

Alabama Board of Genetic Counseling

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MINUTES Board Meeting March 22, 2023

The Alabama Board of Genetic Counseling met on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 12:00 Noon. The meeting was held at the UAB Women and Infants Center at 1700 6th Avenue South, Room 5301 in Birmingham, Ala. Board members attending were Ms. Fallon Brewer (Board Chair), Dr. Sheri Jenkins (member), Ms. Alicia Gomes (member), Dr. Leon Dure (member), Ms. Jessa Blount (member attending virtually), Ms. Katie Nelson (member attending virtually), and Dr. Nathaniel Robin (member attending virtually). The Board members absent were Ms. Kelly East and Dr. Warner Huh. Others in attendance were Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Mr. Brenton Smith (Assistant Attorney General attending virtually), Ms. Renee' Reames (Recording Secretary), and Ms. Hope Childers (Board Administrator attending virtually).

Mr. Warren called the Board roll and indicated a quorum was present to conduct business. Chairperson Brewer called the meeting to order at 12:21 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

Public Notice of this regularly scheduled meeting was submitted and published on the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.alabama.gov, in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

Chairperson Brewer presented the agenda for the meeting.

MOTION: Ms. Gomes made the motion to approve the March 22, 2023 meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jenkins and unanimously approved by the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Brewer presented for the Board's approval of the minutes from the December 9, 2022 meeting. A copy of the minutes was distributed to the members prior to the meeting for their review.

MOTION: Ms. Gomes made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jenkins and was unanimously approved by the Board.

REPORTS

Board Chair: Chairperson Brewer indicated that she had no report at this time.

Executive Director: Mr. Warren reviewed the financial activities of the Board for the period ending February 28, 2023. A detailed line-item report of expenses was provided for the same reporting period. He commented on the improvements in the Board finances from the increase in the number of licensees. Mr. Warren reported on the number of active licenses (359) and presented a list of active and expired licenses for the Board's review.

MOTION: Dr. Jenkins made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Blount and unanimously approved by the Board.

Dr. Robin left the meeting at 12:23 p.m.

Mr. Warren presented, for the Board's review, an example of another Board's statute that provided jurisdiction for the Board to award grants to individuals, institutions, or agencies to develop and promote the profession and continuing education of licensees. Chairperson Brewer indicated that this matter would be considered in future proposed legislation.

Mr. Warren also presented an example of another Board's statute that allowed conducting board business in person or by electronic methods.

MOTION: Ms. Gomes made the motion to authorize the Executive Director to pursue proposed legislative changes to allow virtual meetings of the members, as well as awarding grants, and present the proposed change during the 2023 legislative session. The motion was seconded by Dr. Dure and unanimously approved by the Board.

Mr. Warren reported that there were some exceptions in conducting virtual meetings and he would inquire about waiving those exceptions in the proposed legislation.

Mr. Warren reported on creating a virtual platform for Board documents to be accessed through a portal, which would provide historical record of the Board meetings and replace the board meeting notebooks.

Legal Counsel Report: Mr. Brenton Smith, Assistant Attorney General, was introduced, who was attending the meeting virtually in the absence of Mr. Bowdre, the Board's legal counsel. Mr. Smith reported that the specifications for the Administrative Services Contract would need to be approved by the Board, and Chairperson Brewer deferred the discussion until later in the meeting under New Business.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Licensing and Renewal Periods: The Board discussed changing the Genetic Counselor license to a two-year license and the license fees remaining the same as the one-year license currently required. The Board discussed the temporary license remaining as a one year and reapply for temporary license before the license expired.

MOTION: Ms. Gomes made a motion to approve a two-year license for a Genetic Counselor at the same license fee rate of \$300 per license, plus \$100 application fee, and a \$300 licensing fee for renewed licenses. The motion was seconded by Dr. Dure and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Board discussed making a big announcement to licensees in advance of these changes being in effect.

The Board reviewed the list of active licensees and recommended that the licensee's title be added to the licensee database.

Mr. Warren indicated that it would be helpful for the Board members to submit to him via email any other recommendations that they might have regarding the Board's website and licensee database.

Discussion of Continuing Education Requirements:

Chairperson Brewer commented on the continuing education requirements of 1.25 hours per year and referenced the American Board of Genetic Counseling as a source.

Mr. Warren commented on the recent Executive Orders by Governor Ivey concerning Request for Public Records and other matters and he reported that Board procedures were being developed to comply with the Orders.

Discussion of Board Sponsored Services and Budget:

Chairperson Brewer reminded the members of prior discussions regarding Board-sponsored programs and clarified that the Board's funds were restricted on these activities. She explained that Board funds could not be used to provide lunches nor speaker cost, should the Board sponsor a continuing education program for licensees, and she and Mr. Warren referenced other restrictions by the State regarding the use of Board funds.

Board Terms: Mr. Warren reminded the Board about Dr. Robin's expired term and other Board terms expiring in 2023. He reported that Dr. Robin had submitted the name of Dr. Amitha Ananth and he would contact her about her interest in serving on the Board to replace Dr. Robin.

NEW BUSINESS

Emergency Administrative Services Contract:

Mr. Smith reported that new specifications for Request for Proposal for Administrative Services was due.

Mr. Warren left the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

The Board considered the specifications for the current contract in existence with Smith Warren Management Services and agreed that the current specifications were sufficient for future Requests for Proposals.

MOTION: Ms. Gomes made the motion to authorize the Board's Legal Counsel to proceed with the request for proposals with the terms and services for administrative services under the current RFP specifications and to work with the State's Purchasing Department on any wording that was required under the new RFP procedures. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jenkins and unanimously approved by the Board.

Mr. Warren joined the meeting at 12:57 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Meeting: Chairperson Brewer reminded the members that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled on June 23, 2023. She indicated that there was a conflict with the meeting date and Mr. Warren indicated that the members would be polled to establish another meeting date.

Rule Change: The Board discussed authorizing the Executive Director to draft and publish the rule change regarding the two-year licenses for Genetic Counselors, in advance of the October 1st expiration of licenses.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board, Chairperson Brewer called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Dr. Jenkins made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gomes and approved unanimously by the Board. Chairperson Brewer adjourned the meeting at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fallon Brewer
Board Chair

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director

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