

**STATE BAR OF GEORGIA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MEETING MINUTES
Saturday, March 28, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
The Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, Lake Oconee
Greensboro, Georgia**

The 311th meeting of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia was held at the date and time shown above. President Christopher P. Twyman presided and called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Benjamin A. Torres, YLD Board of Directors, led the pledge of allegiance.

Invocation

Shannon M. Shoultz, YLD Board of Directors, gave the invocation.

Special Recognition

President Chris Twyman recognized the members of the judiciary, the past presidents of the State Bar and other special guests in attendance.

Roll Call

Secretary Shiriki Jones circulated the roll for signature. The list of attendees is attached as Exhibit A.

Future Meetings Schedule

President Chris Twyman reviewed the Future Meetings Schedule. He reminded everyone that the Annual Meeting will be held at the Omni Amelia Island Resort, Fernandina Beach, Florida. President-Elect Bill Gentry discussed his upcoming meetings: the 2026 Fall Meeting will be held at the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina; the 2027 Midyear Meeting will be held at the Omni Hotel at The Battery Atlanta, Atlanta; the 2027 Spring Meeting is currently still pending; and the 2027 Annual Meeting will be held at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center, Orlando, Florida.

Minutes of the 310th Meeting of the Board of Governors

Secretary Shiriki Jones presented the minutes of the Board of Governors meeting held on January 17, 2026, which were approved as presented by majority vote.

License Fee Approval 2026-2027

Executive Director Damon Elmore presented an overview of the proposed FY 2026–2027 budget, dues recommendation, and unallocated cash. Leadership reported that operations are stable and that the proposed budget reflects rising costs, approved program commitments, targeted staffing needs, and measured compensation adjustments. The Board was advised that dues revenue remains the primary funding source and that limited non-dues revenue, anticipated declines in CLE revenue, and facility-related costs necessitate a dues increase to \$294 for active members and \$147 for inactive/provisional members.

An update was also provided on the status and planned use of unallocated cash, including ongoing and future investments in infrastructure and technology, as well as reserves, with an emphasis on prudent, multi-year planning. The recommendations were reviewed by the Finance and Executive Committees and presented as a balanced approach to maintaining financial stability and fulfilling the Bar's regulatory and

service obligations. Voting on dues, budget approval, and related financial resolutions followed in separate polls.

After the presentation, the Board of Governors, by majority vote, approved active license fees at \$294 (\$24 increase from fiscal year 2025-2026) and inactive license fees at \$147 (\$12 increase from fiscal year 2025-2026) for fiscal year 2026-2027.

Approval of Other Items to Appear on the License Fee Statement

The Board of Governors, by majority vote, approved the following items to appear on the license fee statement:

- 1) Center, Division and Section Dues (\$10 to \$50).
- 2) Clients' Security Fund (\$15 per member per Rule 1-506).
- 3) Professionalism Fee (\$11/year).
- 4) Legislative and Public Education Fund Contribution (\$100 optional contribution).
- 5) Georgia Legal Services Program (\$400 suggested individual contribution/\$100 suggested contribution for young lawyers).

2026-2027 State Bar Budget

The Board of Governors approved the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Proposed Consolidated Budget (Exhibit B), by majority vote.

Financial Resolutions

The Board of Governors approved the following financial resolutions by majority vote:

- 1) That the President be authorized to secure a blanket fidelity bond to cover all officers, employees and other persons handling State Bar funds as is required by Article V, Section 8 of the Bylaws.
- 2) That the State Bar of Georgia and related entities open appropriate accounts with such banks in Georgia, but excluding any bank that does not participate in the IOLTA Program, and other such depositories as may be recommended by the Finance Committee and/or Investment Committee, and designated by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia, and that the persons whose titles are listed below are authorized to sign an agreement to be provided by such banks and customary signature cards, and that the said banks are hereby authorized to pay or otherwise honor any check drafts, or other orders issued from time to time for debit to said accounts when signed by two of the following: the Treasurer, the President, the President Elect, the Immediate Past President, the Executive Director, the Office Manager and the General Counsel, provided either the President or the Treasurer shall sign all checks or vouchers and that said accounts can be reconciled from time to time by said persons or their designees. The authority herein given is to remain irrevocable so as said banks are concerned until they are notified in writing of such revocation of authority and in writing, acknowledge receipt thereof.
- 3) That Mauldin & Jenkins be designated as the independent auditing firm to audit the financial records of the State Bar of Georgia for the fiscal year 2025-2026.

Proposed Changes to the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct

Following a report by General Counsel Russell Willard, the Board of Governors, by majority vote, took the following action on the proposed amendments to the following rules:

1. 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.

The Board of Governors approved the proposed changes by majority vote.

2. 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.

The Board of Governors approved the proposed changes by majority vote.

President's Report

President Chris Twyman began his remarks by thanking the Board for its deliberation on the dues and budget, emphasizing the Board of Governors' responsibility to provide oversight and ensure fulfillment of the Bar's mission. He stated that the approved dues and budget support the Bar's mission to foster duty and service to the public, improve the administration of justice, and advance the science of law.

President Twyman addressed recent changes to continuing legal education requirements, noting that while biennial reporting and reduced required CLE hours benefit members, they are expected to reduce CLE-related revenue. He stated that this impact was accounted for during budget deliberations. He also provided updates on the Bar Center at 104 Marietta Street, emphasizing the importance of leasing available space to offset operating expenses. He reported that leases are in progress and that a letter of intent has been signed for nearly 15,000 square feet on the second floor with an anticipated July 1 commencement date, and that discussions continue with other prospective tenants. In addition, he reported that Universal Parking assumed management of the parking deck on March 1, with anticipated reductions in expenses and increased parking revenue over the next year.

President Twyman noted ongoing challenges, including threats to the unified bar structure, improper solicitation, the unauthorized practice of law, increased disciplinary caseloads, and the continued obligation to promote an independent judiciary and the Rule of Law. He also highlighted recent relationship-building efforts with the Georgia Court of Appeals through an Executive Committee-hosted event. President Twyman concluded by thanking Executive Director Damon Elmore and the Bar staff for their exceptional work and stated that, with the leadership of the Board of Governors, the Bar continues to move forward in service to its members, the profession, and the public.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Javoyne Hicks reported that, based on her regular review of Bar operations, there have been no significant changes or unexpected issues since the Midyear Meeting and no financial surprises within the approved budget framework. Treasurer Hicks directed the Board to the financial materials in the Board Book, which reflect financial activity through January 2026. She noted that items with variances exceeding \$2,500 are detailed to explain differences between budgeted and actual expenditures. She emphasized that Bar staff closely monitor financial activity to ensure alignment with budgeted expectations. She concluded by expressing appreciation for the Board's continued support and invited members to contact staff with any questions.

Young Lawyers Division Report

YLD President Veronica Cox began by thanking President Twyman for his continued support of the Young Lawyers Division and reported significant growth in YLD programming. Since the Midyear Meeting, YLD has doubled its total number of events, increasing from 20 to more than 40 CLE, networking, and social programs. She highlighted recent initiatives, including the YLD Leadership Academy and other well-attended activities. YLD President Cox also reported on the Signature Fundraiser benefiting Middle Georgia Justice, which raised more than \$35,000 with support from sponsors and volunteers, and thanked the Signature Fundraiser Committee for its efforts. She noted the continued success of the Georgia YLD Podcast and provided updates on upcoming initiatives, including Legal Food Frenzy and the YLD Spring Meeting in Asheville in partnership with the North Carolina Young Lawyers Division, with a focus on pro bono service. She referred to the YLD's written report in the Board Book for additional information.

Executive Director's Report

After leading the license fee and budget discussion, Executive Director Elmore reported that he had no additional updates to present and opened the floor for questions. He requested a personal privilege to note that Executive Committee Member David Lipscomb was unable to attend the meeting due to a funeral. He stated that this was the first Board of Governors meeting he had missed in more than 33 years of service. The Board acknowledged Lipscomb's longstanding service and commitment with a round of applause.

2026 Legislative Report

Director Jenn McNeely reported that the 2026 General Assembly session was nearing adjournment, with rapid end-of-session activity and ongoing work on the FY 2027 budget. She summarized several measures advancing late in the session and noted recent gubernatorial action on the amended FY 2026 budget and tax legislation. Director McNeely thanked Bar leadership and members for their engagement and reported on the launch of The Gold Dome Track, noting that 20 attorneys are now qualified to run for the General Assembly.

Executive Committee Minutes

The Board of Governors received copies of the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings held on December 5, 2025, and February 6, 2026.

Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism Report

The Board of Governors received a written report on the activities of the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism. President Chris Twyman called to attention the Connect with a Colleague Contest that ends April 30, and Law Day 2026 activities, including "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."

Law Practice Management Program

The Board of Governors received a written report on the activities of the Law Practice Management Program.

Institute of Continuing Legal Education Report

The Board of Governors received a written report from the Institute of Continuing Legal Education.

Media Report

The Board of Governors received a media report from the Communications Department.

Old Business

President-Elect Bill Gentry reported that the Senior Lawyers Division was officially approved by the Supreme Court of Georgia on December 19, 2025. The officers have been appointed by President Chris Twyman as follows: Elizabeth “Betsy” Hodges, president; Howard Delashmit, president-elect; James Hyder, treasurer; and Kendall Butterworth, secretary.

New Business

There was no new business.

Announcements

President Chris Twyman recognized Board Member Hon. Stacey Hydrick’s birthday.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Remarks / Q&A / Comments / Suggestions

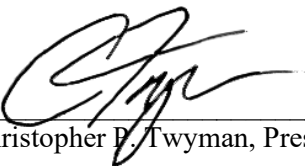
President Chris Twyman opened the floor to remarks, questions, comments and suggestions.

Adjournment

There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.


Shiriki Cavitt Jones, Secretary

Approved:


Christopher P. Twyman, President