

MINUTES  
HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
BOARD MEETING

In person & via Zoom  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

President Jesse Souki called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. with a quorum present.

The following persons were present for all or part of the meeting:

Officers Present

Jesse Souki (Via Zoom)  
Mark M. Murakami  
Mark K. Murakami  
Lanson Kupau  
Kristin Izumi-Nitao

Others Present (Via Zoom)

George Brown  
Buck Rhyme  
Scott Spallina

Staff

Cathy Betts  
Iris Ito  
Sean Perez  
Brian Simon  
Sara Taira (Via Zoom)

Directors Present

Steven Chow  
Geraldine Hasegawa  
Amanda Jones (Via Zoom)  
Ronette Kawakami  
Carol Kitaoka (Via Zoom)  
Erin Kobayashi (Via Zoom)  
Simeona Mariano (Via Zoom)  
Emiko Meyers (Via Zoom)  
Arsima Muller  
Robert Miyashita  
Kelcie Nagata (Via Zoom)  
Paul Naso

Directors Absent

Jocelyn Chong  
Jessica Domingo  
Jacob Lowenthal  
Zale Okazaki

**B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - The minutes of the April 3, 2024, board meeting were approved by consensus.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** – Treasurer Lanson Kupau gave an update on the cash investments as of April 2024. Mr. Kupau noted that the business account with CPB was closed, and the Certificate of Deposit (CD) was opened with \$250k for 6 months. The Bank of Hawaii and American Savings Bank CDs matured and were renewed for another 6 months. As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, HSBA was at 81% of its budgeted revenue for the year, and at 38% of its budgeted expenses. Operations Manager Sean Perez presented the schedule for the 2025 budget process. Mr. Perez also mentioned that EOS Accountants will be on site next month for the annual audit, and that he is still waiting to hear back from the IRS regarding the tax extension.

**D. PRESIDENT'S REPORT** – President Jesse Souki reported on the following items:

1. Leadership Institute Program – Began last Friday.
2. Courts in the Community – Three hundred students participated at the program at Kailua High School. (The fall program will be held on Big Island, with a possible Board meeting to follow.)
3. JSC Elections – The deadline for nominations has passed. The election will be to replace Jeff Portnoy whose term ends in August of this year. Anticipate HSBA members to receive their ballots in June.
4. Judicial Vacancies – Four First Circuit Court Judicial openings. The Board will have to interview nominees.
5. Judiciary AI Committee – Committee is run by Justice Devens and Judge Tonaki. President Souki is on the Committee and welcomed ideas/comments. (Director Steve Chow stated that the Bench-Bar Conference will focus on AI issues.)
6. SCD and YLD Elections – SCD deadline for nominations is May 31<sup>st</sup>, and YLD deadline is July 5<sup>th</sup>.

**E. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** - Executive Director Cathy Betts reported on the following items:

1. Litigation – DEI case is ongoing; Florida CLE litigation settlement has been paid; and the Republican Party case has been dismissed.
2. Pau Hana – Date is confirmed for August 28<sup>th</sup> at The Pacific Club.
3. Annual Meeting – Dean Erwin Chemerinsky from the UC Berkeley School of Law will be keynote speaker. The date and location have been confirmed for Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at the Ala Moana Hotel.

**F. YLD PRESIDENT'S REPORT** - YLD President Kelcie Nagata reported that Law Week is currently underway. Volunteers are still needed to staff Legal Line. Both clinics and phone lines have been very busy. Next month's Legal Line will be staffed by attorneys from the Department of the Attorney General and July will be staffed by attorneys from Carlsmith Ball.

**G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None.

## H. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Strategic Plan: Board Governance Improvements** – Strategic Planning Chair Mark K. Murakami gave a brief summary of the background of the strategic planning committee, and the recent process that the HSBA Board, staff, and core team had undertaken which culminated with three priorities identified by the Board. Buck Rhyme and George Brown from RR Consulting Group joined via zoom to answer any questions that Board members had. They noted that the dates to be determined (DTBD) will primarily be decided by staff or the goal owner (who needs to be identified as the lead or manager to coordinate the goal and its process) depending on scheduling of other HSBA activities. They also stated that the budget process should be taken into consideration if the activity to execute the plan will require funding.

**Action taken:** After discussion, a motion was made (Mark M. Murakami), seconded, and carried without opposition to approve the proposed 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. Buck and George agreed to assist HSBA in communicating the plan to the members and assist staff in monitoring the progress of the plan which will be reported on in President Souki's Executive Director Report.

2. **Proposed Amendment to Board Policy Manual**

**Action taken:** A motion was made (Steven Chow), seconded, and carried without opposition to amend 8.1B of the Board Policy Manual previously approved by the Board, and which reflects current practice, authorizing the Executive Director to sign checks up to \$10,000.

3. **Legal Aid Society of Hawaii – Upcoming Board Vacancies**

**Action taken:** A motion was made (Mark M. Murakami), seconded, and carried without opposition to adopt the Nominating Committee's recommendations on the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii Board vacancies. Director Arsima Muller recused herself from the vote. Director Geraldine Hasegawa abstained from voting.

4. **Executive Session**

**Action taken:** A motion was made (Geraldine Hasegawa), seconded, and carried without opposition to move into executive session.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Submitted by:



Catherine Betts  
HSBA Executive Director

Approved by:



Kristin Izumi-Nitao  
HSBA Secretary