

Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Meeting Held by Video Conference and Phone
DATE: June 2, 2020 TIME: 9:30 a.m.

Public Session Minutes

A regularly scheduled open public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (“the Board”) was held via Videoconference and Conference Call due to the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20.

Board Members Present by video or phone:

Nicole Laffan
Donna Noonan
Kristin Bresnahan
Sarah Young-Hong

Staff Present by video or phone:

Michael Hawley, Executive Director
Lynn Read, Board Counsel

Members of the Public Present by video or phone:

Suzanne Ducharme and Multiple attendees
were present by video and/or phone

Housekeeping

- Meeting Called to Order: At 9:39 a.m., Dr. Laffan called meeting to order.
- Meeting Logistics: Mr. Hawley went over the processes that would be followed during the meeting.

Board Business

- Approve Minutes
 - Minutes of 12/16/2019 meeting, public session
 - Minutes of 3/23/2020 meeting, public session
 - Minutes of 3/31/2020 meeting, public session
 - Minutes of 4/7/2020 meeting, public session
 - Minutes of 4/7/2020 meeting, executive Session

Having reviewed the above minutes, Dr. Laffan moved to approve the minutes of the 12/16/2019, 3/23/2020, 3/31/2020, and 4/7/2020 public meetings as well as the minutes of the 4/7/2020 executive session as written. Ms. Young-Hong seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “Yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “Yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “Yes” and Ms. Noonan – “Yes”.

- Report from Executive Director, Michael Hawley
 - Mr. Hawley reported that the Division of Professional Licensure has been contacted on behalf of a group of Speech Therapists (and other professionals) who teach in the Connecticut schools. They were seeking a temporary licensure arrangement so that they can practice remotely in cases where their students live in Massachusetts and cannot attend school in Connecticut due to the pandemic. It was not necessary to create temporary licenses. Rather, the team worked with the

licensees to arrange reciprocal licensing or, in some cases reinstatements of expired Massachusetts licenses.

- Report from Board Counsel, Lynn Read
 - Ms. Read discussed COVID-19's impact on the Board's legal environment.

Compliance Monitoring.

- F.M. The Board received required documents associated with the consent agreement for case number 2019-000634-IT-ENF.
After discussion, Dr. Laffan moved to accept the reports. Ms. Noonan seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “yes”; Ms. Noonan – “yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “yes”

Discussion

- Covid-19 related issues
 - Telepractice and phased reopening.

The Board reviewed its temporary telepractice policy and discussed the impact of the Commonwealth's phased reopening approach on the policy's requirements. The Board has received inquiries and comments, especially a letter from a group of speech-language pathologists in private practice. The letter requested changes to both the temporary and permanent telepractice policies in order to better accommodate the phased reopening and ongoing limitations on the ability of speech-language pathologists to treat clients in person.

Suzanne Ducharme, former Board chair, was in attendance at the meeting and spoke on behalf of the group that sent the letter. Ms. Ducharme said that the chief concern listed in the letter was that, upon the lifting of the state of emergency, the temporary policy requires immediate in-person evaluations for clients whose treatment was initiated via telepractice during the state of emergency. She asked that the Board immediately modify that requirement in the temporary policy and begin an ongoing process of considering changes to the permanent policy.

The Board discussed the concerns and agreed that the temporary policy should be modified to allow speech-language pathologists and audiologists ninety days after the lifting of the state of emergency to conduct in-person evaluations.

Ms. Noonan made a motion to ask Ms. Read amend Paragraph C of the temporary policy to grant licensees an additional ninety days to conduct in-person evaluations. Dr. Laffan seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “yes”; Ms. Noonan – “yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “yes”

At this point technical difficulties began. Board members, staff and attendees were unable to hear and/or be heard and attempts to reconnect to the meeting were rejected. Since these difficulties made the meeting inaccessible under the open meeting law, the Board agreed to schedule another meeting as soon as possible to formalize the vote above and consider any other matter that was not discussed. Meeting was terminated at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Hawley" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Hawley
Executive Director

Documents Used in the Open Meeting:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of 12/16/2019 meeting, public session
- Draft minutes of 3/23/2020 meeting, public session
- Draft minutes of 3/31/2020 meeting, public session
- Draft minutes of 4/7/2020 meeting, public session
- Draft minutes of 4/7/2020 meeting, executive Session
- Board Guidance on License Renewal, Continuing Education, and Telepractice During the State of Emergency for Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Letter dated June 2, 2020 regarding Telepractice
- FM – March and April monitoring reports.