

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 December 13, 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 9:01 am.

Agenda Item – Roll Call

Board Members Present Constituting a Quorum

Dorene Hagen, Chair, Licensed Professional Counselor

Sammie O'Neal, Licensed Professional Counselor

Mary Elkins, Licensed Professional Counselor

Crystal Herring, Licensed Professional Counselor

Board Members Absent

None

Staff Members Present

Jeanne Pace, Program Coordinator I

Miriam Honea, Licensing Examiner III

Marlo Adams, Licensing Examiner III

Stefanie Davis, Regulations Specialist II

Jasmin Bautista, Investigator III

Melissa Dumas, Administrative Operations Manager

Board Members Absent

None

Agenda Item - Introduction of New Board Member

Crystal Herring is the new member of the Board of Professional Counselors.

Agenda Item - Ethics Disclosure

No potential ethics conflicts to disclose.

In a motion duly made by Mary Elkins, seconded by Sammie O’Neal with unanimous consent, it was resolved to approve the December 13, 2024, agenda.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dori Hagen, Chair	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			
Mary Elkins	X			
Crystal Herring	X			

Agenda Item – Public Comment

Jeanne Brady - Jeanne is a licensed professional counselor in Alaska. Jeanne expressed concern about current regulations pertaining to pre-licensed individuals and supervision. The concern is safety to the public. The board chair requested Jeanne to send this information to the division so the board can take a closer look.

Kelly Brooks - Kelly hopes to become a licensed professional counselor. Kelly thanked the board, and stated she is attending the meeting to listen and learn more.

Jimmy Ward – Jimmy Ward applied to become a professional counselor in the past. At the time his application was approved pending 9 additional graduate semester hours. He is seeking reconsideration of his application with the new statute changes.

Eliza Muse – Eliza is here with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to listen to the meeting.

Agenda Item – Division Update

Melissa Dumas, operations manager for the division, shared the financial report for fiscal year 2024 4th quarter. The professional counseling program ended the fiscal year with a deficit.

Agenda Item – Regulations Update

The regulations update was given by Stefanie Davis, Regulations Specialist. The regulation draft for the associate license in being reviewed by the Department of Law – no further update.

The Regulation Project to delegate the authority to the division that was opened at the last board meeting (September 2024) was reviewed by the Department of law. The recommendation from the department of law is to withdraw the project and instead do a motion during this board meeting.

The reasoning is that the delegation of authority to the division is already in Statutes and starting a new project would be redundant. Furthermore, it might limit the authority of the board. All board members agreed, and both motions were made.

In a motion duly made by Mary Elkins, seconded by Sammie O’Neal with unanimous consent, it was resolved to withdraw project 2024200417 delegate authority to the department.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dori Hagen, Chair	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			
Mary Elkins	X			
Crystal Herring	X			

In a motion duly made by Crystal Herring, seconded by Mary Elkins with unanimous consent, it was resolved to give authority to the department if an applicant for a license or certification under AS 08.29.020(a)(1) meets all applicable requirements and the board is unable to act due to lack of quorum, the board automatically delegates the decision to approve the license or certification to the department. The board does not authorize the department to deny a license application or take any disciplinary action on a license.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dori Hagen, Chair	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			
Mary Elkins	X			
Crystal Herring	X			

Off record at 10:08 am

On record at 10:16 am

Agenda Item – Investigative Report

Jasmin Bautista, investigator gave the investigation report for the period of September 5, 2024, through December 3, 2024. There are 22 open cases. This includes continuing education cases. There are 4 closed cases.

Agenda Item - Investigative Training

Jasmin Baustista presented case review training for new board members.

Off record at 12:02 pm

On record at 1:02 pm

Agenda Item - Application Review

The deadline for applications in Onboard is December 27th at noon. The board decided to vote on applications in Onboard rather than reviewing applications during the meeting. There are 8 applications for review in Onboard.

Agenda Item - Conference Report- out

Mary Elkins, board member, attended the Clear conference in September. Regulatory excellence was the premise of the conference. Mary shared key take aways for each session she attended.

Agenda Item - Administrative Update

A. Old Business –

There was no old business to discuss.

B. New Business –

There was no new business to discuss.

C. Customer Correspondence –

The board reviewed an email from a customer encouraging the board to consider joining the counseling compact. The email initiated a discussion between the board members about the boards stand on the counseling compact.

The board voiced concern about joining the compact. The main points of concern were the financial consequences for the Board of Professional counselors as well as the loss of control. The board of Professional counselors in Alaska is self-funded. Joining the compact could significantly reduce the revenue to the states counseling program. In addition, the board voiced concern regarding insurance companies not paying out Alaska counselors at the Alaska rate but paying at a lower rate. The board would also have to add additional board members who oversee the action of the compact.

Besides the financial aspect that would impact the board of Professional Counselors, the board also worried about the compacts ability to change regulations. The loss of independency could potentially be a great as it is a very expensive and time-consuming process to change regulations back.

The Board of Professional Counselors is not completely excluding the idea to ever join the compact, but at this time, it is not an option.

Agenda item - Board Chair Summit

Dori Hagen, board chair, gave a brief report bout the board summit she joined at the beginning of December.

She also shared that she will be stepping down as board chair and might not extend her term past March 2025. The board discussed doing a nomination process during the next scheduled board meeting to determine who will become the next board chair.

Agenda Item - Scheduling Future Board Meetings

Future board meetings were tentatively scheduled for February 21, 2025, and April 11, 2025.

Agenda Item - Conference Schedule 2025

The conference schedule for 2025 was discussed.

Agenda Item – Adjournment

In a motion duly made by Crystal Herring, seconded by Mary Elkins with unanimous consent, it was resolved to adjourn the December 13, 2024, meeting at 2:18 pm.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Recuse	Absent
Dori Hagen, Chair	X			
Sammie O’Neal	X			
Mary Elkins	X			
Crystal Herring	X			

Date final minutes approved by the board:	January 10, 2025
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Onboard	