

State of Alaska
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners
October 5, 2020

Written meeting minutes only reflects a brief overview of the business conducted during the boards meeting. For a more detailed account, please request a copy of the meeting recording.

By Authority of AS 08.01.070(2) and in compliance with the provisions of AS 44.62, a regularly scheduled meeting of the Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners was held October 5, 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom.

October 5, 2020

Agenda item #1 Call to order/Roll Call

Call to order and Roll Call were not recorded.

Board Members present, constituting a quorum:

Danielle LaFon, Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker, Board Chairperson
Mindy Swisher, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Co-Chair
Geoffry McCormick, Licensed Master Social Worker
Brandon Ercanbrack, Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Colleen Vague, Public Member - absent

Division Staff present were:

Lacey Derr, Records and Licensing Supervisor
Lauren Bales, Occupational Licensing Examiner

Agenda item #2 Review Agenda

Agenda review was not recorded

Agenda item #3 Ethics Reporting

Ethics reporting was not recorded

Agenda item #4 Investigative Report

Investigative report with Joshua Hardy, Investigator, was not recorded. Back on record from Executive Session at 8:40am. Recording begins.

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to accept consent agreement for case number 2019-000581

Investigators Joshua Hardy and Erika Prieksat exit meeting at 8:42am.

Agenda item #5 Mental Health Workgroup

The Mental Health Workgroup is a collective group of board representatives for the Mental Health Boards that are looking for more guidance when it comes to COVID-19 and the fallouts of that. The first meeting will be taking place October 5, 2020 at 12pm. This is the same day as this meeting, and will take place during the meeting break.

Lacey Derr states that per information from the administration, Health mandate 15 is possibly going to be lifted as soon as October 9, 2020. The workgroup is to create an established guideline between boards to have in place of said mandate.

Lacey Derr and Lauren Bales will be in attendance. Brandon Ercanbrack volunteers to go to represent the board.

Agenda item #6 Emergency Courtesy License Update

After discussing the Mental Health Workgroup and moving on to the Emergency Courtesy License Update, Lauren Bales noted that a topic under Agenda item #8 (COVID Guidance update) goes hand in hand with this agenda item. Both agenda items are being discussed at once.

With Health mandate 15 ending, the Emergency Courtesy License will be expiring on November 15th. The Division is not expecting the Emergency declaration to extend at this point in time. The board has been asked to start steering the Emergency Courtesy license base to permanent licensure. Today marks six weeks before the Emergency declaration ends. The board was asked if they would like to prepare a statement that would then be emailed to Emergency Courtesy license holders as a reminder that the license type is coming to an end. The board unanimously agreed.

Lauren will receive the drafted language from the Psychology Board and draft something for the Social Worker board to review at this meeting. Brandon Ercanbrack would also like the language posted on the website so that everyone receives notice.

Agenda item #8 New Business

COVID-19 Guidance Update

Lauren Bales moved on to discussing the COVID Guidance Update (New Business) since it directly ties in to this agenda item. Lauren is currently working with the publications team to remove the notary seal requirements from forms and applications as it is not required in statutes or regulations.

The question was posed by Mindy Swisher regarding what will happen with supervision once Health Mandate 15 ends? Lauren Bales stated that the board will go back to receiving Distance/Alternate Supervision requests and reviewing them as they were prior. If the board wanted to accept that people would continue to receive supervision via teletherapy, the language of statute 12 AAC 18.115 would need to be changed.

Danielle LaFon noted that in January 2020 when completing the right touch regulation project, the board made a recommendation to change the language in statute **12 AAC 18.115 SUPERVISION OF EXPERIENCE FOR CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK LICENSE** from: “(d) To receive the exception in (c)(1) of this section, an applicant who practices in a remote location must, before the supervision begins, submit a written request to the board to allow supervision by telephonic or electronic means. The board will approve a request for telephonic or electronic supervision of an applicant who practices in a remote location if the board determines that (1) approved clinical supervisors are not practicing at, or within a reasonable distance of, that location; or (2) the approved clinical supervisors practicing at that location cannot provide appropriate supervision because of the supervisor's relationship to the applicant, a possible conflict of interest, or other good cause shown.”

to: “(d) To receive the exception in (c)(1) of this section, an applicant who practices in a remote location must, before the supervision begins, submit a written request to the board to allow supervision by telephonic or electronic means”

The board had previously voted on changing this. The board had further discussion regarding the language of this specific statute.

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to strike (d) from 12 AAC 18.115

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

**Resolved to revise 12 AAC 18.115 (c)(1) to state: (c)to be accepted by the board,
(1) direct clinical supervision must be provided in synchronous meetings between the supervisor and the applicant**

Lauren Bales added the drafted statute language document to OnBoard at the suggestion of Danielle LaFon.

During the discussion on supervision, Lacey Derr brought up the Motivo presentation by Rachel McCrickard that was presented to the board in late 2019. Motivo is the first online platform connecting mental health therapists to clinical supervisors to make an easier and more efficient path toward licensure. The Division is considering implementing the use of Motivo to assist in linking individuals in rural areas to supervisors more easily. Motivo has made changes since the presentation. The board is interested in re-discussing this and would like to view an updated presentation.

TASK: Lauren Bales will reach out Rachel McCrickard to have her join the next board meeting to present the updated presentation to the board.

Brandon Ercanbrack states that on the topic of supervision, the 1115 waiver services the state has allowed for more services to be provided telephonically and through Zoom. The Alaska Behavioral Health Association and the Alaska Native Health Board have both issued position statements to the state saying they would like to continue to provide services the way they have the last few months. They are now able to provide services over telephone which they could not do prior. A lot of benefit has been seen from this waiver. There is a fear that it could go away. Brandon recommends the board write a letter of support if that is within the bounds of the board.

Brandon agrees to volunteer to write out a drafted letter for the board to review to encourage the continuation of the supervision services. If approved by the Division and the board, this would then be sent to the waiver program.

Lauren Bales states that once the waiver support statement is drafted by Brandon Ercanbrack, the board can then present this to the Division Director or to the Department of Law to ensure it is not in conflict with anything that is already in place.

Agenda item #7 Application Review

The board took a recess to complete individual application review at 9:48am.

The board returns from recess and is back on record at 10:41am.

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the following applications for Social Work licensure in the State of Alaska for Clinical Social work by Examination: License numbers: 161071, 164013

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the following applications for Social Work licensure in the State of Alaska for Clinical Social work by Credentials: License numbers: 160472, 160084, 165975

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the following applications for Social Work licensure in the State of Alaska for Master Social work by Examination: License numbers: 163533, 163638, 164719, 155465-pending licensure fees

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the following applications for Social Work licensure in the State of Alaska by Master Social work by Credentials: License numbers: 158419, 162824

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

**Resolved to approve the following application for Continuing Education Approval Request:
17978**

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to approve the exam extension requests for Eric Salazar and Peter Park

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to table the following application for Social Work licensure for Clinical Social Work by Examination: 163790

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to table the following application for Social Work licensure for Clinical Social Work by Examination pending verification of 2 months of clinical supervision for license number 157486

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to table the following application for Social Work licensure for Clinical Social Work by Credentials pending additional Substance Abuse education for license number 165188

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to table the following application for Social Work licensure for Clinical Social Work by Credentials pending additional clarification on Substance Abuse CEUs for license number 164477

Agenda item #8 New Business

COVID Guidance – Update: Previously discussed while discussing Agenda item #6.

Finding additional time before the scheduled lunch break, Lauren Bales elected to move on to Old Business, Agenda item #11.

Agenda item #11 Old Business

Danielle LaFon asks Lauren Bales to update the board regarding the following: at the last board meeting the board was made aware that a licensee from the sunset audit was not supposed to have her license. Via Lacey Derr, this has been forwarded to the Chief Investigator. There are a few more items he would like to look into. Once everything is gathered the Investigator will then present his findings to the board.

Mindy Swisher and Brandon Erbanbrack attended the new board member training with ASWB. Mindy Swisher states that the ASWB takes over application review in some states and shares interest in looking into this as there would be more time for the board to work on regulations and other projects. Geoffry McCormick asks about the cost of this. Lauren states that it is outside of the cost of the regular fee. The board unanimously agrees that this is worth looking into further.

TASK: Lauren Bales will reach out to an ASWB representatives for more information on application review that can then be provided to the board.

Mindy Swisher brings up the delegate assembly taking place on November 16th and November 20, 2020. Geoffry was the delegate to attend. Geoffry states Mindy should also attend since she will be board chair. Lauren will reach out to the ASWB representative to see if they will allow two board members to attend. If there is no extra cost associated, Mindy is encouraged to sign up and attend as well.

Right Touch Regulation Project

Danielle LaFon inquires about the status of the Right Touch Regulation project since it was put on hold. Lauren states that the drafted language was sent to the regulations specialist for review. Lauren will check in with the regulation specialists and report back to the board.

Finding additional time before the scheduled lunch break, Lauren Bales elected to move on to the Correspondence section of Agenda item #12-Administrative Business.

Agenda item #12 Administrative Business

Correspondence

Continuing Education credit questions: The board is being asked if they will begin the licensing period on October

30, 2020 or July 1, 2020. Geoffry states that this has been discussed before, the board will not be able to accept anything prior to October 31, 2020 for the next year. Everything must be from after the extension period ended on October 30, 2020. Danielle agrees as anything received prior to October 31, 2020 is technically under the previous licensing period. Geoffry asks if the Division is updating the CE forms to reflect the telehealth requirements. Lauren states that changes have been submitted to the publications team. She will check in on the status of the form updates and report back to the board.

Questions from Universities regarding individual education and CSWE accreditation: Danielle LaFon states that the board does not dictate what individual education is. Since the question is if their students apply for licensure would they receive it, Danielle states we should send them the licensure requirements since the board does not require a specific education other than a degree in Social Work.

Danielle also notes that she believes a future challenge for the board will be figuring out reciprocity for online programs. The board has historically always fallen back on CSWE accreditation but can see Universities moving away from this in the future, especially with online education. She states that reaching out to CSWE and having them talk at a future board meeting about their accreditation process is something to consider.

TASK: Lauren Bales will add discussing reaching out to the CSWE regarding their accreditation process to the next board meeting's agenda.

Public board member, Colleen Vague, absence is noted. She was not able to be contacted before or during today's meeting.

Agenda item #9 **Lunch Break**

The board took a recess for lunch at 11:49am.

The board returns from recess and is back on record at 12:52pm.

Agenda item #12 **Administrative Business**

Task List

Task: Lauren Bales will issue a letter to the Emergency Courtesy License holders.

Task: Lauren Bales will schedule a Motivo representative to present at the next scheduled board meeting.

Task: Brandon Ercanbrack will draft statement regarding telephonic services.

Task: Lauren Bales will reach out to ASWB regarding application review feature information for the next meeting.

Task: Lauren Bales will reach out to CSWE for a representative to present the accreditation process.

Task: Lauren Bales will research the eligibility for two board members to attend the ASWB delegates assembly.

Task: Mental Health Workgroup document will be added to the website once it has been reviewed and approved.

Agenda item #10 **Public Comment**

Public comment period opened at 1:01pm

Tonie Protzman joined the group for public comment at 1:00pm

Lauren Bales read the guidelines as follows:

There is an allotted time for the comments that is divided between all individuals signed in to give comment, right now there is only one. This is not a time for the board to respond to the comments. The

board can choose to respond at the end of the comment period, can send a letter with their responses to the individual, or can choose not to respond. This is not a time to request status updates with any application that is pending.

Tonie Protzman, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers representing the Alaska chapter, called in to express her concern regarding applicants stating that their phone calls and emails are not being returned. License renewals are due by the end of this month, and applicants are having concerns about their licenses. They want to know the availability of the board and how they can get their questions answered. This is a repeating pattern Tonie has seen and wants to have it addressed. She says is open to being a liaison between her members and the board. She also stated the concerns from applicants regarding the new telehealth CEU requirements. A lot of members stated they did not get a notification or a 30-day notice on them. Additionally, it was not clear where to record the telehealth CEUs on the renewal forms.

Public comment period closed at 1:14pm.

Agenda item #11 Old Business

Previously discussed after Agenda item #8

Agenda item #12 Administrative Business

Meeting Dates

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to schedule the next board meeting for February 2, 2021

A motion duly made by Danielle LaFon, seconded by Geoffry McCormick, and approved by unanimous consent, was:

Resolved to schedule a meeting for March 2, 2021

Agenda item #13 Meeting Adjourned

Adjourned at 1:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

DocuSigned by:

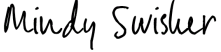


1/13/2022

Date

Stefanie L. Davis
Occupational License Examiner
State of Alaska, DCCED, CBPL

DocuSigned by:



1/11/2022

Date

Mindy Swisher
Board Chairperson
Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners