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**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Occupational Licensure
Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health
and Human Services Professions**

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Public Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2021

Board Members Present:

Bill Ahearn, Acting Chair
Amy Vercillo, Member (arrived at 10:06 a.m.)
Cynthia Belhumeur, Public Member
Frank Gomez, Member
Susan Egan, Member
Kristen Woodbury, Member

Staff Members Present:

Brian P. Bialas, Executive Director
Lynn Read, Board Counsel
Alan Van Tassel, Investigator Supervisor

All board members and staff appeared by videoconference.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

Board Business

- **Public Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2021:** After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2021 as drafted. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2021:** After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Dr. Egan, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2021 as drafted. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **2022 Meeting Dates:** Mr. Bialas proposed a meeting schedule for 2022. After a brief discussion, the Board accepted the proposed schedule and will continue to meet on the third Friday of every month next year.



- **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 Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to approve the decisions made by staff on applications processed since the last Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Ms. Vercillo arrived at 10:06 a.m.

- **Application Processing Under Application Review Policy:** Mr. Bialas reported on the 2021 to date and August data concerning applications reviewed under the Board's Application Review Policy. Staff will continue to produce reports each month.

Application Review Interviews – Past Discipline

- **Jamie James, LMFT Applicant:** Ms. James appeared to discuss the reprimands on her law license for IOLTA account violations and because her paralegal improperly signed her name and her clients' names on documents submitted to court. Ms. James stated that for the IOLTA account violations, at around the time both of her parents died, her former bookkeeper who managed the IOLTA accounts quit working for Ms. James and reported Ms. James to the Board of Bar Overseers (BBO). Ms. James also explained that her paralegal signed court submissions without Ms. James's knowledge or permission when Ms. James was not in the office, and Ms. James's brother reported her to the BBO after combing through her filings for evidence to support a complaint. She now would like to make a difference in people's lives as an LMFT.

After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to allow Ms. James to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- **Katherine Glick, LMHC Applicant:** Ms. Glick appeared to discuss the reprimand on her clinical alcohol and drug counseling license in New Jersey for being charged with possession of marijuana. She explained that she was in the parking lot at a concert and was arrested, processed, and released by the state police at the concert. She completed pretrial probation and the charge was dismissed. She has had no other discipline on any license.

After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Vercillo, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to allow Ms. Glick to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Discussion

- **DPH Order 2021-6 on Temporary Licenses:** Mr. Bialas reported that a new executive order extended the expiration date of temporary licenses for psychologists and social workers through December 31, 2021, but all Board of Allied Mental Health temporary licenses expired on September 15, 2021.
- **Changes to NCMHCE:** Ms. Woodbury reported on her conversation with NBCC with Mr. Bialas and Ms. Read regarding NBCC's upcoming changes to the NCMHCE. She

explained that NBCC answered her questions well, and that the changes will force applicants to use their “clinical brains,” so at this point she is not concerned about the new format.

Correspondence

- **9.9.21 Letter from S. Frank of Thriveworks re: Thriveworks as Clinical Field Experience Site:** The Board reviewed a letter from Thriveworks about whether it qualifies as a Clinical Field Experience Site and heard from members of Thriveworks management about how it is structured, including Ryan Culkin, Chief Counseling Officer, Marc Brooks, Chief Legal Officer, and Heidi Faust, Chief Compliance Officer. The Board’s discussion primarily focused on whether Thriveworks is an individual private practice or group private practice under 262 CMR 2.02. The Board directed staff to draft a Clinical Field Experience Site Policy for consideration at the next meeting.

LMHC Application Reviews

- **Dolores Cabral Soto:** The Board discussed Ms. Cabral Soto’s application. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to deny Ms. Cabral Soto’s application because she does not have enough educational credits under the regulations. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Emily DeBenedictis:** The Board discussed Ms. DeBenedictis’s application. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Vercillo, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to deny Ms. DeBenedictis’s application because she does not have enough educational credits under the regulations. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Kimberly Benoit:** The Board discussed Ms. Benoit’s application. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to deny Ms. Benoit’s application because she does not have enough educational credits under the regulations. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Lea Rojas Otero:** The Board discussed Ms. Rojas Otero’s application. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to deny Ms. Rojas Otero’s application because she does not have enough educational credits under the regulations. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Siyue Niu:** The Board discussed Ms. Niu’s application. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to deny Ms. Niu’s application because she completed her post-master’s degree experience in a foreign country (China) while she was supervised by a licensed counselor in Virginia. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Requests

- **Elizabeth Lovece:** The Board considered Ms. Lovece’s request for an ESL accommodation. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Ms. Vercillo, to allow Ms. Lovece 50% extra time and the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- **Elisenda Santiago-Lopez:** The Board considered Ms. Santiago-Lopez's request for an ESL accommodation. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to allow Ms. Santiago-Lopez 50% extra time and the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Monitoring Report

- **Virginia Childs, 2018-000909-IT-ENF, Request for Biweekly Supervision:** The Board reviewed Ms. Childs' request to allow her to have 44 weekly meetings with her supervisor a year instead of 48 for the remainder of her stayed suspension. After a brief discussion, a MOTION was made by Ms. Belhumeur, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Open Session for Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting

Referring back to the discussion on Clinical Field Experience Sites, Midge Williams from the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association asked whether Thriveworks is exempt from licensure by the Department of Public Health. Mr. Bialas stated that the Board will be discussing the topic again in October.

Executive Session (Closed Session under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1), individual character rather than competence, and under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B, to review sensitive medical information)

At 11:45 a.m., a motion was made by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to exit the public meeting and enter into a closed executive session under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) to review the good moral character of an applicant, and under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B, to review sensitive medical information in NCMHCE accommodation requests, (2) then enter into quasi-judicial session under G.L. c. 30A, § 18 to discuss a draft final decision and order, (3) then enter into investigative conference under G.L. c. 112 § 65C to review cases, and then, after the conclusion of the investigative conference, (4) not return to the public meeting and adjourn. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

See separate minutes.

Quasi-Judicial Session (Closed Session under G.L. c. 30A, § 18)

The Board entered quasi-judicial session at 12:10 p.m.

During the quasi-judicial session, the Board took the following action:

Final Decision and Order

2020-000330-IT-ENF (RB):

Determined sanction for final decision and order

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

At 12:31 p.m., a MOTION was made by Dr. Egan, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to exit quasi-judicial session and enter into closed investigative conference under G.L. c. 112, § 65C to review cases before the issuance of orders to show cause. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

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

Cases

2021-000420-IT-ENF (CC):	Dismiss
2021-000408-IT-ENF (JD):	Invite respondent to a meeting for an interview
2021-000444-IT-ENF (ED):	Dismiss

Adjournment

At 12:44 p.m., a MOTION was made by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

The above minutes were approved at the public meeting held on October 15, 2021.



Brian Bialas, Executive Director

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

- Agenda for Meeting of September 17, 2021
- Draft Public Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2021
- Draft Executive Session Minutes of August 20, 2021
- 2021 Meeting Dates
- Applications Reviewed Under Application Review Policy: April 5, 2021 through September 16, 2021 and August 2021
- Documents for LMFT Application of Jamie James
- Documents for LMHC Application of Katherine Glick
- DPH Order 2021-6 on Temporary Licenses
- 9.9.21 Letter from S. Frank of Thriveworks re: Thriveworks as Clinical Field Experience Site
- Documents for LMHC Application of Dolores Cabral Soto
- Documents for LMHC Application of Emily DeBenedictis
- Documents for LMHC Application of Kimberly Benoit
- Documents for LMHC Application of Lea Rojas Otero
- Documents for LMHC Application of Siyue Niu

- NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Request of Elizabeth Lovece
- NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Request of Elisenda Santiago-Lopez
- Virginia Childs, 2018-000909-IT-ENF, Request for Biweekly Supervision