

# ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN COUNSELING

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## MINUTES

Board Meeting  
July 19, 2024

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling (ABEC) held its regular meeting on Friday, May 17, 2024, to conduct business. The meeting was held at the Board's office located at 2777 Zelda Road in Montgomery, Alabama. Members in attendance were Dr. Debra Atchison (Board Chair), Ms. Anjanette Robinson (Board Vice Chair), Dr. Glenn Hollingsworth (member), Dr. Sherrionda Crawford (member), Ms. DeAnna Tidwell (member), and Ms. Jessie Bowie (member). One vacancy existed on the Board. Also in attendance were Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Mrs. Hendon Coody, (Board Legal Counsel), Mrs. Sheila Dopson (Board Administrator), Ms. Charlotte Daughhetee (Academic Consultant), Mr. Mike James (Investigator), Mr. Brannon Littleton (CFO), Ms. Dawn Durick (Licensing Specialist), Ms. Debbie Townsend (Board Legal Assistant), Ms. Karen Harlow (Legal Assistant) and Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary). Public guests were also present and attended virtually.

### CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Atchison, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. The regularly scheduled meeting was advertised to the public on the Board's website, ([www.abec.alabama.gov](http://www.abec.alabama.gov)), as well as the Secretary of State's website, ([www.sos.alabama.gov](http://www.sos.alabama.gov)), in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act. Mr. Warren called the official member roll, and a quorum of the members was in attendance. Mr. Warren read the Opening Statement regarding Robert's Rules of Order, and Chairperson Atchison welcomed Dr. Melissa Golden and Dr. Jane Coleman who were to address the Board later in the meeting.

### APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Chairperson Atchison presented the meeting agenda for the Board's approval. A copy of the agenda was provided to the Board members prior to the meeting for their review. Mrs. Coody requested that the annual renewal of the administrative services contract be added to the meeting agenda as New Business and add under Legal Counsel Report to discuss issuing letters of concern. Mr. Warren recommended that the two proposed rules under New Business be postponed to the next Board meeting to allow consideration for more modifications.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made a motion to approve the July meeting agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tidwell and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairperson Atchison did not vote except in the case of a tie vote.

### APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Atchison presented the minutes from the May 17, 2024 regular meeting.

MOTION: Ms. Tidwell made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Robinson and unanimously approved by the Board.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Warren presented the Executive Director report to include financial activities of the Board for the period ending April 30, 2024 (copy available in official Book of Minutes). He reported on the number of current licensees by designation and presented a summary of activities concerning consumer complaints submitted to the Board.

Mr. Littleton reviewed the financial activities of the Board for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, along with 4<sup>th</sup> quarter projections for FY 2024 (copy of report in official Book of Minutes). He reported that expenditures were projected to be under budget for the current fiscal year.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bowie and unanimously approved by the Board.

Mr. Warren reported that he was working to establish the new business software platform that the Board would use on the new iPads to access meeting documents and facilitate communications with Board members.

### **LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT**

Mrs. Coody reported that the Investigative Committee of the Board had met to review complaint cases. Mr. James presented the recommendations of the IC for Board approval. A list of cases was provided to the members (report available in the Board's official Book of Minutes). He indicated that Chairperson Atchison served on the Committee in the review of the case and would be recused from voting on cases.

- Close complaints as unfounded: 2024-008, 2024-053 and 2024-059.
- Complaint to be closed as other jurisdiction as a custody issue: 2024-058.
- Complaint to be closed as no probable cause: 2024-057.
- Issue a letter of concern and close case: 2024-065.
- Complaint was founded and \$1,000 fine was recommended for violation of failing to report drug conviction to the Board and submit to the Board every six months a status report from the probation officer while on court probation: 2024-060.
- Complaint was founded and \$250 fine was recommended for practicing without an active license: 2024-061.
- Complaint was founded and IC recommended referral to the Wellness Program with boundary issues and drug/alcohol related issues: 2024-062.

MOTION: Ms. Bowie made the motion to approve the IC's recommendations as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board, with Chairperson Atchison abstaining from voting as a member of the committee.

Mr. James stated that the Board's Wellness program was working well. Ms. Tidwell reported that Dr. Latofia Parker had presented at the National annual meeting information about the Board's Wellness Program and several state representatives indicated interested in the program for their state and licensees.

Mrs. Coody presented modifications to Board rules concerning the issuing of letters of concern to licensees or respondents in complaint cases as a form of private, confidential, written communication from the Board to provide notice of board conclusion that actions or conduct of the individual may not be in accordance with generally accepted standards or counseling practice and/or may be detrimental to client care, etc. She explained that the letter of concern was not punitive and no public. The Board considered modifications to Rule 255-X-8-.03(5) or 255-X-8-.07(b) to insert the letter of concern language.

MOTION: Ms. Tidwell made the motion to approve the language concerning issuance of letters of concern as presented and the Board's Legal Counsel determine the best location to insert the modifications into the Board's rules. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

### Update on Counseling Compact

Dr. Parker, the Board's Counseling Compact liaison, reported (virtually) on the organizational activities of the Counseling Compact. She indicated that the Compact had made good progress concerning establishing the licensee database system for state boards to verify licensure in other states and changes to the Board's statute may be necessary in requiring FBI backgrounds histories and she reported that information will be sent to the participating states about the type of fees involved in the compact licensure process. She also

reported about the Compact's open committee meetings being held and proposed rules that were posted on the Compact's website for public comment. The deadline for comments was also listed on the Compact's website and Mr. Warren reported that a link to the Counseling Compact would be posted on the Board's website homepage. He explained that as the Compact rules are approved, he would present to the Board any recommended changes to the Board's rules and statute in the future.

The Board congratulated Dr. Parker on her recent appointment as Department Chair of the University of Montevallo's Counseling Program.

#### Academia Rule Revision Committee Report

Dr. Hollingsworth reported that the Academia Rule Revision Committee had no report at this time.

#### Supervision Committee Report

Dr. Crawford reported that the Supervision Committee planned to release the survey again to collect data about continuing education needs and CE providers.

Dr. Hollingsworth presented a chart concerning categories of direct or other and supervision methods/techniques and hours related to method, included with the July 2, committee meeting minutes (copy available in official Book of Minutes). The Board discussed adding footnotes to the Proposed Plan of Supervision (PPoS) virtual supervision training and an Attestation by the Supervisor that they had obtained virtual supervision training. Further recommendations from the committee were discussed, to include changing direct supervision to individual supervision and explain that no form of other supervision was allowed without real-time, synchronous presence of the ALC's approved Supervisor Counselor (LPC-S). Mrs. Coody recommended that further discussion be tabled to consider the recommendations of the Supervision Committee. Mr. Warren indicated that he would schedule a virtual meeting with committee members and board legal counsel, academic consultant, executive director and report recommendations at the next Board meeting.

Chairperson Atchison called a meeting break for 10 minutes at 11:02 a.m. and reconvened the business meeting at 10:13 a.m.

#### ALCA Update

Dr. Jane Coleman reported (virtually) about the Alabama Counseling Association meeting scheduled November 20-22, 2024 in Montgomery at the Renaissance Hotel and Spa Convention Center and pre-conference training in collaboration with Department of Education. She reported that Dr. Driver plans to work with Mr. Warren about developing an ethics seminar for licensees.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Atchison called for any old business and there was none to report.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### Public Hearing on Proposed Rules

Chairman Atchison reported that adoption of Final Rules, 255-X-3-.02 and 255-X-2-.25 had been postponed. She reminded the members that the Supervision Committee would review the proposed rules for additional changes and discuss at the September Board meeting.

##### Continuing Education

Chairperson Atchison introduced Dr. Melissa Golden who requested to appear again before the Board to present additional information concerning the Board's continuing education policy. She asked the Board

to consider expanding the licensees' access to continuing education providers and subject matter and amend the Board's "Acceptable Continuing Education for Licensure Renewal" policy (copy of recommendation available in official Book of Minutes). It was discussed that PESI was included in the American Psychological Association's approved CE credits; however, the current approved providers such as the National Board of Certified Counselors, PESI was not included but could be considered in further amendment considerations by the Board.

The Board considered the likelihood in the volume of CE pre-approval requests to be submitted for Board approval should the Board initiate this practice.

Dr. Crawford reminded the Board about the Supervision Committee's plans to re-survey on CE needs and providers and inquired about continuing with the survey at this time. She reviewed some of the questions on the survey and Dr. Hollingworth recommended adding a question about professional identity and how licensee viewed themselves. Dr. Crawford recommended that Dr. Hollingsworth work with the Supervision Committee to include his survey questions in advance of the survey's tentative release in mid-July.

#### Continuing Education Provider Questions

Chairperson Atchison presented a copy of an email inquiring about the inclusion of the Association of Christian Counselors as a CE provider.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to table further discussion of continuing education and the Supervision Committee release the survey again to collect data on CE needs, prior to the Board considering changes to the continuing education policy, and to reconsider the matter at the September Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

MOTION: Ms. Tidwell made the motion to allow 1 hour credit for licensees completing and submitting the CE needs survey conducted by the Board's Supervision Committee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Board agreed that license numbers would be used to identify the licensee and award the 1-hour CE credit and home study credit would be awarded for completion of survey rather than counted as an Ethics credit.

#### Review of Applications and License Requests:

Mr. Warren and Ms. Dopson presented licensing requests for the Board's approval (list of applications available in the Board's official Book of Minutes):

Initial ALC: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the ALC requests for initial issuance of license except applicants JRM and RSA. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bowie and unanimously approved by the Board.

Mrs. Coody reported that the Investigative Committee had recommended random drug testing as a condition of licensure concerning JRM's ALC application.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve JRM for ALC license conditional upon JRM's written consent to random drug testing for a two-year period and referral to the Wellness Program. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bowie and unanimously approved by the Board.

ALC to LPC: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve the ALC requests to become an LPC. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tidwell and unanimously approved by the Board.

LPC by Endorsement: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to approve the LPC applications by endorsement requests. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

LPC-Supervisor: Ms. Bowie made the motion to approve the LPC-Supervisor requests for licensure. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

NCE Accommodations: Ms. Robinson made the motion to ratify the Board's Chairperson's approval of NCE accommodation requests. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

Requests to Inactive Status: Ms. Robinson made the motion to ratify the actions of the Board Chairperson's approval of requests to place their license on inactive status. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bowie and unanimously approved by the Board.

Requests to Reactive License: Ms. Dopson reported that no requests had been received to reactive licenses.

Special Review of Transcripts: The transcript was reviewed for RSA with a counseling psychology degree and Dr. Daughhetee reported the coursework met requirements.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to approve RSA's ALC application. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hollingsworth and unanimously approved by the Board.

Provisional Licensure Requests: The applications by SVL and LDE were reviewed by the Board.

The Board discussed SVL's LPC by Endorsement application and lack of direct client contact hours. The Proposed Plan of Supervision (PPoS) was reviewed indicating supervision by a Board LPC-S and discussed deferring the matter pending additional information about Georgia licensure and experience.

MOTION: Ms. Robinson made the motion to defer the matter and invite SVL to attend the September Board meeting to answer questions about her application. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board. The applicant had the option of attending virtually.

The Board continued to discuss whether there was a family relative relationship between the applicant and supervisor. The Board reviewed the rules related to this matter.

MOTION: Dr. Hollingsworth made the motion to amend the PPoS with a change of supervisor. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board.

The Board discussed LDE's LPC by Endorsement Application and the lack of direct client contact hours. The distance between supervisor and applicant and the potential for all virtual supervision was discussed by the Board.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to table the matter and invite LDE to attend the September Board meeting to answer questions about the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tidwell and unanimously approved by the Board.

Other Review: The Board reviewed the written request from AAH to reconsider the denial of the application due to the doctoral degree awarded. The degree was a Doctor of Ministry in Family Therapy. The Board discussed the initial issuance of her ALC license in January 2011, which was not renewed in January 2021 and the renewal lapsed six years later in 2018.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to deny the appeal for consideration, which was outside of six years and does not meet current requirements. The motion was seconded by Ms. Robinson and unanimously approved by the Board.

Annual Renewal of Administrative Services Contract:

Mrs. Coody reported that the annual renewal of the administrative services contract with Smith Warren Management Inc. was due, and she recommended that the Board go into Executive Session. Dr. Crawford made a motion that the Board adjourn to Executive Session for approximately 45 minutes for the purpose of protecting the good name and reputation of the Executive Director. Ms. Bowie seconded the motion. Ms. Coody certified that the Executive Session could be called for this purpose. The following roll call votes were recorded on the motion: Ms. Anjanette Robinson, aye, Dr. Glenn Hollingsworth, aye, Dr. Sherrionda Crawford, aye, Ms. DeAnna Tidwell, aye, and Ms. Jessie Bowie, aye. Chairperson Atchison called the Board into Executive Session at 12:35 p.m. The staff and guest left the meeting and virtual participation was concluded. Ms. Tidwell made the motion to adjourn the Executive Session and reconvene the business meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Crawford and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairman Atchison reconvened into the regular business meeting at 1:21 p.m.

MOTION: Dr. Crawford made the motion to renew the administrative services contract with Smith Warren for an additional year. The motion was seconded by Ms. Robinson and unanimously approved by the Board.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next Board Meeting: Chairperson Atchison reminded the members that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board was September 20, 2024, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Robinson made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bowie and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairperson Atchison adjourned the meeting at 1:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Debra H. Atchison, Ed.D.  
Board Chair



Keith E. Warren  
Executive Director

Approved on: September 27, 2024 (RAT)