



STATE OF NEVADA

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

Board Minutes - September 10, 2021

Call to Order and Roll. Erickson called the meeting for the Board of Examiners for Social Workers to order at 9:09 a.m. on September 10th, 2021 followed by Roll Call: Vikki Erickson, Board President/ Chair, Monique Harris, Board Vice President/ Chair, Jacqueline Sanders, Board Member. Staff Present: Karen Oppenlander, Executive Director, Sandra Lowery, Deputy Director, Asheesh Bhalla, Deputy Attorney General/ Board Counsel. Guests Present: Lisa Disman, Manuel La Fontaine, Susan Hess, Dominga Wilson-Moreno, Barbara Ruth, Anastasia Watson, Bobby Wilson, Carrie Wilson, Deirdre Wilson, Dick Wilson, Elle Dowdy, and Monique Bingham. Absent Board Members: Abigail Klimas, Susan Nielsen.

Erickson introduced Board Agenda Item 3A - Board Meeting Minutes for May 14th, 2021.

Motion was made to approve Board Meeting Minutes from May 14, 2021 by Jacqueline Sanders, Seconded by Monique Harris. Roll call vote: Erickson – Aye, Sanders – Aye, Harris – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Erickson moved to Agenda Item 3B – License Denial Review, Deirdre Hart Wilson (For Possible Approval). Erickson continued by stating that the Board may conduct a closed meeting to consider the character allegations of misconduct, professional competence or physical and mental health of a person.

Monique Harris motioned to close the session; Seconded Jacqueline Sanders. All in favor: Erickson – Aye – Erickson; Harris – Aye; and Sanders – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Erickson closed the first Open Session of the Board meeting at 9:15 a.m.

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Closed Session of the Board of Examiners for Social Workers from 9:16 a.m. – 9:54 a.m.
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Erickson reconvened the Board meeting in Open Session at 9:55 a.m. She stated that the Board had just met privately and would have public comment take place during Agenda Item 4 Public Comment as previously stated on the Board's Agenda.

At this point, Erickson asked for a motion on Agenda Item 3B (see above) to approve the licensure of Deidre Hart Wilson.

Jacqueline Sanders made a motion to approve licensure for Deidre Hart Wilson, seconded by Monique Harris. Roll Call Vote: Erickson – Aye, Sanders – Aye, Harris – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Erickson congratulated Ms. Wilson.

Erickson introduced **Item 3C, Review and Discuss Year End Financials through June 30th 2021**. **Lowery** indicated that BESW had attained approximately 100% of projected budget expectations for the last fiscal year ending June 30 2021. Expenses were 68% of the projected budget. By keeping costs low, BESW was able to end the fiscal year with a balance of \$352,415. That increase is due (in part) to the fee increase that went through during the 2019 legislative session. Therefore, BESW is sitting in a positive financial position after the first full year of fee increases. Of note, portions of that money is encumbered as we are required to have certain amounts in reserves.

Jacqueline Sanders made a Motion to approve year-end financials through June 30th, 2021; seconded by Harris. Roll Call Vote: Erickson – Aye, Sanders – Aye, Harris – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Next, **Erickson** moved to **Agenda Item 3D, Review and Approve BESW Representative for Association of Social Work Board Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly, November 19-20, 2021. (For Possible Action)**. **Oppenlander** stated that the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) customarily provides funding for a delegate, committee chairs, and slated candidates when the annual ASWB meeting is held in-person. However, Boards can send as many attendees as they choose and BESW would typically have to budget and pay if over 1 person is sent to the annual meeting. For this upcoming meeting, we have recently learned that it will be held online instead of “live” in New Orleans. ASWB has indicated that it is important for BESW to select a Delegate and an Alternate to attend. That way, BESW would be able to vote if the Delegate is unable to participate in the voting process for some reason. As **Erickson** is currently the chair of the ASWB Bylaws Committee, she needs to be at the meeting to make her report. **Erickson** added that she is also running for the Nominating Committee for ASWB. A brief discussion about member availability ensued.

Jacqueline Sanders made a motion for Vikki Erickson to be the BESW Delegate for the upcoming ASWB meeting and Monique Harris would be the Alternate; seconded by Monique Harris. Roll Call Vote: Erickson – Aye, Harris – Aye, Sanders – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Erickson moved on to **Agenda Item 3E, Review and Discuss BESW Data Reports**. **Lowery** shared information in the Board Packet that BESW submits quarterly through the Occupational Boards portal on the Legislative Website. In the last quarter, BESW added 199 licenses; and, one third of those were endorsements; and BESW lost 129 licensees through attrition. BESW received 293 applications during that quarter. The numbers show that this quarter is higher than other quarters of the year as BESW ramps up licensing applications starting in April due to graduating students.

Following, **Erickson** turned to **Agenda Item 3F, Executive Director Report**. **Oppenlander** moved to **Item 3F i, Update re: Board Counsel/ Deputy Attorney General Assignment**. She gave an update on Deputy Attorney General (DAG) reassignments that have been made recently. She let the Board know that Board Counsel/ Deputy Attorney General Asheesh **Bhalla** has been reassigned by his Chief and the new DAG replacement will be Harry Ward. **Bhalla** commented that it's a standard operating procedure at the Attorney General's Office that board assignments are changed around due to changes in capacity and resources. He let the Board know that he would be presenting a case at our next meeting in October and then the case load will be transferring to DAG Ward. He went on to say that it's been his pleasure and privilege to serve the Board and to be a part of this team. He also wanted to commend Director

Oppenlander and the staff for all of the work that they did through the pandemic; as you know, they were onboarding social workers from all over the country and really ensuring that that this Board is functioning very smoothly in a chaotic time period. He'll be at the AG's office and will look forward to working with everyone in various capacities in the future with other state activities. **Harris, Sanders, Erickson,** and **Oppenlander** thanked DAG **Bhalla** for the time he has spent with the Board and specifically appreciated his guidance, support and education.

Next, **Oppenlander** moved to **Item 3F ii Status of BESW Contracts**. First, the new auditor contract is being hammered out between DAG Ward and the legal counsel for Edie Bailey as their organization wanted to make 10 changes to the State of Nevada standard contract form. Next, the Enterprise IT System (EITS) data migration contract has not been completed and BESW awaits an interlocal agreement from EITS; in the meantime, Business and Industry continues to provide services to BESW. Third, BESW has a two year contract being processed right now with a strategic planning consultant that some Board members have worked with before: Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. And lastly, Capitol Partners closed its doors on August 31 and BESW cancelled its contract.

Oppenlander covered **Item 3F iii Setting Dates for Future Board Meetings including Strategic Plan Sessions and Nevada Administrative Code Meetings**. First she discussed upcoming Board meetings in 2021. She reminded the Board of a meeting that is scheduled on Thursday, October 14th 2021 for a disciplinary hearing. Next, she cancelled the Friday, November 12th 2021 Board meeting due to scheduling conflicts. Then, she added a meeting for a review of the June 30 2021 Audit. That meeting is a Zoom meeting that is scheduled on Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at 9 a.m. At this time, the auditor, **Erickson**, and DAG Ward are available to review the audit. If possible, it would be great to have a quorum of the Board available with an intent to send our Board approved audit (vs a draft audit) to the State of Nevada by the December 1 2021 due date. **Oppenlander** also plans to send out proposed dates for Board meetings in 2022 for regular meetings, meetings to make changes in Nevada Administrative Code; and strategic planning meetings.

Moving to **Item 3F iv Pending Litigation Matter in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada - Case No. 3:20-cv-571-MMD-WG**, she asked DAG **Bhalla** for comment. He stated that in this matter, we filed a motion to dismiss; and, this is awaiting a review and an order from the district court. Despite the change in his assignment, **Bhalla** will continue to represent Director **Oppenlander** and the Board on this matter until it's concluded. At this time, he expects that the motion to dismiss will be granted soon; but, we will have to wait until there's a further action from court.

Oppenlander then moved to **Item 3F v Future Agenda Items/ Ideas: Strategic Planning, Understanding Reserves Categories, etc.** She has gathered some initial strategic planning ideas. And one is to strategically plan how to work with the Board's reserves especially as some of our reserves are encumbered. Hearing no additional ideas from the Board at this time, she concluded the executive director's report after reiterating **Item 3F vi Next Board Meeting: Hearing at 9 a.m. Thursday, October 14, 2021.**

Erickson thanked Board staff and moved to **Item 4 Public Comment** and asked for public comment at this time asking for those speaking to state their full name for the record.

Manuel La Fontaine spoke first. He's a 42 year old resident of the Greater Bay Area in California. He has three children; they have had the opportunity to meet and spend quality time over the past dozen years with Deirdre Wilson. He shared his family's story and put it into a broader context. He added that he has seen Ms. Wilson tirelessly working in the service of others. He went on to commend the Board for their decision.

The next person during public comment was Susan Hess who is a clinical associate professor at USC School of Social Work and an advisor to a group that Ms. Wilson has chaired. She went on to discuss dismantling the dominant paradigm of judgment and that's what this meeting did. And it gives me so much hope for the field of social work.

The following speaker was Elle Dowdy who has worked with Ms. Wilson for the last year and a half in creating curriculum for a correspondence course for men and women who are incarcerated to teach empathy and victim impact. I have found Ms. Wilson to be a delight to work with, an incredible writer and an incredible editor. You made the right choice. Thank you.

Monique Bingham spoke next. She stated that there aren't very many people that are as hardworking and as compassionate as she is (Deirdre Wilson). And I think that I'm just completely elated. This news feels so warm; like to come to a wild close of 2021. And I just thank you all. And I hope to also witness others come through because there really is a need and a requirement for that lived experience doing the work that we embark on. Thanks.

Erickson asked for additional public comment. Hearing none, she moved to **Agenda Item 5 – Adjournment.**

Monique Harris made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jacqueline Sanders. Roll Call Vote: Erickson – Aye, Harris – Aye, Sanders – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Karen Oppenlander