

Board of Professional Counselors & Therapists

Board Meeting Open Session – October 16, 2026

10:35 AM - Meeting Minutes

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Attendees

Board Members	Board Staff
Sharita Sivels, Board Chair, LCPC	Tomiloba Olaniyi-Quadri, Executive Director
Kimberly Poole-Sykes, LCPC	Victoria Stinson, Deputy Director
Lisa Connors, LCPC, LMFT, Vice Chair	Tony DeFranco, Assistant Attorney General / MDH Counsel
Terri Johnson, LCADC	Shelly-Ann Barnes, Compliance Supervisor
Ingrid Mazziotta, LCPC, LCADC	Katrina Hunter, Office Secretary
Stacey Nelson, LCPC, LCPAT, ATR-BC	Sandra Boxley, Licensing Coordinator
Luisa Wayman, Consumer Member	Nusrat Tusi, Executive Administrative Assistant
Mary Blackwood, LCMFT	Trevor Smoot, Administrative Assistant

	Breya Graves, Compliance Assistant
	Myisha Maybin, Compliance Investigator
	Wendy Morton, Compliance Investigator
	Grecia Whitehead, Licensing Coordinator
	Olanrewaju Adebona, Administrative Specialist

Meeting Called to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 10:35 AM by Board Chair Sharita Sivels. The Open Session Meeting for October 16, 2026, was offered virtually via Google Meet.

Statement of COMAR Regulation 10.01.14.02.02: *The public attendance regulation states that except in instances when a public body expressly invites public testimony, questions, comments, or other forms of public participation, or when public participation is otherwise authorized by law, a member of the public attending an open session may not participate in the session.*

Attendance Call by Board Chair:

The Board Chair completed a roll call and confirmed that the Board had an official quorum for today's meeting. The following members responded present:

Sharita Sivels, Board Chair, LCPC
Kimberly Poole-Sykes, LCPC
Lisa Connors, LCPC, LMFT, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Guroff, MA, LCMFT
Ingrid Mazziotta, LCPC, LCADC
Stacey Nelson, LCPC, LCPAT, ATR-BC
Luisa Wayman, Consumer Member
Mary Blackwood

Review and Approve the Board [Meeting Minutes from September 18, 2026](#): The Board reviewed the Open Session meeting minutes from September 18, 2026.

- Motion to Approve: Kimberly Poole-Sykes
- Motion Seconded: Lisa Connors
- All in Favor: All in Favor
- Any Oppositions: None

- **Outcome: The Motion was Approved.**

Review and Approve the Board [Meeting Agenda for October 16, 2026](#): The Board reviewed the proposed agenda for the October 16, 2026, meeting.

- Motion to Approve: Lisa Connors
- Motion Seconded: Kimberly Poole-Sykes
- All in Favor: All in Favor
- Any Oppositions: None
- **Outcome: The Motion was Approved.**

Board Chair Report

Board Chair Sharita Sivels presented the following updates:

- **Meeting Schedule Notice:**
 - The public was informed that the Board will hold no meetings in December 2026; following today's meeting and the upcoming November meeting, the Board will next convene in January 2027.
- **Regulations Subcommittee Update:**
 - The Board has been actively meeting to review continuing education (CE) regulations and consider potential modernization changes.
- **Open Discussion on NCE Testing Timelines:**
 - The Board opened a public discussion regarding whether to allow graduate students to take the National Counselor Examination (NCE) during their final semester/internship year rather than waiting until after graduation. Kimberly Poole-Sykes and Lisa Connors supported the concept to help bridge employment gaps and keep coursework fresh, provided coursework prerequisites are met, while Mary Blackwood noted that some students already navigate this successfully and advocated for broader accessibility and equity across non-accredited programs. No final vote was taken, but the Board emphasized its commitment to exploring equitable pathways.

Board Counsel Announcements & Reports

- **Legal Counsel Attendance:**
 - Assistant Attorney General Tony DeFranco attended on behalf of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). No separate formal report was presented.

Executive Director Report

Tomiloba Olaniyi-Quadri presented operational updates:

- **Counseling Compact Data Sharing & SSN Collection:**

- The Executive Director reported on a recent meeting with Compact Executive Director Greg regarding completion checklist items. Because the Board halted collection of Social Security Numbers following the 2021 data breach, collecting SSNs remains a prerequisite for transmitting complete data to the Compact. The IT team will utilize the upcoming renewal period to capture missing SSNs so data dumps can occur iteratively before full go-live next year.
- **Executive Committee Elections:**
 - Shelly-Ann Barnes facilitated the electronic election process for the Executive Committee. The election concluded successfully, returning Sharita Sivels as Board Chair, Lisa Connors as Vice Chair, and Kimberly Poole-Sykes as Secretary.

Credentialing Committee

Kimberly Poole-Sykes presented the application intake and licensing metrics for October 2026:

- **Licenses Issued (October 2026):** Total of 300 licenses issued
 - LCPC: 73
 - LGPC: 107
 - LCADC: 2
 - LGADC: 5
 - LCMFT: 11
 - LGMFT: 5
 - LCPAT: 1
 - LGPAT: 4
 - LBA: 35
 - CAC-AD: 8
 - CSC-AD: 10
 - ADT: 39
- **Motion to Ratify:** Kimberly Poole-Sykes moved to approve and ratify the 300 licenses issued in October; Lisa Connors seconded the motion.
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously via roll-call vote by participating board members.

Disciplinary Review Committee

Lisa Connors presented the monthly compliance statistics on behalf of the DRC:

- **New Complaints:** 18 new complaints were evaluated over the past month.
- **Cases Closed:** 20 cases were formally closed.

Counseling Compact Update

Lisa Connors delivered the compact tracking update:

- **Full Commission Meeting:**

- The next Counseling Compact Full Commission meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2026, at 1:00 PM, and is open to the public via www.counselingcompact.gov.
- **Communications Committee:**
 - A newly formed Communications Committee (of which Lisa Connors is a member) has launched outreach initiatives, including a Facebook page, LinkedIn presence, state spotlights, and marketing kits to assist member states with public visibility.

Old/Miscellaneous Business

- None reported.

Adjournment

The next general Open Session Board Meeting is scheduled for **Friday, November 20, 2026, at 10:30 AM**, to be conducted virtually via Google Meet.

- Motion to Adjourn: Sharita Sivels
- Motion Seconded: Stacey Nelson
- Any Oppositions: None
- **Outcome:** The Motion was Approved.

The Open Session officially adjourned at 11:01 AM. Board members were directed to immediately disconnect and transition into the closed administrative session portal.