



Alaska Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board Meeting February 6, 2026 Minutes

Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
2/6/2026 1:00 PM AKST
Zoom

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

A. Roll Call

Board members:

- Valerie Phelps, Chair
- Victoria "Tori" Daugherty, Secretary
- Jonathan Gates
- Michelle Scott-Weber
- Eliza Ellsworth
- Vacant - Public Member
- Vacant - OT/OTA

Staff members:

- Reid Bowman, Program Coordinator 2
- Shane Bannarbie, Program Coordinator I
- Sheri Ryan, Licensing Examiner 3

Alaska State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Mission Statement

The mission of the Alaska State Physical and Occupational Therapy Board is to promote healthy, independent, productive Alaskans. The board strives to do this by:

1. Adopting regulations necessary for the safe and efficient practice of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy in the State of Alaska.
2. Reviewing and approving the qualification of applicants to ensure a competent and effective work force of therapists and assistants.
3. Issuing temporary permits and licenses to qualified persons.
4. Monitoring compliance with continuing education requirements.
5. Reviewing and acting on any report or documentation of any unsafe, unethical or unlawful actions of a licensee.

The Alaska Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy board meeting was called to order on Friday, February 6, 2026 by Chair Valerie Phelps at 1:04 pm.

Roll Call - Roll call taken by Chair Phelps.

Board members present: Valerie Phelps, Chair; Tori Daugherty, Secretary; Jonathan Gates, and Eliza Ellsworth. Board member Michelle Scott-Weber, absent = excused.

Staff present: Shane Bannarbie, Program Coordinator and Sheri Ryan, License Examiner.

Guests: Carolyn Stokes and Philip White.

Quorum established; 4 of 7 board members present. Two board positions open. Public member seat vacant since 09/23/2025. OT/OTA seat vacant since 03/2025.

Ethics Reporting

No conflicts of interest for today's agenda items reported by any board members present.

Review/Approval Agenda

Eliza Ellsworth moved to approve the agenda for the February 6, 2026 Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy board meeting as written. Jonathan Gates seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes unanimously.

2. Public Comment

Phil White, owner of Therapeutic Health and Home, a PT and OT practice, gave public comment. The business operates in South Central primarily, although they are expanding to Juneau and Southeast in the next few months. He has been encountering restrictive non-competes that have been applied to physical and occupational therapists, primarily operating in pediatrics, that are preventing them from leaving places of employment and continuing to work with their specialty populations, such as pediatrics, for a year, and then being threatened with legal action. Mr. White is asking the board if regulations, and/or updates, would be warranted to prevent this sort of practice from occurring, because all it is doing is serving to limit the community's access to healthcare, and prevent mobility for therapy teams, and also make it less likely to get more qualified therapists to our great state.

Board member Tori Daugherty expressed concern about where the legality of non-competes fell. And if not with the board, does it when it impacts someone's ability to access patient's care. Many employers do not allow moonlighting. If therapists cannot

work outside of their system and another system needs patient coverage, then how do you get those patients taken care of if no one in town is allowed to help?

Board member Jonathan Gates also expressed concern about whether this falls under board jurisdiction or not. If it does, he feels the board should address.

Licensing examiner Sheri Ryan notified the board that Dr. White had submitted board correspondence that was to be addressed at the board's regular meeting scheduled February 26-27, 2026, but was not added to this meeting because it was called specifically to address the AO360 Reform Plan.

3. Administrative Business

A. AO 360 Reform Plan and Decisional Document

- Excel document AO 360 Reform Plan and Decisional Document (working copy)
- PDF - PT/OT Regulations - Regulations Committee Recommendations 01-23-2026

Licensing Examiner Sheri Ryan provided a high level overview of the PDF document and working copy AO 360 Reform plan Excel spreadsheet for the board.

Board discussion regarding active practice requirement at renewal/reinstatement in 12 AAC 54.405 for physical therapy and 12 AAC 54.705 for occupational therapy. Only 4 states (OT) have an active practice requirement for renewal per NBCOT. Board discussed if active practice experience is employer responsibility at hire versus board's responsibility at renewal and evidence based research that 60 hours of therapy services or additional 40 hours of continuing education provides that therapist is a qualified and/or competent provider. Board discussed options to waiving requirement such as reducing additional 40 contact hours of continuing education in (B) from 40 to lower number. Ultimately the board decided it is the therapist's professional obligation to be competent when providing services.

Jonathan Gates moved to recommend repealing the Continuing Professional Practice Requirements for physical therapy in 12 AAC 54.405 and occupational therapy in 12 AAC 54.705 for renewal and reinstatement as part of the AO360 Reform Plan to be submitted to the Governor. Seconded by Eliza Ellsworth. Roll call vote:

Valerie Phelps = Yes

Tori Daugherty = No

Eliza Ellsworth = Yes

Jonathan Gates = Yes

Motion passes by majority.

Board discussed posting of licenses for physical therapy in 12 AAC 54.500(b) and occupational therapy in 12 AAC 54.805. Discussion revolved around service delivery changes such as multi-disciplinary offices and hospital settings where clients might not have access to or a therapist might not have control over the actual posting of their license. Language changed to mandatory posting to *“For a licensee providing services, the license or permit must be available for public inspection upon request within a reasonable timeframe.”*

Principles of Practice discussed and use in dry needling draft language. Consensus of board to proceed with recommendation to include remove of Principles of Practice in AO360 Reform plan and spell out language in dry needling language instead of referring to anything referred to in Principles of Practice.

Jonathan Gates moved to approve the AO360 Reform Plan recommendation as revised at the meeting 02/06/2026 and submit to the Division prior to the February 13, 2026 deadline. Motion seconded by Eliza Ellsworth. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes unanimously.

- B. Correspondence - Continuing Competency Committee Response Letter Recommendation

Tori Daugherty moved to approve the CEU Consideration Wilderness First Responder Course response draft as written. Jonathan Gates seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes unanimously.

Action Item:

Staff to send approved response to Emma Powley as approved.

- C. PT Scope Modernization Work Group

Status Update and Requests

- i. APTA-AK Meeting - Request to attend APTA-AK Meeting and educate new leadership on PT Scope Modernization language

Tori Daugherty moved to approve Jonathan Gates to attend meetings as the board's delegate as necessary to educate APTA-AK leadership regarding PT Scope Modernization efforts. Eliza Ellsworth seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes unanimously.

- ii. AK State Medical Board Mtg. February 20, 2026 - Request to attend AK State Medical Board Mtg. February 20, 2026, to gather stakeholder input re: primary care language on PT Scope modernization draft

Eliza Ellsworth moved to approve Jonathan Gates to attend the Alaska State Medical Board meeting on February 20, 2026 as the PHY board's delegate to gather stakeholder input regarding primary care language on the PT Scope modernization draft. Tori Daugherty seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion passes unanimously.

D. FY2026 Annual Report review

No discussion on this item due to time constraints. Staff to send information to 2026 Annual Report scribe to update action items completed at this meeting.

4. Meeting Summary - Action Items

- 1. Staff to update AO360 Reform Plan as discussed and submit to Division by February 13, 2026 deadline.
 - 1. Repeal 12 AAC 54.405 and 12 AAC 54.705 - professional practice requirements (active practice) for renewal and reinstatement
 - 2. Update language for 12 AAC 54.500(b) and 12 AAC 54.805 license posting as discussed.
- 2. Staff to send information to 2026 Annual Report scribe to update action items completed at 02/06/2026 meeting.
- 3. Staff to send response CEU Consideration Wilderness First Responder - 11-09-2025 as approved.

5. Adjourn

The Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board meeting was adjourned at 2:56 pm on Friday, February 6, 2026.

Next meeting to be held February 26-27, 2026 virtually.

Approved by unanimous board vote as the February 26, 2026 board meeting.