

Board Meeting - Minutes

January 23, 2026

With proper and required notice having been provided to the Alabama Secretary of State's Office and with posting on the websites of the Alabama Secretary of State, and the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage & Family Therapy (ABEMFT), the ABEMFT meeting was held on Friday, January 23, 2026, at 60 Commerce Street, Suite 1440, Montgomery, Alabama. The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am by Chairman, Tony Watkins.

A quorum was established and maintained; the following Board members were present:

1. Dr. Kathryn Jones
2. Dr. Samuel Jones
3. Tony Watkins
4. Ann Bethea – arrived 10:24 am
5. Dr. Tim Nichols

Also present, Claire Austin, Executive Director, Will Parker, Jacki Tucker, Board Administrator, Ben Seiss, Board Legal Counsel, and Rachel Sullivan, Association Chair was via Zoom at 10:04 am.

Chairman Tony Watkins asked for an approval of the agenda. Dr. Samuel Jones made the motion to approve the agenda, and it was seconded by Dr. Kathryn Jones. All members present voted in favor of the agenda.

Chairman Tony Watkins asked for an approval of the board minutes from the November 7, 2025, meeting. Dr. Kathryn Jones made the motion to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Dr. Samuel Jones. All members present voted to approve the November 7, 2025 board minutes. A roll call vote was done to approve the minutes.

The executive director's report came next, Austin; however, deferred to Will Parker for the board's financial report due to his schedule for the morning. Parker gave the overall update on the board's financials stating that the Board is in very good financial shape, much better than three years ago. He discussed how board administrator, Jacki Tucker, reviews applications daily and works hard to get the applications ready for the board meeting for approval. He thanked Jacki for her diligence in working with the applicants. Parker stated that this is a reason why the Board's balance has increased is because we simply process the applications in a timely manner, which keeps the Board on task and ultimately in return increases the board's revenue. The Board has a balance of \$222,817.97; we have continued to try to increase revenue and lower expenses over the past three years, and the board is in much better shape than it's been in over three years.

Executive Director Austin reported that there were 270 renewals this year, and as of 12/31/25, 210 have renewed. Austin stated the Board has 552 current active Licensees, 46 expired licenses, 3 inactive, and 21 pending applications for today's board meeting. Austin stated that the Board will begin to close the application process a week before the Board meeting.

There were a great deal of applicants waiting until the last minute to turn in applications, for example, two days before the meeting. Austin stated this is simply just not enough time to get them processed accurately and ready for the education committee to review at 7:00am the morning before the Board meeting without serious overtime for the entire staff. There are application deadlines that have just been ignored for the past year.

Austin stated that the Board needs to add a Board meeting for March 2026, the Board selected March 20th, and changed the dates for the Board meetings in May and August 2026.

Austin called on Jacki Tucker, Board Administrator, to update the Board on the National MFT Examination numbers in Alabama. Tucker presented the numbers and update on the National MFT Examinations for the licensees according to the School Performance Roster released by each school. Alabama has thirteen schools reporting their performance. The period from October – December 2025. The numbers are a little better than the last reporting period for the passing rate.

Legal Counsel, Ben Seiss, stated there was a licensee that wanted to come before the Board today regarding his license. Seiss refreshed the Board, stating that the licensee had asked to come before the board for consideration. Legal Counsel Seiss stated that the Board needs to go into Executive Session regarding the good name and character of a licensee. A motion was made by Dr. Tim Nichols and second by Ann Bethea, the other three members voted unanimously to go into Executive Session. The Session would last at least twenty minutes. The Board went into Session at 10:27 am. Austin turned Zoom off, and Parker and Tucker excused themselves from the meeting. The Board went out of Executive Session at 11:14 am with a motion by Dr. Tim Nichols, and a second by Tony Watkins, the three other Board members voted in favor of ending the Executive Session.

Staff, and public via Zoom were invited back into the Board meeting at 11:15 am. There was a motion by Dr. Tim Nichols, and seconded by Dr. Samuel Jones for a vote of the Board to approve Mr. Tim Pughsley's application for full licensure. With a roll call vote all members of the Board voted Yes to approve Mr. Pughsley license. Mr. Pughsley graciously thanked the board for their time and confidence in him as an LMFT licensee.

The review of all the applicants. – All these applicants were approved by a Board vote.

Intern Applications: (3)

Dorian Bayles
Eleanor Jones
Maleha Larry

Associate Applications: (2)

Silvia Fernanda Garcia
Aimee Whisler

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Associate & Exam Application: (2)

Amber Lee
Rachel Williamson

LMFT: (10)

Jennifer Doty
Jacqueline Goble
Randi Nowell
James Parker
Tim Pughsley
Erin Russell
Sabrina Shaw
Terri Stanley-Nolfe
Miguel Torres
Kiyana Zachery

LMFT By Endorsement: (4)

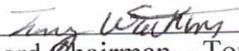
Diana Akan – Utah
Kendra Hathaway – Michigan
Victoria Hicks - Georgia
Erin Wisehart - Georgia

There was a motion made by Tony Watkins and seconded by Dr. Samuel Jones, the board members voted unanimously in favor of approving all the above applicants.

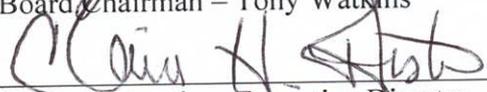
Under other business and announcements, Austin stated that the Board needs to add a Board meeting for March 2026, the Board selected March 20th, and changed the dates for the Board meetings in May and August 2026 to work better in the interest of applicants graduation dates and times for transcripts to be sent to the Board. A motion was made by Dr. Tim Nichols, and secondly by Tony Watkins, the board voted unanimously to change the dates. Austin stated she would make these changes today on the Website as well as the Secretary of State's website.

With no further business before the board, Chairman Tony Watkins requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Dr. Tim Nichols and seconded by Dr. Kathryn Jones the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 am.

The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, March 20, 2026 @ 10:00 AM CST – at the ABEMFT office located downtown at 60 Commerce Street, Suite 1440, Montgomery, AL.



Board Chairman – Tony Watkins



Claire H. Austin – Executive Director