



Bencher Meeting: Minutes

To: Benchers

Purpose: Approval (Consent Agenda)

Date: Friday, July 3, 2026

Present:

Thomas L. Spraggs, KC, President	Benjamin D. Levine
Michael Welsh, KC, 1st Vice-President	Jaspreet Singh Malik
Katrina Harry, KC, 2nd Vice-President	Marcia McNeil
Simran Bains	David Perry
Nazanin Aram	Georges Rivard, KC
Aleem Bharmal, KC	Michèle Ross
Tanya Chamberlain, KC	Gurminder Sandhu, KC
Christina J. Cook, KC	Karen K.L. Tse, KC
Cheryl D'Sa, KC	Nicole E. Smith
Tanya Heuchert	Natasha Tony
Ravi R. Hira, KC	Michael Zimmerman
Sara K. Hopkins	
James A. S. Legh	

Absent:

Tim Delaney, KC	Arun Mohan
John Greschner	Kevin B. Westell
Jay Michi	Ruth Wittenberg

**Senior and
Meeting
Support
Staff**

Gigi Chen-Kuo, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
 Tara McPhail, Chief Legal Officer
 Jeanette McPhee, Chief Financial Officer & Senior Director, Trust Reg.
 Su Forbes, KC, Chief Operating Officer, Lawyers Indemnity Fund
 Lesley Small, Senior Director, Credentials, Prof. Dev. & Practice Supp.

Barbara Lu, Director, Policy & Strategic Initiatives
 Michael Lucas, KC, General Counsel/Senior Policy Counsel
 Sherry Small, Director, Indigenous Initiatives
 Christine Tam, Director, Communications
 Adam Whitcombe, KC, Senior Advisor
 Jeffrey Hoskins, KC, Legislative Counsel
 Avalon Bourne, Manager, Governance & Board Relations
 Rebecca Neal, Senior Administrator, Governance & Board Relations
 Volodymyr Burlachenko, Administrator, Governance & Board Relations
 Deborah Mah, Administrator, Governance & Board Relations

**Staff
present:**

Kim de Bruijn	Herman Van Ommen, KC
Barbara Buchanan, KC	Sara Pavan
Jackie Drozdowski	Carrie Robinson
Jeffrey Hoskins, KC	Nadia Rowe
Claire Hulley	Janice Taylor
Joyce Johner	Madison Taylor
Jane Ladesma	Eva Theiss
Michael Mulhern	Teo Wong
Doug Munro	Charlene Yan
Rashmi Nair	Vinnie Yuen

Guests:

Karen St. Aubin	Director of Membership & Education, Trial Lawyers Association of BC
Dom Bautista	Executive Director, Courts Center & Executive Director, Amici Curiae Friendship Society
Jess Furney	Representative, Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch
Muhammed Goghari	Rule of Law Essay Contest Winner
Paul Hargreaves	CFO, Courthouse Libraries BC
Claire Marchant	Executive Director, Lawyers Assistance Program of BC
Desmond MacMillan	Assistant Dean of Law, Thompson Rivers University
Kerry L. Simmons, KC	Executive Director, Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch
Beau Wong	Rule of Law Essay Contest Runner-up

Recognition

1. 2026 Rule of Law Essay Contest: Presentation of Winner and Runner-up

President Thomas L. Spraggs, KC introduced the winner and runner-up of the 2026 Rule of Law Essay Contest. Muhammed Goghari is the winner of this year's contest, and Beau Wong is the runner-up. They both wrote exemplary essays, which will be posted on the Law Society website.

Consent Agenda

2. Minutes of May 30, 2026 meeting (regular session)

This item was removed from the consent agenda for discussion *in camera*.

Following discussion *in camera*, the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 30, 2026 were approved by the majority of Benchers, subject to amending paragraph 2 at page 6 to read:

Benchers discussed next steps in the process including whether the statutory requirement requires the actual wording of the rule to be determined by the membership at a meeting, although no decision was reached on that point. Benchers also discussed the importance of demonstrating commitment to governance reform and providing sufficient information and explanation to the membership about the purpose of the resolution.

3. Minutes of May 30, 2026 meeting (*in camera* session)

The minutes of the *in camera* meeting held on May 30, 2026 were approved unanimously and by consent as circulated.

4. Rule Amendments: Further Amendments to Admission Program Transition Rules

The following resolution was passed unanimously and by consent:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Benchers approve the further proposed amendments to the Admission Program rules as set out in the Resolution attached as Schedule "C."

5. 2026 Law Society Scholarship for Graduate Legal Studies: Co-Recipients

The following resolution was passed unanimously and by consent:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Benchers ratify the recommendation of the Credentials Committee to divide the 2026 Law Society Scholarship for Graduate Studies between Chidimma Ike and Astitwa Thapa.

6. 2026 Law Society Indigenous Scholarship: Co-Recipients

The following resolution was passed unanimously and by consent:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Benchers ratify the recommendation of the Credentials Committee to divide the 2026 Law Society Indigenous Scholarship for Graduate Studies between Brenna Brown and Cary Morin.

7. Revisions to Schedule of Authorizations

The following resolution was passed unanimously and by consent:

BE IT RESOLVED the Benchers approve the revised Schedule of Authorizations, effective July 3, 2026.

Reports

8. President's Report

Mr. Spraggs began his report by acknowledging the recent resignation of Benchers James Struthers. He thanked Mr. Struthers' for his contributions as a Benchers.

He then provided an update on his recent and upcoming activities and events, including attending call ceremonies, welcome ceremonies, Gold Medal Award presentations, the KC Ceremony and Reception at Government House, and the Law Society's annual general meeting.

Mr. Spraggs concluded his report by speaking about current priorities, including the Single Legal Regulator initiative, the use of Artificial Intelligence, and the strategic plan objectives.

9. CEO's Report

Gigi Chen-Kuo, Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director began her report by providing an update of Phase 2 of the Ours to Protect Campaign. She indicated that a virtual summit was held on June 23, 2026 to facilitate discussions about international efforts to engage youth on democratic principles, such as the rule of law. Ms. Chen-Kuo noted that the next phase of the campaign would explore the development of learning materials based on the research and findings of the summit, noting that the profession can earn CPD credits by teaching a lesson on the Rule of Law in their local classrooms.

Ms. Chen-Kuo then provided an update regarding her recent and upcoming meetings and events, including the KC Ceremony and Reception, a BC North Shore Bar Association event, and the Law Society's annual general meeting. She indicated that nominations for this year's KC appointments are currently open.

Ms. Chen-Kuo concluded her report with an update regarding employee engagement and next steps regarding the engagement action plan.

10. Briefing by the Law Society's Member of the Federation Council

Tanya Chamberlain, KC provided a brief overview of the written report she provided for Benchers' information, including an overview of the recent Federation of Law Societies of Canada meetings.

Discussion & Decision

11. Amendments to Trust Rules and Related Rules

Mr. Spraggs introduced and provided some background regarding the proposed amendments to the trust and related Rules. He indicated that a great deal of input had been received from Benchers, and that while Benchers had the option to approve the Rules during this meeting, more time could be provided if needed.

Michael Lucas, KC, General Counsel/Senior Policy Counsel provided additional information regarding the proposed amendments. He indicated that these proposed amendments stem from the Trust Review Task Force recommendations, which were approved by Benchers in September 2025, and represent the first major revision of these Rules in quite some time. Mr. Lucas added that the proposed Rules had been considered and reviewed by the Executive Committee on two prior occasions, and that input had been incorporated, along with the feedback received from Benchers directly.

Benchers discussed the proposed Rule amendments with focus on the timing of these Rules coming into force, the amount of funds that would trigger an audit report, and the requirement of needing to take a course(s) and whether this would be a one-time requirement or a recurring requirement, and who can be a signatory for trust fund withdrawals.

Jeanette McPhee, Chief Financial Officer & Senior Director of Trust Regulation advised that the Law Society has courses available online regarding trust accounting that the profession can take, and these courses would be updated based on the proposed amendments to the Rules. She indicated that the Law Society would ensure that resources and information is available to adequately prepare the profession for the changes that are being contemplated.

Some Benchers were of the view that more time was needed to review and consider these proposed Rule amendments.

A motion was moved and seconded to adjourn the consideration of this matter to the next Benchers meeting, which was approved by the majority of Benchers.

Mr. Lucas advised Benchers that if there were additional questions or comments regarding the proposed Rule amendments that had not yet been raised to please provide to staff, so as to be considered in advance of the next meeting.

Updates

12. 2026-2028 Strategic Plan: Implementation Approach and Year 1 Mid-Year Progress Report

Ms. Chen-Kuo introduced the item and provided some background information regarding the Law Society's 2026-2028 Strategic Plan.

Barbara Lu, Director, Policy & Strategic Initiatives presented the mid-year progress report, which included an overview of the objectives, metrics, and overall reporting approach. She indicated that a year-end progress report would be presented in early 2027.

13. Journey of Practice – 2026 Mid-year Update

Sherry Small, Director, Indigenous Initiatives, introduced the item and provided an update regarding the Journey of Practice. She spoke about her role and the work she has undertaken to date, and the work being undertaken by the senior leadership team and by the Journey of Practice working group.

14. AI, the Legal Profession, and the Protection of the Public

Ms. Chen-Kuo introduced this item and provided some background regarding the work the Law Society had undertaken in regard to artificial intelligence.

Ms. Lu then presented on artificial intelligence and its impact on the legal profession and the public, as well as the work undertaken by the Law Society to support the profession and to ensure the protection of the public. Ms. Lu indicated that an "AI Roadmap" would be provided to the Executive Committee and Benchers in the fall.

15. Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Survey Results

Ms. Lu introduced the item and provided some background information, including how this work relates to the Law Society's strategic plan.

Dr. Rashmi Nair, Senior Data & Policy Analyst then presented on the findings of the survey. Ms. Lu indicated that the survey findings would be available on the Law Society website shortly.

16. 2026 May Financial Report

Ms. McPhee provided an update on the financial results and highlights to the end of May 2026. She indicated that the General Fund operations resulted in a positive variance to budget, with revenues at budget and operating expenses lower than budget by 7%, mainly due to timing differences.

17. 2025 Tribunal Annual Report

Herman Van Ommen, KC, Law Society Tribunal Chair provided an overview of the 2025 Law Society Tribunal's Annual Report.

18. Update from First Vice-President

First Vice-President Michael F. Welsh, KC informed Benchers that he was resigning effective July 3, 2026 at midnight.

Mr. Spraggs thanked Mr. Welsh for his service.

The Benchers then commenced the *in camera* portion of the meeting.

RN
2026-09-16