

Board of Registration of Optometry

Public Session Minutes

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: May 18, 2022 TIME: 10:00am

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Rhonda Willinger, OD

Jeanette Sewell, OD

Everett Sabree, OD

DPL Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Charles Kilb, Board Counsel

Thomas F. Burke, Executive Director

Board Members Not Present:

Bruce Rakusin, OD

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

Meeting called to order at 10:04 AM by Dr. Sabree

Meeting called to order:

- Teleconference Procedures

Tabled.

Board Business:

- Review of Public Session Minutes: March 16, 2022

Dr. Sewell moved to accept the minutes as written. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

Discussion:

- Open Meeting Law and Ethics Procedure Reminders
 - Mr. Kilb reminded Board members that they are bound by the State Ethics laws and required to adhere to Open Meeting Laws anytime a quorum is established. Board Counsel is available to provide advice to the Board in matters of ethics and decorum. Counsel further reminded Board members that in the event of a conflict, they generally would need to recuse themselves. To participate in such a matter, there may be a way of dispelling a conflict by seeking approval of the members appointing authority (generally the Governor), this requires paperwork that may take two weeks or longer, thus advanced discussion is recommended.
- Glaucoma Certification Course and Applications
 - New Applicants.

Dr. Wayne Zahka reported that sixty-one attendees have passed the didactic portion of the glaucoma certification course and are proceeding with the clinical component. He expects the course to conclude by June 12, 2022.

The Board revisited its previous instruction that optometrists licensed after June 30, 2021 will be exempt from taking the MSO course for glaucoma certification. Because some individuals complete their graduation in May, the Board expressed concern that the cut-off date excludes 2021 graduates who became licensed prior to June 30th. In response to an inquiry by counsel, members indicated that these earlier graduates would still have received glaucoma education in school.

After discussion, Dr. Sewell moved to allow 2021 graduate who receive their license after May 1, 2021 be exempt from taking the MSO course for glaucoma certification. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

- Treatment for symptoms of dry eye disease

The Board discussed the use of FDA-approved treatments for the signs and symptoms of dry eye disease. The Board members generally agreed that these treatments would be considered a topical and oral therapeutic pharmaceutical agent as defined in the practice of optometry (Chapter 112, Section 66B), and therefore do not require further review by the Board. The Board concurred with Counsel that questions about individual new treatments may be better posed to DPH who retains authority over controlled substances. The Board members agreed that it would not be the role of the Board to approve specific products.

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

- The Board briefly discussed how to address the burgeoning use of remote eye examinations. The Board concluded that such topic may require a telehealth policy to address questions of public safety and how comprehensive and effective these exams may be. Board counsel advised that so long as the focus was on whether the remote eye exams comply with the regulations with a focus on meeting the various requirements put in place for public safety, future guidance issued by the Board would legally be appropriate.
- Public attendee Dr. Parvis inquired as to whether the Board’s advisory regarding online education was in effect. The members indicated that it was. No action taken.
- Staff provided the members correspondence from the ARBO annual meeting for information only, no discussion took place.

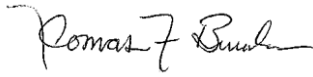
Cases, Investigative Conference, Settlement Offers [Closed session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 §65C]:

- None

Adjournment:

At 10:56 a.m., Dr. Sewell moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Burke, Executive Director

Documents used in the open meeting:

- Agenda for May 18, 2022 board meeting
- Public Session Minutes for March 16, 2022
- ARBO 2022 Annual Meeting Correspondence