

Board of Registration of Optometry

General Session Minutes

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: January 15, 2025 TIME: 10:00am

A public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Optometry (“the Board”) was held via Videoconference and Conference Call pursuant to section 40 of chapter 2 of the acts of 2023, signed into law on March 29, 2023.

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Rhonda Willinger, OD
Everett Sabree, OD
Julie Hiura, OD
Jeanette Sewell, OD
Michael Hawley

DPH Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Jaqueline Petrillo, Board Counsel
Thomas Burke, Executive Director
Margaret McKenna, Board Staff
Isaac Badner, Board Intern

Board Members Not Present by Phone/Video:

None

Meeting called to order at 10:06 AM by Dr. Sabree

Meeting called to order:

- Roll Call Vote for Attendance

Board chair Dr. Sabree established a quorum via calling attendance: Everett Sabree, Julie Hiura, Jeanette Sewell, Rhonda Willinger and Michael Hawley. All members participated remotely via Webex by Cisco.

Board Business:

- Review of General Session Agenda: January 15, 2025

Dr. Sewell moved to accept the general session agenda for January 15, 2024. Dr. Hiura seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Michael Hawley “yes”.

- Review of General Session Minutes: December 18, 2024

Dr. Hiura moved to accept the general session minutes for December 18, 2024 as written. Dr. Sewell seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “not present”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Michael Hawley “abstain”.

- Open Meeting Law, Conflicts of Interest, and other reminders for BHPL Board meetings

Board Counsel reviewed the purpose of the Open Meeting Law (OML) to ensure transparency in public meeting sessions and board deliberations. She discussed the work of the board as a public body, posting of notice of meetings, quorum rules and the proper use of motions for voting on agenda items. She advised the Board to avoid discussion of board business outside of board meetings in private conversations or group email communications, and reviewed the different sessions during which board business may be conducted. Counsel also reviewed the Conflict of Interest (COI) law and advised members to address appearances of conflict prior to general or closed session meetings. Board counsel will contact members if recusals are needed. Finally, she noted that the DPH ethics commission attorney is available to board members if they need more detailed guidance. Board members may also contact Board counsel directly.

Discussion

- Optometry Telemedicine Policy

Board council presented the optometry telemedicine policy to the board for review and discussion. Counsel noted that the policy was reviewed and approved by the Commissioner's office. **After discussion, Dr. Hiura moved to adopt the policy. Dr. Sewell seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Michael Hawley “yes”.**

- Massachusetts Society of Optometrists glaucoma course proposal and schedule

The Board met with Massachusetts Society of Optometrist (MSO) executive director Lindsay Desantis to discuss proposed changes to the required glaucoma certification course. After discussion, the Board directed Ms. Desantis to provide an outline of proposed course costs, the course curriculum, and address how the MSO plans to offer the clinical component by electronic means that meets the requirements first established by the Board. Ms. Desantis agreed to present an amended course proposal at the subsequent meeting.

- New York State Optometry board enhance scope of practice

Tabled until a subsequent meeting.

- NERCOATS examination for licenses optometrists

Tabled until a subsequent meeting.

- Licensure reinstatement policy

Board counsel presented a draft licensure reinstatement policy for board review and discussion. The policy outlines the petition for reinstatement by an optometrist following the surrender, suspension, revocation, or rescission of the optometrist's Massachusetts license

and presents factors the Board may consider when reviewing reinstatements. The policy enumerates the requirements an optometrist must meet to petition for reinstatement, including completion of the terms established in a consent agreement. The Board amended the policy to say “indefinite suspension” in the first paragraph and agreed to change the period after the cessation of the license before an optometrist may apply for reinstatement from five years to three years.

Following discussion, Dr. Sewell moved to accept the amended policy. Mr. Hawley seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Michael Hawley “yes”.

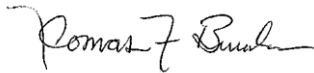
Adjournment:

At 11:40 a.m., Dr. Hiura moved to adjourn the public session meeting. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Mr. Hawley – “yes”.

65C Meeting Session:

At 11:40 a.m., Dr. Hiura moved to enter into closed session to conduct investigatory conferences pursuant to G.L. c. 112, §65C. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”; Dr. Hiura – “yes”; Mr. Hawley – “yes”.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Burke, Executive Director

Documents used in the public session meeting:

- Agenda for January 15, 2025 Board meeting
- Public session minutes for December 18, 2024
- Massachusetts Society of Optometrists proposed glaucoma certification course
- Massachusetts Policy on Telemedicine in Optometry
- Draft license reinstatement policy
- New York glaucoma certification course
- Correspondence with the executive director of the New York board of optometry
- New York memo regarding optometrists prescribing pharmaceutical agents
- Application for licensure for K. Keely