



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions
Public Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2024

Board Members Present:

William Ahearn, Acting Chair
Kathleen Tucker, Public Member
Kristen Woodbury, Member
Amy Vercillo, Member
Kathryn Stevens, Member (arrived at 11:36 a.m.)
Alayna McGarty, Member (arrived at 10:29 a.m.)
Cynthia Belhumeur, Public Member (left the meeting at 12:13 p.m.)
Ashley Williams, Member (left the meeting at 11:36 a.m.)
Susan Egan, Member

Staff Members Present:

Brian Bialas, Executive Director
Michael Egan, Board Counsel
Lauren McShane, Investigative Supervisor
Doris Lugo, Investigator
Ellen D'Agostino, Investigator
Emily Peterson, Investigative Intern
Alric Noronha, Investigative Intern

All board members and staff appeared by videoconference.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m.

Roll Call for Attendance

Mr. Bialas called the roll of board members. William Ahearn, Kathleen Tucker, Kristen Woodbury, Amy Vercillo, Cynthia Belhumeur, Ashley Williams, and Susan Egan all present by videoconference.

Board Business

- **Public Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2024:** After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Belhumeur, seconded by Dr. Vercillo, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2024 as drafted. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Executive Session Minutes of October 18, 2024:** After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Vercillo, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of October 18, 2024 as drafted. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Ratification of Decisions by Board Staff to Approve Applications:** The Board considered whether to approve the decisions made by staff on applications processed since the last meeting. A motion was made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Dr. Vercillo, to approve the decisions made by staff on applications processed since the last Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Application Processing Under Application Review Policy:** Mr. Bialas presented application review data and stated that the number of applications submitted for review continues to increase.

Hearing on Denial of Application

- **Yesenia Garcia Velez, Applicant for LMHC:** Dr. Velez appeared for the continuation of the hearing on the denial of her application. Dr. Velez's application was denied because she did not complete a qualifying pre-master's degree internship. She produced documentation indicating that she did complete a qualifying internship.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Vercillo, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to allow Dr. Velez to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

LMHC Application Review – Reference

- **Matthew Friend:** The Board reviewed Mr. Friend's application, including a reference. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to invite Mr. Friend's former supervisor who provided the reference and Mr. Friend to a meeting for separate interviews.

LMHC Application Reviews – Education

- **Christopher Shutzer:** The Board reviewed Mr. Shutzer's education. Mr. Bialas explained that Mr. Shutzer's education is identical to education previously accepted by the Board. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Belhumeur, seconded by

Dr. Williams, to allow Mr. Shutzer to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- **Sophia Brown:** The Board reviewed Ms. Brown's education.

Ms. McGarty arrived at 10:29 a.m.

After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to ask Ms. Brown what courses she believes cover Group Work and Research and Evaluation and ask her for syllabi for the Foundations for Doctoral Study and Advanced Theories courses from her MFT degree.

- **Carolina Polanco Rosario:** The Board reviewed Ms. Rosario's education. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to inform Ms. Rosario that she must complete qualifying courses in Psychopathology and Clinical Skills. The Board also directed Mr. Bialas to ask Ms. Rosario for syllabi for courses that she believes cover Group Work and Human Growth and Development.

NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Requests

- **Rose Yona:** The Board reviewed Ms. Yona's request. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to allow Ms. Yona 50% extra time and the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Debora Barbosa:** The Board reviewed Ms. Barbosa's request. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. McGarty, seconded by Dr. Williams, to allow Ms. Barbosa 50% extra time and the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

National MFT Examination ESL Accommodation Request

- **Graciela Gutierrez:** The Board reviewed Ms. Gutierrez's request. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Vercillo, seconded by Dr. Egan, to allow Ms. Gutierrez 50% extra time and the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Discussion

- **Delegation of Decisions on Examination Accommodation Requests to Executive Director and Associate Executive Director:** Mr. Bialas proposed that the Board delegate authority to him and Erin Murphy to approve examination accommodation requests. The Board provided direction to Mr. Egan on how a delegation policy should be drafted for future consideration.

Monitoring

- **Jacqueline Dupont, 2021-000408-IT-ENF, Revised 3rd Quarterly Monitoring Report and 4th Quarterly Monitoring Report:** The Board reviewed Ms. Dupont's reports. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. McGarty, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to accept the reports. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Catherine Stavrakas, 2020-000400-IT-ENF, 3rd and 4th Quarterly Monitoring Reports:** The Board reviewed Ms. Stavrakas's reports. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Vercillo, seconded by Dr. Egan, to accept the reports. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Mr. Bialas clarified that what the Board reviewed and approved are the second and third reports.

Comments from Professional Associations

Jami Osborne from the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association discussed applicant concerns and the need for the supervised-level license.

Miranda Croteau from the New England Association for Family and Systemic Therapy discussed a committee the association is developing.

Executive Session (closed under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B; specifically, the Board will discuss and evaluate examination accommodation requests that involve medical records and information of patients)

At 11:05 a.m., a motion was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. McGarty, to exit the public meeting and (1) enter into a closed executive session under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B; specifically, the Board will discuss and evaluate examination accommodation requests that involve medical records and information of patients; then (2) enter into investigative conference under G.L. c. 112, § 65C to review new cases; and then, after the conclusion of investigative conference, (3) not return to the public meeting and adjourn. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The Board entered executive session at 11:05 a.m.

Board maintains separate minutes of executive session.

Investigative Conference (closed session under G.L. c. 112, § 65C)

The Board entered investigative conference at 11:31 a.m.

Ms. Stevens arrived at 11:36 a.m.

Dr. Williams left the meeting at 11:36 a.m.

During the investigative conference, the Board took the following actions:

Cases

2021-000285-IT-ENF (Flexible Fundamentals):	Refer to Board Counsel
AMH-2023-0043 (AM):	Refer to the Office of Prosecutions

Ms. Belhumeur recused herself from the consideration of AMH-2023-0036 (GC) and left the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

AMH-2024-0011 (CS):	Dismiss
AMH-2023-0036 (GC):	Dismiss

Adjournment

At 12:22 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Tucker, seconded by Dr. Vercillo, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Approval

The above minutes were approved at the public meeting held on December 20, 2024.



Brian Bialas, Executive Director

List of Documents Used by the Board at the Public Meeting:

- Agenda for Meeting of November 15, 2024
- Public Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2024
- Executive Session Minutes of October 18, 2024
- Applications Reviewed Under Application Review Policy: January 1, 2024 through November 14, 2024 and October 1, 2024 through October 31, 2024
- Documents from LMHC Application of Yesenia Garcia Velez
- Documents from LMHC Application of Matthew Friend
- Documents from LMHC Application of Christopher Shutzer
- Documents from LMHC Application of Sophia Brown
- Documents from LMHC Application of Carolina Polanco Rosario
- NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Request of Rose Yona
- NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Request of Debora Barbosa
- National MFT Examination ESL Accommodation Request of Graciela Gutierrez

- Jacqueline Dupont, 2021-000408-IT-ENF, Revised 3rd Quarterly Monitoring Report and 4th Quarterly Monitoring Report
- Catherine Stavrakas, 2020-000400-IT-ENF, 3rd and 4th Quarterly Monitoring Reports