



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Board of Social Workers
Public Session Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2023

TIME: 9:32 a.m.

ATTENDANCE: Scune Carrington
Charlene Zuffante
Marie Pierre-Victor (left the meeting at 1:03 p.m.)
Tamara Lundi
Marcia Roddy
Yvonne Ruiz (left the meeting at 11:42 a.m., returned at 11:50 a.m.)

STAFF: Brian Bialas, Executive Director
Marine Jardonnet, Board Counsel
Lauren McShane, Investigator Supervisor

All board members and staff appeared by videoconference.

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

Board Business

- **Roll Call Vote for Attendance:** Mr. Bialas called the roll of board members. Scune Carrington, Charlene Zuffante, Marie Pierre-Victor, Tamara Lundi, Marcia Roddy, and Yvonne Ruiz all present by videoconference.
- **Public Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2023:** After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Lundi, seconded by Ms. Carrington, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2023. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote, with Ms. Ruiz abstaining.
- **Executive Session Minutes of August 22, 2023:** After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Zuffante, seconded by Ms. Pierre-Victor, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of August 22, 2023. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote, with Ms. Ruiz abstaining.

- **Board Meeting Dates for 2024:** The Board considered proposed Board meeting dates for 2024. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Lundi, seconded by Ms. Pierre-Victor, to approve the proposed meeting dates for 2024. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Application Review Interview – Reference

- **Michele Sessa, Applicant for LCSW**
 - **Interview of Supervisor Wendy Rosenblum:** Ms. Rosenblum appeared to discuss her reference for Ms. Sessa. Ms. Rosenblum, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, stated that she supervised Ms. Sessa from September 2021 through November or December of 2022 or January of 2023. Ms. Sessa’s attendance at her position was problematic even though she was working part-time, and she had many excuses for her absences, including that she was sick, her car was not working, she had to attend a wedding, she had to work on a paper, she was exposed to someone with COVID-19, her alarm did not go off, she had bad sushi, she was having trouble breathing, she had to support her mother, and her grandmother died. Ms. Rosenblum noted that at one point it was apparent that Ms. Sessa would not obtain the experience hours she needed without being more flexible with when she was able to work. In addition, Ms. Sessa was missing paperwork, and she “cut and pasted” notes. Ms. Rosenblum also was concerned about Ms. Sessa’s focus on one client whom she sought out even after being taken off of the client’s treatment team. Ms. Rosenblum explained that Ms. Sessa likely had no malicious intent but simply was a new clinician who needed to learn more about boundaries.

After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to invite Ms. Sessa to a meeting for an interview.

Application Reviews – Reference

- **Eu Choi, Applicant for LCSW:** The Board reviewed Mr. Choi’s application, including a reference. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Carrington, seconded by Ms. Lundi, to allow Mr. Choi to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Jennifer Ullrich, Applicant for LICSW:** The Board reviewed Ms. Ullrich’s application, including a reference letter. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to request a response to the reference letter from Ms. Ullrich.

Application Review Interview – No Reference

- **Michael Cortez, Applicant for LICSW**
 - **Interview of Supervisor Karen Loftus:** Ms. Loftus appeared to discuss her refusal to provide a reference with experience hours for Mr. Cortez. Ms. Loftus stated that she supervised Mr. Cortez from October 2020 until May 2021 when Mr. Cortez refused to work with her any longer. She does not know why he did not want to work with her anymore. After they parted ways, Ms. Cortez would say disparaging things about Ms. Loftus during team meetings such as “You only see old people,” and when she would offer her opinion, he would say “that’s not true” or “no one knows what to do.” She understands that he now is “doing better” and lately has interacted with her more positively during meetings. He did not say disparaging things to her while she was supervising him.

When asked, Ms. Loftus explained that she did not complete Mr. Cortez’s reference form because she thought he already had enough hours for licensure and did not need her to submit the form. She stated that she believes Ms. Cortez is hardworking and cares about his clients. She agreed to complete the reference form for Mr. Cortez.

After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to invite Mr. Cortez to a meeting for an interview.

Application Reviews – Reference

- **Laura Geidel, Applicant for LCSW:** The Board reviewed Ms. Geidel’s application, including a reference. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Carrington, seconded by Ms. Ruiz, to allow Ms. Geidel to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Samuel Giess, Applicant for LCSW:** The Board reviewed Mr. Giess’s application, including a reference. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Pierre-Victor, seconded by Ms. Carrington, to allow Mr. Giess to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Monitoring

- **Aimee Monette, Conditional Licensure Agreement, 6th Quarterly Monitoring Report:** The Board reviewed the report. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Carrington, seconded by Ms. Pierre-Victor, to accept the report. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The Board directed Mr. Bialas to inform Ms. Monette’s supervisor to place her future reports on letterhead, to sign the reports, and to include her license number on the reports.

Executive Session (Executive session CLOSED under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) and G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B)

At 10:32 a.m., a motion was made by Ms. Lundi, seconded by Ms. Ruiz, to (1) exit the public meeting and enter into a closed executive session under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1), individual character rather than competence, to discuss and evaluate the good moral character of applicants as required for licensure, and under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, para. 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B, to review applications, conduct an interview for an application, and evaluate requests for continuing education extensions that involve medical records and information of patients, then (2) enter into investigative conference under G.L. c. 112, § 65C to review settlement offers and conduct case interviews, 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.

Board maintains separate minutes of executive session.

Ms. Ruiz left the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Ms. Ruiz returned to the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Investigative Conference (Closed Session under G.L. c. 112, § 65C)

The Board entered investigative conference at 11:50 a.m.

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

Settlements

2022-000338-IT-ENF (TK):	Gave direction to prosecutor
2022-000297-IT-ENF (TK):	Gave direction to prosecutor
2021-001013-IT-ENF (AG):	Gave direction to prosecutor

Ms. Pierre-Victor left the meeting at 1:03 p.m.

Case Interviews

SW-2023-0004 (RI):	Interviewed respondent; review case again at next meeting
SW-2023-0023 (BL):	Interviewed respondent; refer to office of prosecutions

Adjournment

At 2:00 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Ruiz, seconded by Ms. Lundi, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The above Minutes were approved at the public meeting held on October 24, 2023.



Brian Bialas, Executive Director

List of Documents Used During the Public Meeting:

- Agenda for Meeting of September 26, 2023
- Public Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2023
- Executive Session Minutes of August 22, 2023
- Proposed Board Meeting Dates for 2024
- LCSW Application of Michele Sessa
- LCSW Application of Eu Choi
- LICSW Application of Jennifer Ullrich
- LICSW Application of Michael Cortez
- LCSW Application of Laura Geidel
- LCSW Application of Samuel Giess
- Aimee Monette, Conditional Licensure Agreement, 6th Quarterly Monitoring Report