



STATE OF NEVADA

BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS
4600 Kietzke Lane, Suite C121, Reno, Nevada 89502

Board Minutes – March 16, 2022

Call to Order and Roll. Erickson called the meeting to order on March 16, 2022, at 9:01 a.m. for the Board of Examiners for Social Workers (BESW). She welcomed new Board Members: Dr. Esther Langston and Linda Holland Browne followed by a Roll Call: Vikki Erickson, Board President; Monique Harris, Board Vice President; Susan Nielsen, Secretary/ Treasurer; Abigail Klimas, Board Member; Jacqueline Sanders, Board Member; Linda Holland Browne, incoming Board Member; Dr. Esther Langston, incoming Board Member. Staff: Karen Oppenlander, Executive Director; Harry B. Ward, Deputy Attorney General, Board Counsel. Guests: Paralegal Sydney Klein attending for Cord Ford who represents Jessica Veik; Kelly Marschall and Megan Jones from Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (both MSW graduates of UNR School of Social Work), and Robert Diamond.

The incoming Board Members made self-introductions: Linda Holland Browne indicated that while she is new to the Board, she is very 'old to social work'. She stated that she is a private contractor with Healing Minds and prior to that was the Director of Social Services at Nevada Adult Mental Health, Willow Springs, and West Hills.

Next, Dr. Esther Langston stated that she is Professor Emeritus at School of Social Work, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Also, that she is the Director of Family Support Services at the Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach Services. She added that she has been a social worker since 1965.

Following, Erickson moved to **Agenda Item 2 Public Comment.** Oppenlander asked attendees to introduce themselves before speaking by stating their full name for the record. Ward added that people may submit emails for public comment. Oppenlander indicated that the Board had not received public comments via email. Erickson moved forward as there was no public comment.

Erickson next moved to **Board Operations, Agenda Item 3A, Review and Discuss Board Meeting Minutes for February 16, 2022. (For Possible Action).** There was a brief discussion about voting when a Board Member had not been at the previous meeting. Ward indicated that it would be appropriate to approve minutes as to form, but not as to content when they were not at the meeting.

A motion was made to approve Board Meeting Minutes for February 16, 2022, by Jacqueline Sanders, seconded by Abigail Klimas. Roll call vote: Erickson – Aye, Klimas – Aye, Sanders – Aye, Harris – Aye. Nielsen, Langston, and Holland Browne each approved minutes as to form but not as to content. The motion passed unanimously.

Erickson moved to **Agenda Item 3B, Review and Discuss Board Elections and Selection of Designee for Screen Policy (for Possible Action).** Oppenlander explained that following the February Board meeting, BESW received notification from the Governor's Office of the appointment of two new Board

Members. As a result of this notification, **Erickson** as out-going Board President began to conduct the Board Election process pursuant to *NRS 641B.120 Officers; elections; meetings; quorum. 1. The Board shall elect from its members a President, a Vice President and a Secretary-Treasurer, who hold their respective offices at its pleasure. 2. An election of officers must be held annually.*

Ward suggested that **Erickson** begin with the President position by having a discussion asking those interested in holding the position to give their qualifications and the current President share some background about what the job will entail. **Erickson** proceeded with that suggestion by first giving background about her experience as well as highlighting the support she has received from Board staff and the DAG(s). She then opened the floor to determine interest and learn about Board Member's qualifications. This discussion culminated with three willing volunteers to be considered for the Board President position: **Holland Browne, Klimas,** and **Langston**. Hearing no further nominations, **Erickson** conducted a single vote by roll call and at this time **Ward** indicated that whoever gets the majority vote, wins that position. The Board moved through a one round voting process that had a clear majority vote. Elected to the position of Board President was Dr. Esther **Langston**. The majority vote constituted a formal nomination and election process. **Erickson** congratulated **Langston**.

As the result of a majority vote by all Board Members, the Board of Examiners for Social Workers elected Dr. Esther Langston as President.

The transfer of the "virtual gavel" to **Langston** was effective immediately. With **Langston** presiding and **Ward** offering support, **Langston** immediately opened the floor to discuss the election of a Vice President and accept nominations. There was one nominee and all Board Members voted in favor.

As the result of a unanimous vote, the Board of Examiners for Social Workers elected Linda Holland as Vice President of the Board.

Klimas thanked Vikki **Erickson** and Monique **Harris** for their leadership declaring that it has been wonderful to learn from them over the past year and a half. In looking at the past strategic plan and where we've come as a Board, both have laid a foundation that has done so much for this Board and for social work. Then, **Klimas** welcomed new Board Members **Langston** and **Holland Browne** and looks forward to moving forward together with them.

Oppenlander shared additional matters for the Board's consideration as part of this agenda item including: an election for Secretary-Treasurer; the designation of a second Board Member as check signer; and the designation of a Board Member to work with Board staff for support of an internal Screen Policy for licensing applications and renewals. Designees were determined as follows: **Holland Browne** will become a check signer for the Board, joining **Nielsen** who will continue as a check signer. **Sanders** was designated as Board Member to assist with the Screen Policy with **Langston** as alternate designee.

Regarding the Secretary-Treasurer position, **Ward** suggested that **Nielsen** give a brief synopsis of what the job entails and then open it up for nominations following the same procedure. **Nielsen** discussed her role as public member, check signer (co-signing with another designated signer), attending

meetings, approval of expenses, and other jobs as necessary. **Oppenlander** clarified that check signing is not attached to the Secretary-Treasurer role.

Langston stated that the floor was open for nominations for Secretary-Treasurer. **Sanders** asked if the position required travel. **Ward** responded that because of COVID, we can use electronic signatures e.g., for signing off on minutes. **Sanders** asked if the Secretary-Treasurer is the person responsible for taking notes. **Oppenlander** responded that the meeting is double recorded. Staff translates the recording. If it was ever necessary for the Secretary-Treasurer to take minutes, **Ward** added that all that would be needed is a summary of what was said. Then, the minutes and the recordings are kept by BESW for at least three years.

Harris and **Sanders** each nominated **Klimas** for the position of Secretary-Treasurer. There was one nominee and all Board Members voted in favor.

As the result of a unanimous vote, the Board of Examiners for Social Workers elected Abigail Klimas as Secretary-Treasurer of the Board.

Next, **Langston** moved forward to **Agenda Item 3C - Board Review of Voluntary Surrender Agreement Kristopher Lee Komarek, License No. 6832-C, (For Possible Action)**. **Ward** offered to address Item 3C as well as the following matter **Agenda Item 3D - Review and Discuss Pre-Hearing Motions for Kristopher Lee Komarek, License No. 6832-C, (For Possible Action)**. **Ward** requested that these two matters be moved to the next meeting. He also stated that he would reference Agenda Item 3G (iii) until we get to that item i.e., and that he was going to reference “the next meeting” and would not be saying April 20th or anything of that nature.

Ward gave new Board members a brief message stating that this Agenda Item is a voluntary surrender. He has been working with the counsel representing the licensee. The voluntary surrender is not completed. We will be filing an amended complaint (“we” referring to the Attorney General’s office). We will get all the paperwork together and present it at the next Board meeting.

Continuing, **Ward** referred to Agenda Item 3D that was put on there, regarding if the settlement of the voluntary surrender did not come to fruition, then we would have a hearing at the following meeting. Opposing counsel had said, let's just put the pre-hearing motions on (the agenda) at the same time in case this does not get through. **Ward** suggested that the Board does not need a vote and that Item 3C and 3D be tabled to the next meeting. **Langston** said that Agenda Items 3C and 3D would be tabled to the next meeting asking if there were any objections from the Board. Hearing none, she moved to the next agenda item.

Agenda Item 3E - Board Review of License Renewal for Robert Diamond, License No. 7879-C (For Possible Action) was introduced by **Oppenlander** who stated that the licensee in this matter has requested Closed Session and that this was pre-approved by the BESW DAG. **Ward** explained the procedures related to a closed session under the Open Meeting Law.

10:02 a.m. Move to Closed Session

Langston called Board meeting back into Open Session at 10:37 a.m. to resume Agenda Item 3E. **Holland Browne** was recognized. She suggested that Mr. Diamond has met the requirements and is in compliance with the decree that was issued to him in New Mexico; and which in essence has very little to do with his licensure here in Nevada. It appears that he has completed the educational portion, and has paid a fine, and that he is from our standpoint, free and clear.

Sanders said that she understands that New Mexico is a different state, but the practice of social work is universal. We are (unclear statement) ethics and character (unclear statement) define who we are and what our primary functions will be. I do have concerns. I am glad that our Board is very open-minded; although I agree that he met those requirements (New Mexico), I am opposed; I do have concerns.

As there was no further discussion, comments, **Langston** called for a motion.

A motion was made to accept the license renewal for Robert Diamond, License No. 7879-C with no restrictions by Linda Holland Browne, Seconded by Abigail Klimas. Holland Browne – Approve, Sanders – Opposed, Klimas – Approve, Nielsen – Approve, Langston – Approve. Motion Carried.

Next, **Langston** moved it **Agenda Item 3F - Review and Discuss SEI Strategic Plan Report (For Possible Action)**. Kelly Marschall from Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. along with Megan Jones led this portion of the Board discussion and review. Social Entrepreneurs is a private for-profit consulting firm. They worked with BESW previously on its strategic plan. They reviewed the process since we have some new Board members. Marschall shared that the SEI mission is to improve people's lives by strengthening organizations. She gave a quick overview sharing that there are many types of strategic planning. The Board opted to take a critical issues approach in 2018 by identifying the most critical issues facing the Board at that time, and then developed goals to address those critical issues.

Marschall said that today's goal was to discuss updates for the final year of the current Strategic Plan in preparation for adoption in June 2022. SEI differentiated between updating the current Strategic Plan and the new Strategic Plan process that will follow by first updating a one-year version of the current plan. To begin to accomplish this, Jones had previously joined the January 2022 Board meeting and provided a brief orientation to the strategic plan process.

In January 2022, SEI sent out a Board Survey and conducted Key Informant interviews. Marschall opened and extended an invitation to the survey and interview for the new Board members. During today's meeting, SEI presented some preliminary findings and their analysis about the feedback they have received. SEI proceeded to assist the Board in identifying potential additions and changes to adopt goals for the one-year period from July 2022 - June 2023. Marschall added that SEI will join the May Board meeting to revise/ finalize BESW goals and strategies.

On July 1, 2022, BESW will embark on the development of its new Strategic Plan that will culminate in a two-day Board retreat in March 2023 to develop goals and strategies for the upcoming plan; and in May 2023 will present the new Strategic Plan to the Board for final feedback and review. This plan would go from July 2023 – June 2026. SEI is now encouraging three-year plans because things like pandemics happen and so forth. Current thinking is that a three-year plan is most appropriate.

Jones covered information from a previous satisfaction survey that was conducted as part of the current strategic plan. **Oppenlander** gave background for the survey that was developed by a former BESW Vice President Jodi Ussher, Miranda Hoover from Capitol Partners, and former Board Member Monique **Harris**. This workgroup decided to add a survey to the last page of the new online licensing renewal process. The three slides that summarized the three questions being asked in that survey each showed that over 75% of responses strongly agreed/ agreed i.e., they indicated satisfaction with the Board. The stated goal was to achieve 75% or better response rate in a satisfaction survey and BESW did achieve this goal.

Next, SEI provided Board Survey and Interview results collected between January – March 2022. Strengths included: Trust between Board members and Board staff; Executive Director leadership; Board members competence and passion in promoting the purpose of the Board; Networking and partnerships; Progress with investigations; Technology updates. Weaknesses: Lack of dedicated Board personnel and staff capacity related to that to move forward with some of the processes that the Board would like to see.

Continuing, the SEI report that identified opportunities included: Develop regulatory pathways and partnerships between schools in the state and the Board; Address regulations around telehealth; Examine licensing exemptions; Provide education about the Board to the two university social work program graduating classes. Threats identified included: Shifts in political and cultural landscape; Potential transition to a combined behavioral health board; Lack of public knowledge of social work field of practice; Tracking of provisional licenses (across time) that were issued during the pandemic.

In laying the groundwork for the New Strategic Plan, potential critical issues and concerns are: Performance evaluation process of the Executive Director; Interstate Compacts; Telehealth regulations; Increasing education around the practice of social work within the state; Developing a Board social media presence; Improving partnerships with lawmakers and public officials to increase awareness and opportunities for social work practice; Creating pathways for more licensed social workers within k-12 school system; Address the recommendations that were made in the most recent audit.

Marschall conducted a “rapid fire assessment” by reviewing what was in the current BESW strategic plan and sharing the rationale with the Board. Given all the changes that have taken place including the new makeup of the Board, the process that was decided on was to extend the current plan for one year. To move forward, BESW would have time to grapple with and engage in an in-depth strategic planning process with a two-day retreat in March so that we could identify what the new process would be. Would it be a critical issues and goals process? Would it be a goals process? And then establish those goals and strategies for that next 3-year period beginning in 2024 (aka fiscal year July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). The summary/ feedback from the process will be presented by SEI at the May 18th Board meeting giving the Board time to review the updated Strategic Plan and make final edits and then adopt the updated Strategic Plan in May or at the June 15th Board meeting. Marschall thanked the Board.

Langston moved to **Agenda Item 3G Executive Director’s Report (For Discussion Only)**. **Oppenlander** covered (i) Pending Litigation Matter in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada - Case No. 3:20-cv-571-MMD-WG; On March 2, DAG Bhalla filed a motion to Dismiss Amended Complaint by Defendant Karen **Oppenlander**. Responses are due by 3/16/2022; also, on March 4, DAG Bhalla sent **Oppenlander** a copy of a minute order from Judge Du regarding the required response from Plaintiffs in this matter. DAG Bhalla will update the Board when a response is received.

Then, **Oppenlander** briefly covered the list of Future Agenda Items: 1) Understanding reserves categories; 2) Address items outlined by the auditor; 3) Relinquishments; 4) Nevada Administrative Code changes;

and 6) Nevada Revised Statutes changes and hearing no additional items; moved to a request to reschedule the next Board meeting to 9 a.m. Wednesday, April 13, 2022, which was acceptable to all.

Langston moved to Agenda Item 4, Public Comment. Oppenlander reported that the Board had not received any public comments via email; and hearing no public comment, she moved to **Agenda Item 5, Adjournment** and stated that the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

March 16, 2022, meeting of the Board of Examiners for Social Workers was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Karen Oppenlander, Executive Director.