

State of Alaska
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF CORPORATION, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

BOARD OF Professional Counselors
Minutes of the meeting May 20th, 2024

By the authority of AS 08.01.070(2) and in compliance with the provisions of AS 44.62, Article 6, a scheduled meeting of the Board of Professional Counselors originated virtually via Zoom.

The Chair brought the meeting to order at 9:03 am

Board Members Present Constituting a Quorum

Dorene Hagen, Board Chair, Licensed Professional Counselor

Sammie O’Neal, Licensed Professional Counselor

Rachel Buddin-Young, Licensed Professional Counselor

Board Members Absent

None

Staff Members Present

Renee Carabajal, Program Coordinator II

Jeanne Pace, Program Coordinator I

Miriam Honea, Occupational Licensing Examiner

Melissa Dumas, Administrative Operations Manager

Jasmin Bautista, Investigator III

Stefanie Davis, Regulations Specialist II

Members of the Public Present

Megh Yarmak

Agenda Item – Review/Approve Agenda

In a motion duly made by Rachel Buddin-Young, seconded by Sammie O’Neal with unanimous consent, it was resolved to approve the May 20th, 2024 agenda with the one change to move lunch to 11:30.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin- Young	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			

Agenda Item – Ethics Disclosures

All members said they had no potential ethics conflicts to disclose.

Agenda Item – Public Comment

Megh Yarmak was present. No questions or comments at this time.

Agenda Item – Annual Report (Accomplishment)

Jeanne Pace presented the new template for the annual report. The Board discussed how to best complete the report in a time efficient manner and decided to conceptualize each section of the report together during the meeting. The three main sections of the report are Accomplishments, Needs and Activities.

In the context of discussing the annual report, Sammie O’Neal expressed the importance to establish a FAQ list for applicants. Jeanne Pace added this task to her list and assured the Board to have this task addressed by end of week.

Dori Hagen asked for update on recruiting. She was informed two individuals had reached out and their contact information was forwarded to Sara Chambers for further steps in the application process.

Agenda Item – Division Update

a. Quarterly Report

Melissa Dumas presented the FY24 third quarter financial report. Melissa stated that a negative balance was carried over into the new fiscal year, which would need to be monitored for potential need to increase fees.

Agenda Item – Continuation of Annual Report (Accomplishments)

Continued discussing regarding the annual report, section “Accomplishments”.

Agenda Item – Investigations

a. Investigative Report

Jasmin Baustista presented the investigative report covering February 22nd, 2024 thru May 07, 2024. The report included 6 open cases and 10 closed cases.

b. Disciplinary Matrix

Discussion regarding Disciplinary Matrix. The Board members agreed that a Disciplinary Matrix is a great tool to offer guidance when determining how someone should be disciplined, especially for new Board members who have no experience in that matter. Rachel Buddin- Young added that a Disciplinary Matrix will allow a consistent and fair handling of misconduct. However, all Board member also agreed that the purpose of the Disciplinary Matrix is to offer general guidance, but each case still needs to be looked at individually to determine a fair penalty.

The Board agreed to table this discussing until the next Board meeting.

Agenda Item – Continuation of Annual Report “Activities and Needs”.

The Board members continued their discussion about the annual report. Sammie O’Neal specifically pointed out that he would like at least one Board meeting per year to be in person. All Board members agreed.

Off record 10:42

On record 10:46

Agenda Item – Tabled Applications

In a motion duly made by Rachel Buddin-Young, seconded by Sammie O’Neal with unanimous consent, it was resolved to move to executive session in accordance with AS 44.62.310(c) Alaska Constitutional Right of Privacy provision for the purpose of discussing table applications with board staff Jeanne and Miriam to remain.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin-Young	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			

In a motion duly made by Sammie O’Neal, seconded by Rachel Buddin-Young with unanimous consent, it was resolved to approve license number PCOP198 pending clarification on Continuing Education courses meeting regulatory requirements.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin- Young	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			

In a motion duly made by Sammie O’Neal, seconded by Rachel Buddin-Young with unanimous consent, it was resolved to approve license number 220794.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin- Young	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			

Off record 11:06

On record 11:09

Agenda Item – Regulation Project

Stafanie Davis presented the public comments on Project relating to Names and Definitions.

In a motion duly made by Rachel Buddin-Young, seconded by Sammie O’Neal with unanimous consent, it was resolved to adopt the proposed regulation for file number 2023200593 as amended to update organization names.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin- Young	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			

In a motion duly made by Rachel Buddin-Young, seconded by Sammie O’Neal with unanimous consent to begin lunch break early at 11:27am.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin- Young	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			

Off record 11:27

On record 12:34

Agenda Item – Continuation of Regulations Project

a. Associate Regulations

The Board discussed the boundaries of the Professional Counselor Associate license. The Associate license will allow an individual to practice as a professional counselor while being supervised by a Board Approved Supervisor. The Professional Counselor Associate License will be valid for four years with an opportunity to extend the license for a maximum of two additional years. The Associate license will also allow the State to track of Licensee who are still in training and keep a record of their work. If an individual's time is interrupted due to life altering circumstances, they would have the right to pick up their supervised hours where they left off and would not have to reapply for a new Associate license. They may have to retake the NCE exam if their exam score is outdated. The board had a brief discussion regarding the FAQ's and want to ensure that one of the answers explains how to locate a board approved supervisor.

b. Supervisor Regulations

As per the new Regulation starting July 1st 2025, a Board Approved Supervisor license will no longer be perpetual but will have an expiration and will need to be renewed. The total duration of the PCO-S license will be four years. When renewing a PCO-S License an individual must show Verifications of 10 Continuing Education units taken in the previous two years, including 3 credit hours in Ethics pertaining to Supervision. The benefit of updating the Board Approved Supervisor license is to ensure the quality of education a supervisee receives under the supervision of a Board Approved Supervisor. The Board agrees that prerequisites of 10 CE courses can only be made mandatory starting 10.31.2029 due to the short time frame between the date the new Regulation goes into effect and the upcoming up renewal date (10.31.2025).

In a motion duly made by Rachel Buddin- Young, second by Sammie O'Neal with unanimous consent to initiate a regulations project regarding the Associate and Supervisor license by approving the following language for public comment, unless substantive changes are made by the regulations specialist or Department of Law:Draft language appended to minutes.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin- Young	X			
Sammie O'Neal	X			

Off record 2:35

On record 2:39

Agenda Item – New Business

a. Correspondence

a. Personality Assessment Inventory

The Board approved Megh Yarmak's request to provide Personality Assessment Inventory to those looking to become gamete donors and/or gestational carriers through their treatment plan in Alaska assuming all her training and schooling was approved by statutes.

b. Request to work together

The Board concluded that two individuals who are in a romantic relationship may work together in the same office without violating AMHCA Code of Ethics as long one does not supervise the other. Additionally, if one individual is receiving supervision, the supervisee must be supervised by someone outside of their workspace.

c. Ethical Question

The Board agrees that providing therapy to a friend is in violation of the AMHCA Code of Ethics. The Board agrees that providing therapy to a friend or supervising an individual providing therapy to the friend is in violation of the AMHCA Code of Ethics.

d. Program Curriculum Verification Request

The Board approves the request for internship at the College of New Jersey (TCNJ) assuming the College is accredited for. The Board asked for more clarification before making a final decision.

e. Acceptability of Degree Program

The Board determined that a CACREP accredited program requiring 60 semester credits to meet the education requirements for a Professional Counselor in Alaska.

f. Music Class for Veterans/ Request to be added to Statutes

After a brief discussion, the Board concluded that the Music class cannot be added to the approved Continuing Education organizations, however, the Board will honor up to 15 credit hours based on Statue 12 AAC 62.320. Section (7).

g. Supervisor hours

The Board agrees that all hours the supervisor signed off on before being investigated count toward the required 3000 hours of supervised experience. It is up to the supervisee to find a new Board approved Supervisor.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 12th and 13th, 2024.

In a motion duly made by Rachel Buddin-Young, seconded by Sammie O'Neal with unanimous consent, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 3:26 pm.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dorene Hagen, Chair	X			
Rachel Buddin-Young	X			
Sammie O'Neal	X			

Date final minutes approved by the board:	June 14, 2024
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Onboard	

Associate License

(a) An applicant for a professional counselor associate license shall submit:

- (1) a complete application, on a form provided by the department;
- (2) an authorization for release of records;
- (3) verification that the applicant meets the requirements of AS 08.29.110(a)(1-3 and 5);
- (4) certified transcripts showing that the applicant meets the requirements of 12 AAC 62.120;
- (5) the applicable fees established in 12 AAC 02.325;
- (6) supervision plan on a form provided by the department; (would include supervision agreement with supervisor on record)
- (7) a report of state criminal justice information under AS 12.62.005 – 12.62.200, and if a state other than this state is the applicant's primary state of residence, an equivalent report issued by that other state;

(b) A professional counselor associate license to practice as a professional counselor associate under supervision is valid for 4 years from the date issued.

(c) The board will extend the associate license up to two additional years if the applicant requests and is approved for the extension and demonstrates to the satisfaction of the board that an extension is necessary for good cause shown to complete the supervised experience required in AS 08.29.110(a)(6)

(d) A holder of a professional counselor associate license under this section may practice only under supervision as defined in 12 AAC 62.220

(e) An applicant may not begin post-doctoral degree or post-master degree supervised experience in the state until the board approves the applicant's plan for obtaining supervised experience and issues a professional counselor associate license under this section.

(f) An individual practicing under professional counselor associate license will be identified on the license as a holder of a professional counselor associate license to practice under approved supervision.

(g) Upon receipt of an application for a professional counselor associate license, the board may accept supervision hours earned through a similar and equivalent license in another jurisdiction.

(h) A professional counselor associate license will be suspended if there is no supervisor of record and may be reinstated if a new supervisor and supervision plan is approved by the board.

(i) An application submitted under this section is considered abandoned one year after the date of application

(j) Any supervision hours accrued outside of a Professional counselor associate license on or after October 1, 2025 will not be accepted toward total supervised hours.

Additional provisions for counselor associate licensee:

With application, turn in supervision plan with supervisor agreement requiring direct supervision every fifteen client hours must have one hour of face-to-face supervision. A professional counselor associate may not exceed 30 client hours per week.

- and a statement that the following topics will be covered:
 - (A) clinical skills;
 - (B) practice management skills;
 - (C) skills required for continuing competence;
 - (D) development of professional identity;
 - (E) ethical practice;
 - (F) legal and regulatory requirements.
- Turn in supervision progress form every 6 months
- When referencing their professional license, the licensee must include the words Associate Professional Counselor License on all professional documents including on all client records and electronic platforms.
- If changing supervisors, notification of changes must be submitted in writing within 14 days of the change with signatures from both the supervisee and new supervisor. An emergency change of supervisor may be approved by the board upon notification from the new supervisor.
- Submit completion of supervision document at conclusion of supervision for each supervisor, signed by supervisor, to include number of hours completed in each area and supervisor narrative.

Supervisor Certification

12 AAC 62.200. APPROVED COUNSELOR SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATION.

(a) The board will certify as an approved counselor supervisor an applicant who meets the requirements of this section. An applicant for certification under this section must be licensed as a professional counselor or as a licensed physician, licensed advanced practice registered nurse who is certified to provide psychiatric or mental health services, licensed clinical social worker, licensed marital and family therapist, licensed psychologist, or licensed psychological associate and have five years of counseling experience;

(1) submit a complete application, on a form provided by the department;

(2) submit the board-approved supervisor fee established in 12 AAC 02.325;

(3) certify that the applicant adheres, and will continue to adhere, to the ethical guidelines adopted in (b) of this section;

(4) provides to the board for its approval or disapproval a statement that details the person's supervision philosophy, orientation, and experience;

(5) submit documentation of having completed at least 25 contact hours of continuing education related to supervision of professional counselors within the two years preceding the date of application; the 25 contact hours of continuing education must include at least 12 hours earned through attendance and completion of synchronous courses, seminars, and workshops; the 25 contact hours must be obtained through any of the following: (A) a three semester-hour graduate course in clinical supervision; (B) a course approved by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC); (C) a course approved by the American Counseling Association (ACA); (D) a course approved by the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA); or (E) other courses related to professional counseling supervision and presented to the board for preapproval as equivalent to courses described in (B) – (D) of this paragraph; and

(6) if the applicant is applying to be certified as an approved counselor supervisor from another jurisdiction, submit a copy of the applicant's license in that jurisdiction.

(b) The code of ethics for an approved counselor supervisor certified under this section is the AMHCA Code of Ethics, adopted by reference in 12 AAC 62.900.

Renewal verbiage needs to be added to supervisor regulation – 4 years (to match with program cycle) with 10 CE units specific to supervision to include 3 units specific to supervision ethics for renewal, and to be renewed with program licenses.

Additional provisions for Supervisors:

- A. Supervisor to send written notice of providing supervision for applicant prior to supervision beginning.
- B. Supervisor to collect report turned in by the applicant every six months to show where applicant is at in training process.
- C. Per every fifteen client hours must have one hour of face-to-face supervision, to include telehealth hours.
- D. Supervisors are required to notify the board upon commencement or termination of supervision.
- E. An applicant will not qualify for an approved counselor supervisor certification under this section if the applicant has been disciplined by any State board for any violations of the Professional Counselor Practice Act or unethical conduct within 3 years immediately preceding the date of the application.
- F. Must notify this board in writing within 30 days if found guilty or has received discipline for any violation of the AMHC Code of Ethics by any State board.