical panels, tenant improvements, additional audio and visual capabilities, and the behind-the-scenes tasks involved in building ownership.

YLD Report

YLD President Veronica Cox reported on recent and upcoming Young Lawyers Division activities, including the rescheduling of High School Mock Trial rounds, which still require judges, and updates on the Leadership Academy sessions in Atlanta and Savannah. She also highlighted upcoming events, including kickball tournaments, the Signature Fundraiser in Macon on February 28, and Legal Food Frenzy, scheduled for April 20 through May 1. YLD President Cox noted that three podcast episodes have been released and additional programming is underway.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Damon Elmore thanked the Executive Committee for its discussion and support regarding the budget and license fee level for the 2026-2027 Bar year. He noted ongoing challenges in securing smaller hotels for meetings due to market demand, as well as the logistical and financial complexities of hybrid meeting models. To help alleviate some of those challenges, he discussed potential adjustments to meeting scheduling, including revising the meeting pattern to Tuesday-Friday, hosting the Spring BOG Meeting at the Bar Center, and transitioning the Fall BOG Meeting to a fully virtual format via Zoom. He concluded his report by noting that a more comprehensive report would be provided at the Spring Meeting on the status of unallocated cash and the proposed 2026-2027 budget.

Office of the General Counsel Report

General Counsel Russ Willard advised the Executive Committee to notify him of any communications from media or concerns related to disciplinary matters and reported that he is reviewing the Bar's policies governing public commentary on discipline, including responses to the media and to members.

Legislative Report

Director of Governmental Affairs Jenn McNeely reported on the Bar's legislative agenda, along with other items of interest to the Bar. She said that the State Bar's legislative agenda for the current session includes

a single bill, House Bill 1042, which is being carried by Representative Matt Reeves and combines proposals previously approved by the Board of Governors with judicial security and foreclosure-related provisions. She also provided an update on the launch of the Bar's *Gold Dome Track: Answering the Call to the Capitol* initiative, noting strong participation in the inaugural program and an upcoming virtual session focused on campaign finance and election law compliance. She concluded with an overview of emerging legislative priorities for the session, including ongoing discussions among state leaders on income and property tax policy.

Committee Updates

Executive Committee liaisons to State Bar committees gave updates regarding their assigned committees.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business


There was no new business.

Announcements

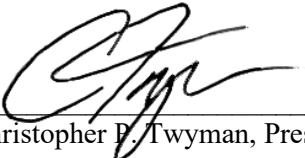
There were no announcements.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.


Shiriki Cavitt Jones, Secretary

Approved:


Christopher P. Twyman, President