

1 State of Alaska
2 Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
3 Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
4

5 Alaska Board of Social Work Examiners
6 June 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes
7

8 The staff of the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
9 prepared these draft minutes. They have not been reviewed or approved by the
10 Board.
11

12 By authority of AS 08.01.070(2), and in compliance with the provisions of AS
13 44.62, Article 6, a scheduled meeting of the Board of Social Work Examiners
14 was held via videoconference through zoom.
15

16 Agenda Item 1 Call to Order/Roll Call Time: 9:07 a.m.
17

18 The June 22, 2020 meeting day was called to order by Chair, Danielle Lafon at 9:07 a.m.
19

20 Board members present, constituting a quorum:
21

22 Denielle Lafon, Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker – *Chair*
23 Geoffry McCormick, Licensed Master Social Worker
24 Mindy Swisher, Licensed Clinical Social Worker – *Vice Chair*
25 Eleanor Vinson, Public Member
26

27 Board members absent:
28

29 Brandon Ercanbrack, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (Joined later)
30

31 Division staff present:
32

33 Andy Khmelev, Acting Records and Licensing Supervisor
34 Marilyn Zimmerman, Paralegal II
35 Melissa Dumas, Administrative Officer II
36 Amber Whaley, Investigator II
37
38

39 Agenda Item 2 Review/Approve Agenda
40

41 Upon review of the agenda, Board Chair Danielle Lafon called for a motion to approve the
42 agenda.
43

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Colleen Vague, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to approve the amended agenda for the June 22, 2020 meeting as amended with the addition of the items listed by the chair.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague	x			
Brandon Ercanbrack				x

The motion passed with no further discussion.

Agenda Item 3 Review/Approve Mintues from January 27-28, 2020 meeting

Upon review of the minutes from the January 27-28, it was determined that they were incomplete. There were a few sections missing, and Acting RLS Andy Khmelev informed the board that he will get in touch with the examiner to get those finished and voted at the next quarterly meeting

The voting for the meeting minutes has been set aside.

Agenda Item 4 Ethics

No ethics to report.

Agenda Item 5 Investigative Report

Investigator II Amber Whaley joined the meeting to deliver the investigative report. The report covered January 15, 2020 through June 10, 2020. There are nine open cases in various statuses, and three were closed. No license actions to present.

Agenda Item 7 New Business

A. COVID-19/Renewal Discussion

Since Administrative Officer Melissa Dumas had not joined the meeting yet, the board moved on to agenda item new business. At the prior emergency meeting, the board voted to extend the lapse date for social workers from June 30, 2020 to October 30, 2020. This was done per a clause in SB 241, and the board made this decision because of the COVID-19 pandemic causing continued education opportunities to cancel on a massive level. With the

87 extended date, it will give social workers more time to accrue the necessary continued
88 education they need in order to remain in compliance. Board Chair Danielle Lafon asked
89 RLS Andy Khmelev how the social worker licensee base was reacting to the change. Mr.
90 Khmelev informed the board that so far there were three different responses. One of which
91 was the group of licensees that didn't know the renewal was extended, and were frequently
92 contacting the division to find out where the renewal forms are. The second group of
93 licensees were the ones that knew about it, but were not happy about the later renewal. In
94 most cases, those licensees had already completed their continued education before the
95 pandemic, and were looking to renew right on the spot. In some cases, some of the licensees
96 sent an outdated renewal form from 2018 with payment, only to receive a notice back
97 explaining to them that this is the incorrect form, and they will need to request a refund. The
98 third group of licensees who responded were happy with the change, but wanted proof of
99 extended date to reflect on their license. Mr. Khmelev referred those licensees to the license
100 search page on the CBPL website.

101
102 Overall the response was more positive than negative, as licensees were grateful that they
103 had more time to complete their continued education. Board member Geoffry McCormick
104 wanted to know if the next round of continued education would begin on July 1, 2020, or
105 October 31, 2020. It was discussed and interpreted that any continued education completed
106 by 10/30/2020 will count for the current licensing period, as this was the whole reason the
107 renewal date was pushed back.

108
109 The board also asked Mr. Khmelev how the courtesy licenses were coming along, and if
110 people were applying. Mr. Khmelev informed the board that the license has been issued in
111 decent numbers. In some cases, social workers mistook the courtesy license for a renewal
112 and had to get refunded, however mostly the courtesy licenses have been successful.

113
114 **Agenda Item 6 Division Update – FY 2020 2nd Quarter**

115
116 Administrative Officer II Melissa Dumas joined the meeting to present the boards financial
117 report for the second quarter of FY 2020. The revenue for the board through March of 2020
118 \$49,656, and the direct expenditures for the board were \$71,278. The boards total
119 expenditures were \$119,846, and a carry-over of \$87,843 in surplus from the prior year.
120 Currently the deficit for the board is \$70,191, however Miss Dumas did indicate that this was
121 nothing to be concerned about, as that revenue will bounce back in the upcoming renewal.

122
123 Miss Dumas informed the board that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all out of state travel
124 for the entire state has been cancelled through January of 2021 at this time.

Agenda Item 7 New Business

B. ASWB Update RE: Conferences and Testing Centers

The board discussed any upcoming travel to conferences. As stated during the division update by Miss Dumas, all out of state travel for the year 2020 has been cancelled by the office of the governor through January of 2021.

Acting RLS Andy Khmelev also reminded the board that if any of the scheduled 2020 conferences or trainings ended up going virtual, it is still important to put in a request as if travel was happening. The board of Professional Counselors had a similar scenario where a conference that was thought to be cancelled ended up going to zoom instead, and by the time the request was submitted, the registration deadline had passed.

The board moved onto potential travel in 2021 for ASWB, since there was no possibility to travel in the remaining 2020 year.

The board appointed Mindy Swisher to attend the 2021 ASWB Education Conference in Philadelphia on April 29-May 1, 2021.

The board appointed Mindy Swisher and Geoffry McCormick (tentatively) to attend the ASWB Delegates Assembly in New Orleans on November 18-20, 2021.

Board Chair Danielle LaFon also suggested that if there is a quarterly meeting between now and October, it would be good for Vice Chair Mindy Swisher to chair that meeting, as after October, Miss LaFon has no intention of renewing her license, and as a result will lose her place on the board.

Agenda Item 8 Annual Report

As opposed to prior years, when the annual report was divided between board members, this year the entirety of the annual report was written by board chair Danielle Lafon, due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing a rise in demand for mental health needs in the state. The board has been sent the annual report approximately a week prior to the meeting for review.

Board member Brandon Ercanbrack let RLS Andy Khmelev know via email that the only error he found in the report was that his new location was Kotzebue, and not Nome.

There were a few more errors that were found on the report, such as on page 44, to take out the word “the” on the recommendations sentence, and on page 48, correct the word regulations.

Aside from those minor errors, the board members were very impressed at the well written document.

On a motion duly made by Geoffry McCormick, seconded by Mindy Swisher, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to approve the 2020 Annual Report for the Board of Social Work Examiners with corrected changes.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague	x			
Brandon Ercanbrack				x

The motion passed with no further discussion

Agenda Item 10 Application Review

With the meeting going ahead of schedule, the board moved to application review before the lunch hour. The board reviewed applications that they had previously tabled during online board review.

The board discussed with Acting RLS Andy Khmelev on the proper procedure for reviewing applications. After discussion, it was decided that only applications that are complete with all the information available should be sent to board review. This would create less tabled applications, and less approved pending applications.

In regards to LCSW applicant 157486, the board determined that one of the supervisors indicated that he does not recommend the applicant for licensure, and the verification cannot then be used to satisfy licensure requirements. He will need to obtain the remaining three months of supervision from another supervisor. Letter to be sent.

Applicant 143564 requested an extension for their exam for one year. After reading the petition, the board agreed to give the extension.

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to approve the request from applicant 143564 to extend their exam deadline by one year from 9/18/2020 to 9/18/2021.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			

218	Mindy Swisher	x
219	Colleen Vague	x
220	Brandon Ercanbrack	x

221

222 The motion passed with no further discussion

223

224 The board reviewed request for alternate supervision from applicant Josh Stein. The board
 225 determined that not enough information was provided, and that more will be needed. The
 226 board will need to know if the potential supervisor is within the same agency or not, and the
 227 method of delivery is unclear. The board will need to know how it will be administered (ie
 228 through zoom, phone, etc.). Applicant will be notified.

229

230 Prior to recessing, the board members noticed an error on the website. The CBPL website
 231 indicated that the board is called the “Board of Clinical Social Work Examiners” and it will
 232 need to be corrected to remove the word “Clinical”.

233

234 *Off the record for lunch at 11:28 am.*

235

236 **Agenda Item 9 Lunch**

237

238 *Back on the record at 12:32 pm.*

239

240 **Agenda Item 13 Old Business**

241

242 Brandon Ercanbrack joined the meeting at 12:32 pm. Colleen Vague did not rejoin the
 243 meeting.

244

245 Due to some extra time prior to the arrival of the paralegal, the board moved to old
 246 business.

247

248 **Right Touch Regulation Touch Base:**

249

250 Due to the COVID-19, the work that the board did at the prior quarterly meeting was put
 251 on hold with the right touch regulation project, as the board was in and out of emergency
 252 meetings to accommodate the issues created by the pandemic. The board was wondering if
 253 the pandemic would end up causing this project to be terminated. Acting RLS Andy
 254 Khmelev informed the board that this is a project that could easily be paused, and picked up
 255 at any time. Especially given that any statutory changes would require the lobbying of
 256 legislators, and currently the legislators main focus was the pandemic.

257

258

259

260

Agenda Item 14 Administrative Business

Correspondence:

The correspondence was the board going over the ASWB Examination passing rates. Upon reviewing the passing rates, the board discussed ways of improving the rates for LBSW, as the license type already has low numbers, and no exam rates as nobody has taken it recently. The board considered reaching out to universities such as University of Alaska Anchorage, and University of Alaska Fairbanks to possibly create a course, or a presentation on the pathway to licensure. Not many students know about the LBSW option, as it seems most social work students focus on the masters and clinical licenses. If either UAA or UAF had the presentation or a course on pathway to licensure, there could be more interest in an LBSW as well as more knowledge of the licensing process itself. After some discussion on lobbying the universities, the board appointed members to lobby each university to push through more bachelors licenses:

- UAA – Brandon Ercanbrack
- UAF – Geoffry McCormick

Agenda Item 11 Consent Agreements Review

Paralegal II Marilyn Zimmerman joined the meeting to present the consent agreements for the board to review. The board moved into executive session to discuss the agreements.

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to enter executive session in accordance with AS 44.62.310 (c) for the purpose of discussing subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague				x
Brandon Ercanbrack	x			

The motion passed with no further discussion

Off the record at 1:02 pm for executive session.

Back on the record at 1:21 pm.

After return from executive session, the board was ready to vote on the consent agreements.

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Geoffrey McCormick, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to adopt the consent agreement for 2018-001197.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague				x
Brandon Ercanbrack	x			

The motion passed with no further discussion

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Geoffrey McCormick, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to adopt the consent agreement for 2018-001328.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague				x
Brandon Ercanbrack	x			

The motion passed with no further discussion

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Geoffrey McCormick, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to adopt the consent agreement for 2020-000404.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague				x
Brandon Ercanbrack	x			

The motion passed with no further discussion

On a motion duly made by Mindy Swisher, seconded by Brandon Ercanbrack, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to reinstate license # 109568.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague				x
Brandon Ercanbrack	x			

The motion passed with no further discussion

Off the record for recess at 1:46 pm.

Back on the record at 2:01 pm.

Agenda Item 12 Public Comment

After recess, Board Chair Danielle LaFon opened up public comment at 2:01 pm once on the record. The board kept the line open, and proceeded with the next agenda item, as nobody had called in at this time.

Agenda Item 14 Administrative Business

The board scheduled a tentative one day meeting for October 5, 2020.

The board decided on a one day meeting for October due to the fact that originally the board anticipated having to do audits, but with renewal being pushed back to 10/30/2020, the audits will be reviewed at the spring board meeting. When discussing the type of meeting to have in the spring, the board was wanting a two day meeting in order to review audits. Acting RLS Andy Khmelev recommended going what the counselors board did, which is review the audits via onboard, and then discuss the tabled ones at the meeting. Mr. Khmelev reminded the board that most of the audits are straightforward, and it's the unusual ones with the questionable continued education that require board discussion. The board was in support of this idea.

The board settled on tentative dates for March 1-2, 2021 in Anchorage for their spring meeting.

Board Chair Danielle Lafon closed public comment at 2:16 pm with no one calling in during the period.

Task List:

- Follow up with regulations specialists on right touch regulation.
- Make corrections to annual report.
- Reach out to the applicant who requested alternate supervision.
- Brandon Ercanbrack to contact UAA, and Geoffry McCormick to contact UAF.
- Follow up with Marilyn regarding ongoing issue incorrectly licensed individual that was discussed in executive session.
- OLE Lauren Bales will need to finish the January 2020 minutes.

Board Chair Danielle Lafon stated on the record that Brandon Ercanbrack had an excused absence for the first half, however, Colleen Vague's absence for the second half of the meeting is unexcused.

On a motion duly made by Geoffry McCormick, seconded by Mindy Swisher, and approved unanimously, it was

RESOLVED to adjourn the June 22, 2020 meeting.

	APPROVE	DENY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Danielle Lafon	x			
Geoffry McCormick	x			
Mindy Swisher	x			
Colleen Vague				x
Brandon Ercanbrack	x			

The motion passed with no further discussion.

Off the record at 2:28 pm.

Andy Khmelev, Acting Records and Licensing Supervisor Date

Danielle Lafon, Board of Social Work Examiners Chair Date