



ALABAMA BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

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MINUTES

**Board Meeting
February 10, 2023**

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy met on Friday, February 10, 2023, at the Board's office located at 2777 Zelda Road in Montgomery. Members present were Mr. Douglas Cooke (Board Chair), Dr. Karly Downs (Board Vice Chair), Dr. Samuel Jones (member), Dr. Timothy Nichols (member) and Mrs. Raven Pyle Livingston (member). Others attending were Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Ms. Laura Howell (Legal Counsel), Ms. Hope Childers (Administrator) and Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary). Guests attending were Ms. Rachel Sullivan and Ms. Sarah Beth Earles, both from the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.

The regularly scheduled meeting was advertised on the Board's website, www.mft.alabama.gov, and the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.alabama.gov, in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Mr. Cooke, Board Chair.

Mr. Warren called member roll and reported that a quorum of the members was present to conduct business. Mr. Cooke welcomed everyone in attendance and guests from the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (ALAMFT).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Cooke presented the October 7, 2022, Board meeting minutes for the Board's approval. A copy of the minutes was provided to the Board prior to the meeting for their review. Dr. Nichols made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board.

REPORTS

Report by Board Chair: Chairperson Cooke commented on corrections to the financial report expenditures and Mr. Warren indicated that a list of expenditures and receipts would be provided to the Board at a future meeting to review and become familiar with the line-item expenditures by object codes in the budget.

Executive Director's Report: Mr. Warren presented the Executive Director's Report and reviewed the Board's financial activities for the period ending January 31, 2023. He also presented a summary of expense obligations vs. budget (numbered object codes) for this same period. He presented a list of new licensees, along with a list of licensees whose license had expired. He reminded the Board that the expired licenses could be renewed through March 1, 2023, with a late fee. Mr. Warren reviewed other activities performed by staff since the last Board meeting and reported on the number of complaints the Board had received in FY 2023 (copy of the reports are available for review in Official Book of Minutes).

Mr. Warren reported that he had sent a letter to the Director of Medicaid supporting LMFTs having the authority to approve treatment plans for Medicaid patients and to overturn their decision to deny privileges. He reported that he had written Representative Ledbetter (House Speaker Elect) about sending a similar letter to Medicaid. He indicated that he had not received a reply and would keep the Board advised.

Mrs. Livingston made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jones and was unanimously approved by the Board.

Legal Counsel Report: Ms. Howell reported that the Investigative Committee (IC) had met, and she presented recommendations on the following cases:

- Case 2023.003 recommended that the case closed as unfounded.
- Case 2023.001 and 2023.006 recommended the matter be discussed in Executive Session.

Dr. Nichols made the motion to approve the recommendations of the Investigative Committee. The motion was seconded by Dr. Downs and unanimously approved by the Board, with Mrs. Livingston abstaining from the vote as a member of the Investigative Committee.

Dr. Nichols made the motion to enter into Executive Session for 10 minutes to discuss the good name and reputation of the Respondent in the complaint case 2023.001 and case 2023.006. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jones. Ms. Howell certified that the Executive Session could be called for this purpose. Following a roll call vote, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Chairman Cooke called the meeting into Executive Session at 10:45 a.m., and indicated that the business meeting would resume in approximately 10 minutes.

Dr. Downs made the motion to exit the Executive Session and reconvene the business meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Nichols and, and following a roll call vote, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Chairman Cooke reconvened the business meeting at 10:57 a.m.

Dr. Downs made the motion to issue a consent agreement to the Respondent in cases 2023-001 and 2023-006, to include a \$10,000 fine, a 2-year probation, and attend in-person during each of the probationary years, six (6) additional hours of continuing education (CE) on privacy protection, for a total of 12 additional CE hours. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jones and following a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved by the voting members, with Mrs. Livingston abstaining from the vote.

Rules Committee – Dr. Downs reported that the Rules Committee had met and discussed removing reference to COAMFT requirements in Rule 536-X-2. A draft of the rules' changes in Rule 536-X-2 and 536-X-3. was presented to the Board to review (copy available in Official Book of Minute). Dr. Downs made the motion to approve the amended Rule 536-X-2 as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Livingston and unanimously approved by the Board. Mr. Warren reported that the application forms would be modified after the rules were certified.

ALAMFT Report – Chairman Cooke recognized Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Earles with the Alabama Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Earls requested continued support from the Board against Medicaid's denial of LMFT's authority to approve treatment plans for Medicaid patients. Also discussed was the difficulty by Associate licensees to identify LMFT supervisors and they offered, on behalf of the Association, to work with the Board and share resources to assist the Associate licensees.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Cooke called for any old business of the Board and there were none at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

CE Requirements – The Board discussed changes to Rule 536-X-6 Required Relevant Professional and Continuing Education Experience, to include:

- changing the numbered sections to letters in section 536-X-6-.01(4)(b),
- adding MFT to Associate designation,
- remove last sentence, in section 6-.01(1) which read: “If the MFT Intern is enrolled in a COAMFTE or CACREP MCFC Accredited program, then the continuing education require is met.”
- Remove last sentence in section 6-.01(4)(b)7., which read “No more than twenty (20) hours of continuing education shall be in distant learning” and replace with “Distant learning must be synchronous.”

Dr. Downs made the motion to approve the changes in Rule 536-X-6 as discussed. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jones and unanimously approved by the Board.

Approval of Applications –Dr. Downs reported that she had reviewed, prior to the Board meeting, twenty-two (22) applications comprised of 5 MFT, 4 intern, 11 Associate and 2 supervisor mentor applications and presented the applications for the Board’s approval (list available in Official Book of Minutes). Dr. Downs recommended approval of the following applications and indicated that the other applicants required additional information:

AE – Associate
DR – Associate
HN – Associate
LH – Associate
BH – Associate
JR – Associate
RLP – Associate
JAM – Associate
MAR – Associate
TR – Intern
TM – Intern
MD – Intern
AM – MFT
KON – MFT
TU – MFT
LK- Supervisor
AO – Supervisor

Dr. Downs made the motion to approval the 17 applications as recommended. The motion was seconded by Dr. Nichols and unanimously approved by the Board.

Next Board Meeting: Chairman Cooke reported that the next regular meeting was scheduled May 19, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Board’s office.

Adjournment: With no further business to discuss, Chairman Cooke adjourned the meeting at 12:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Cooke
Board Chair

Keith E. Warren
Executive Director

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