



STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS (BESW)
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Board Meeting Minutes, March 12, 2021

Call to Order and Roll. Vikki **Erickson** called meeting of the Board of Examiners for Social Workers (BESW) to order at 9:02 a.m. Executive Director **Oppenlander** made an Agenda Change and pulled item 3Fii: Review and Approve Data Migration Plan. **Erickson** proceeded with a **Roll Call of Attendees** that included Board members Vikki **Erickson**, Jacqueline **Sanders**, Abigail **Klimas**, and Monique **Harris** (9:30 a.m.); Board Counsel/ Deputy Attorney General Asheesh **Bhalla**; Board Staff Karen **Oppenlander**; Capitol Partners Nick **Vander Poel**; and Guests: DeAnna Mear, Robyn Isaacson, Joseph Cutter.

Erickson moved to **Item 2: Public Comment**. Hearing no comment, she moved to **Item 3 Board Operations 3A - Review and Discussion of Board Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2021**.

Jacqueline Sanders made a motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes for January 8, 2021; seconded by Abigail Klimas. Roll call vote: Erickson – Aye; Klimas – Aye; Sanders – Aye. Motion passed.

Erickson continued to **Item 3B Review and Discussion of Request for Conclusion of Monitoring/ Consultation Meetings for Robyn Isaacson, License No. 2952-S, Case No. G19-04. (For Possible Action)**. **Oppenlander** provided background on this item as follows: Robyn Isaacson, License No. 2952-S, and Respondent in Case No. G 19-04 agreed to the terms of the Consent Decree that was made effective by the Board on May 17th, 2019. A copy of the Consent Decree was included in the Board Packet. Ms. Isaacson acknowledged that her conduct described in the Consent Decree constituted violations of the Nevada Social Work Practice Act (NRS and NAC 641B). To resolve the allegations and avoid the necessity and cost of a hearing, Isaacson agreed to the terms of the Consent Decree. At this time, Ms. Isaacson has fulfilled all terms of the Agreement. Many of the terms included iterative meetings by and for the Board (by designated individuals) were captured in previous Board meeting minutes. Some of the terms of this agreement have included: Payment of a fine in the amount of \$300.00 that was paid in full to the State Treasurer's office; Reimbursement of \$3202.30 for legal and investigative fees to the Board of Examiners for Social Workers which were paid in full; Completion of an approved graduate-level semester course pertaining to professional responsibility/ ethics; and a meeting with a Board panel for an evaluation. As a result of the panel evaluation, a recommendation was made to reinstate Ms. Isaacson's LSW license on December 2, 2019; At that time, Ms. Isaacson began a probation period that included meeting with a Board approved Probation Monitor; As per the terms of the Consent Decree, after a period of one year of probation, the Probation Monitor and the licensee have requested to meet before the Board to request the conclusion of the monitoring and consultation meetings. This request letter is in the Board packet. Ms. Isaacson has successfully engaged with the Probation/ Monitor as evidenced through submission of one year of quarterly reports that have been reviewed by Board Designee **Oppenlander**. Her recommendation is for the Board to agree to conclude the monitoring and consultation meetings

which will effectively close the probationary period. And with that motion, Ms. Isaacson will have completed all items stipulated in the Consent Decree.

Ms. Isaacson took a few moments to thank Probation Monitor DeAnna Mears, LCSW. Ms. Mears commented that Ms. Isaacson has become stronger as a social worker and as a person. Ms. Isaacson has been very open to feedback and has sought clarification when dealing with difficult cases and has also been willing to make changes when necessary. As Probation Monitor, Mears is confident in requesting a completion of Ms. Isaacson's monitoring process.

Erickson remarked that a supportive work environment and having people to staff difficult cases with makes a big difference. She continued by thanking Ms. Isaacson for the work that she has done along the way and with Ms. Mears. **Sanders** disclosed that she works for the same company as Ms. Isaacson and not think that this creates bias in her decision-making on this matter. Board Counsel **Bhalla** thanked Board member **Sanders** for this disclosure. Given her statement on record and the underlying facts, he does not think that there would be an actual conflict in deliberating and voting on the matter.

Jacqueline Sanders made a motion to Conclude Monitoring and Probationary for Robyn Isaacson; seconded by Abigail Klimas. Roll call vote: Erickson – Aye; Klimas – Aye; Sanders – Aye. Motion passed.

Erickson moved to **Review and Discussion of Year-End Financials (October 1 2020 – December 31 2020) (For Possible Action)** asking **Lowery** to cover this item. **Lowery** indicated that in the Board packet are second quarter financials so the Board is looking for a target in the 50% range in terms of both expenses and income at December 31st 2020. BESW is trending a little under projections at 47% of income at the 50% mark. When we created a budget for this year, it was based on fee increases that we were going to receive. While income is moving in a positive direction, it is not quite as favorable as we planned. When you take a look at our expenses which would also be expected to be in the 50% range, you will see that our salaries are coming in at 39% and our other expenses are coming in at 26%. This makes the overall expenses at 34% which is indicative of how conservative we are being as we haven't been certain about how this budget would play out with COVID. One of the things that we have noted is that with the Governor's Emergency Directive has allowed individuals from other states to practice in Nevada without paying Nevada fees. Therefore, we have not been getting as much endorsement income as we would have predicted. This is due (in part) to telehealth, a practice that is now firmly in place as a result of the pandemic. We are carefully maintaining our expenses in anticipation that we will be able to balance our budget numbers during the current fiscal year.

Jacqueline Sanders made a motion to approve Financials for October 1 2020 to December 31 2020; seconded by Abigail Klimas. Roll call vote: Erickson – Aye; Klimas – Aye; Sanders – Aye. Motion passed.

Erickson moved on to the next agenda item: **Review and Discussion of 2021-2022 Budget (For Discussion Only)**. **Oppenlander** mentioned that this item is to provide a brief overview of the budget development process. The budget will be on the next Board Agenda for approval on May 14th. To create next year's budget, staff is studying trend lines and adjusting the projected fees to more accurately pinpoint expected income. These projections will include both fee increases and increases in the number of licensees. We are also trying to predict how legislative changes will affect the Board's income e.g. the chance that the Governor's Emergency Directive 11 may be discontinued. Next year, we will plan to reduce the disciplinary backlog by having a

total of 1.25 in FTEs for investigators, up from .5 FTEs currently. We plan for additional contract labor costs for 2021/ 2022 to include external desktop support and part-time clerical assistance. We plan for moderate raises for staff that have been extremely flexible while we work through the pandemic. And since this summer will be 3 years since we held a facilitated Board workshop for training and strategic planning, we will want to add funds to cover a facilitator for the workshop. In terms of travel costs, we expect to continue to provide Board trainings by utilizing Zoom meetings. However, the in-state travel line item will stay in the budget to accommodate travel for the Board workshop as a face-to-face meeting. Of course, this will be dependent on COVID restrictions. The budget will include contract costs for an EITS Interlocal Agreement. We are also planning for an increase in credit card processing fees when BESW initial applications go online; and increases in the online renewal processing as Master Card and Visa have already noticed that they will be increasing fees next year. We expect some changes in future contracts that will be higher for storage/ payroll / bookkeeping services/ and for an auditor. We will also plan to include fees associated with Nevada Administrative Code changes for court reporters, LCB. And last, BESW expects increases in printing and postage.

Following, **Erickson** moved forward to **Item 3E Review and Discussion of Application Software Implementation. (For Discussion Only)**. **Lowery** gave the Board an update on the software implementation for BESW licensing applications. In 2015, BESW was given a legislative mandate to put both renewals and applications into an online process. This was an unfunded mandate. First, BESW got the online renewals up and running as it's where our biggest volume is. We are now in our second year of having online renewals and it's working very well. Now we are partly through the process of getting our initial applications into an online format. We have several different types of applications processes: There is the initial application for licensure, an application for internships, and an applications via endorsement process. We have beta tested the initial applications and the endorsements, and those work smoothly. We are still in the process of testing the internship applications process. This is a more complex process as the each application has to be completed by both the intern and the supervisor. Fortunately, we have had interns and supervisors who have been willing to beta test with us; but, we aren't finished yet. We plan to roll out online applications as soon as April. Related to this will be an increase in credit card charges. Once we move into online applications processing, this will increase the amount that we pay to credit card processing companies as applicants will be paying BESW using their personal credit cards instead of checks. We have to trust that this will be balanced out in a reduction of staff time processing the applications. For example, one advantage for BESW is that an application cannot be submitted to us if it is not complete. I think that that will allow for more efficiency. And when we complete the application implementation, the next module will be a disciplinary module.

Erickson next moved to **Item 3Fi: Status of Data Migration Plan (For Discussion Only)** and turned it over to **Oppenlander**. She informed the Board that the status of the BESW Data Migration Plan has not changed since February due to issues within the team we are assigned to work with. The Board has already approved for staff to work with the Enterprise Information Technology Services (EITS) team so this is a discussion item only. The EITS team is working with their new EITS leadership to come up with a solution so that BESW can move from Business and Industry to EITS. This long-standing issue initially began in July 2020 and in the meantime, B&I continues to provide services to BESW. From a risk management perspective, we determined that it is the best fit for BESW to rely on the technological savvy of the State of Nevada EITS system. The EITS team leader (Eric) is working to find a good solution for BESW, for B&I, and for EITS. He is committed to communicating regularly with BESW. He has briefly described 2 potential short-term solutions. Related to this, EITS has not yet issued an Interlocal Agreement

to BESW; this would be an agreement between BESW and EITS in which they would agree to perform certain services. In preparation, BESW has put various steps in place including:

- put together a desktop solutions contract with an outside vendor;
- secured and installed a dedicated circuit for SilverNet access in our office along with a new compatible network switch; SilverNet is the State's wide area network (WAN) used by agencies for connection between agency PCs and LANS, host computers and state application programs, and for outside access to the internet.
- installation was based on recommendation from EITS after they conducted an onsite assessment.

Oppenlander stated that BESW looks forward to an Interlocal Agreement with EITS so that we can complete the data migration project.

Erickson moved to **Item 3G for Review and Discussion of Association of Social Work Boards Committee Assignment (For Discussion Only)**. **Erickson** asked to have this item placed on the agenda to let everyone know that she was asked to chair the bylaws committee for ASWB. She will be working on the bylaws to see if ASWB needs to make any adjustments. Then the bylaws committee will present their findings at the ASWB Delegate Assembly in November.

Following, **Erickson** moved to **Item 3H, Review and Discussion of Updates for the 2021 Legislative Session (For Discussion Only)**. **Vander Poel** from Capitol Partners gave a quick legislative update from Carson City. He focused on Senate Bill 44 which was presented early on Monday morning. He told the members that Board President Erickson did an excellent job reading into the record in support for the bill. Also, he had communications with Valerie Cauhape Haskin who presented the bill and she also did an excellent job. So, after the bill starts its process moving through the Senate committee, we'll later have more interactions when the bill goes to the Assembly.

Vander Poel added that Capitol Partners is monitoring six bills that may have impact on the Social Work Board. Next Monday will be the deadline for bill introduction so there may be more. He stated that the Legislative Council Bureau has been working overtime to draft language and get prepared. **Erickson** commented how much she appreciates the work that he has been doing. **Vander Poel** talked about the work that takes place behind the scenes with **Oppenlander** et al. There are a lot of moving parts but together we get it all done. **Erickson** appreciated the coaching he provided; he agreed that the online process for testimony is very unique his year. Also, included in the Board Packet is a copy of the letter of support for SB44 that was submitted to Chair Spearman and the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor from BESW. He also added that they have a request to speak with Assemblywoman and social worker Benitez-Thompson to bring her up-to-date about Senate Bill 44.

Erickson moved to **Item 3I - Executive Director's Report (For Discussion Only)** turning to Board Counsel **Bhalla** re: 3Ii - Pending Litigation Matter in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada - Case No. 3:20-cv-571-MMD-WG. He stated that there's really been no change. The case is still sitting on the docket as there is quite a bit of a backlog in the courts due to the pandemic. **Bhalla** and colleague Deputy Attorney General Benson are monitoring the case(s) as there are other employees from health and human services involved. He will continue to monitor and then provide any updates to the Board as necessary and is also available for questions.

Oppenlander then checked with the members on 3Iii - Future Agenda Items/ Ideas e.g. Board Workshop for Training and Strategic Planning. Hearing no new items, she closed her report stating that the next Board Meeting is 9 a.m. Friday, May 14, 2021.

Item 4 – Public Comment. Erickson asked for **Public Comment**. Hearing none, she asked for a motion for **Item 5 - Adjournment**.

A motion was made for Adjournment by Jacqueline Sanders, Seconded by Abigail Klimas. After a Roll Call Vote, the Motion Passed Unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Karen Oppenlander