

Board of Registration of Optometry

Public Session Minutes

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: October 20, 2021 TIME: 10:00am

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Rhonda Willinger, OD

Jeanette Sewell, OD

Everett Sabree, OD

Bruce Rakusin, OD

DPL Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Charles Kilb, Board Counsel

Thomas F. Burke, Executive Director

Board Members Not Present by Phone/Video:

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM by Dr. Sabree

Meeting called to order:

- Teleconference Procedures

Mr. Burke reviewed protocols for meeting via electronic means.

Board Business

- Review of Public Session Minutes: September 15, 2021

Dr. Rakusin moved to accept the minutes as written. Dr. Sewell seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

- Board Elections

Dr. Sewell nominated Dr. Sabree as the Board chair and Dr. Rakusin seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

Dr. Rakusin nominated Dr. Willinger as the Board secretary and Dr. Sewell seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

Compliance Monitoring

- S. Tittl

The Board reviewed Dr. Tittl's consent agreement. **After discussion, Dr. Sewell moved to approve Dr. Tittl's license reinstatement and to commence the two-year probation with monitoring. Dr. Rakusin seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.**

Discussion:

- 2022 Board Calendar

Dr. Sewell moved to approve the 2022 calendar for Board meetings. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

- Glaucoma Certification Course and Applications
 - Glaucoma Course Format 2022

Dr. Zahka of the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (“MSO”) discussed the format of the MSO course for the 2022 calendar year. He noted that the course syllabus and content will consist of identical modules, but the course itself will be offered asynchronously for continuity. Course lectures from 2021 will be available to participants to review and questions may be submitted via email to instructors. There will be additional forums for interactive question and answer. The Board approved the format but requested that MSO review the survey and evaluations. At present, the start and end dates are not specified.

- Continuing Education for Glaucoma & MSO Continuing Education

Considering the approval of glaucoma certification, the Board agreed that three (3) of the eighteen (18) continuing education course hours required each renewal period must be in the area of glaucoma certification offered by the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE).

Also, the Board discussed whether to include live webinar formatted courses as constitutive of “in-person” courses. **After discussion, Dr. Rakusin moved to adopt an interpretation that live, interactive webinar courses would count for all “in-person” continuing education hours. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.** To ensure this adoption is clear, the matter will be on the next Board meeting agenda to provide additional context.

- Department of Public Health

The Board met with Lauren Nelson, Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs at DPH, and Traci Westgate, Director of Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration at DPH, to discuss the scope of the glaucoma certification process and DPH requirements. Ms. Nelson reported to the Board that the majority of medications for the treatment of glaucoma are schedule VI, which TPA optometrists are currently permitted to use through their certification with Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration (MCSR). Ms. Nelson and Ms. Westgate noted that Massachusetts TPA optometrists who want to prescribe or administer controlled substances in Schedules II-V must be registered with both the Department of Public Health Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration (MCSR) and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). In response, the Board members requested staff include this information in a letter to all glaucoma certified TPA optometrists. The Director noted that the letter will be mailed with the approved certificate. No formal vote taken.

- Continuing Education Extension Request

The Board reviewed a request from a recently licensed optometrist for an extension of the continuing education requirement. Upon review, the Board determined that because the optometrist completed a residency program within the year of licensure, she is not required to complete the eighteen (18) hours of continuing education. The Board members requested staff follow up with the licensee. No formal vote taken.

- Remote Eye Exams

The topic was tabled.

Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting:

A Massachusetts optometrist who received email notification of his approved application for glaucoma certification indicated approval to prescribe and treat glaucoma. Board counsel indicated it was his understanding that the email notification was not approval of certification, just a notification that certification was pending. The Board members agreed with this interpretation. No formal vote taken.

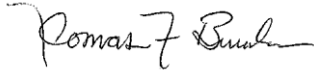
Cases, Investigative Conference, Settlement Offers [Closed session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 §65C]:

None

Adjournment:

At 12.10 p.m., Dr. Sewell moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Rakusin seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Burke, Executive Director

Documents used in the open meeting:

- Agenda for October 20, 2021 board meeting
- Public Session Minutes for September 15, 2021 Board meeting
- Tittl Consent Agreement and Monitoring Report
- MSO Correspondence