

State of Maryland
Board of Social Work Examiners
Open Session Meeting
February 9, 2024
10:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER

The Open Session was called to Order at 10:33 AM

ADJUSTMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No adjustment or additions were made to the agenda.

ATTENDANCE

Board: Susan Coppage, Chair; Adrienne K. Ekas, Vice Chair; Jamie Wilson, Board Secretary/Treasurer; Leslie Lampieri, Board Member; Kevin Meenan, Board Member; Kori Olszewski, Board Member; Allyson Stanton, Board Member; David Goldman, Board Member.

Board Staff: Kristen Lim, Board Counsel; Karen Richards, Executive Director; Kara Brooks-Tyson, Director of Compliance; Gail Wowk, Director of Continuing Education; Stacie Rigby, Continuing Education Associate; Marianne Graham, Social Work Supervisor; Pamela Price-Murray, Licensing Coordinator; Linda Beyer, Fiscal Officer; Lillian Reese, Legislative and Regulations Coordinator.

MDH Staff: Kimberly Link, Senior Advisor for the Health Boards; Zakiyyah Holmes, MDH-Office of the Secretary

Community: Bracha Poliakoff, Social Worker and Continuing Education Provider; Daphne McClellan, Social Worker

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jamie Wilson, Secretary/Treasurer

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2024 Board meeting Minutes. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Susan Coppage, Chair

- Susan Coppage welcomed everyone to the open session meeting and acknowledged that there were no questions or requests for comment from the public. She introduced the new Executive Director, Karen Richards, who comes from the Department of Juvenile Services and is a past chair of the Board.

- Karen Richards introduced herself and thanked the Board members for giving her the opportunity to fill the Executive Director position. She also gave special thanks to Kara Brooks-Tyson for
- standing in as Interim Director as well as keeping up while still maintaining her responsibilities as the Compliance Director. She also thanked the rest of the staff for doing extra duties due to staff shortages and ensured that filling open positions is a top priority.
- Susan Coppage also thanked Kara Tyson for her service as the Acting Executive Director.
- Susan Coppage wanted to make sure that her attendance was correct on the attendance report.
- Susan Coppage had questions about the applications and ensured that the Contractual Agreement form had instructions that the public would understand more clearly. Marianne Graham, Social Work supervisor, was able to answer for the Licensing Unit. Susan and Marianne agreed that the discussion would be revisited at the next meeting. Kristen Lim, Board Counsel, also spoke about signatures needed for the contract. Susan sent everyone a current form so that any suggested changes can be discussed and there can be a vote if changes are necessary.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Lillian Reese, Legislative and Regulations Coordinator

- Lillian Reese announced that over 2,500 bills have been dropped between the House and the Senate. Senate Bill 204, Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact Bills, would have a hearing in the house on Tuesday, February 13, 2024. Susan Coppage made a motion to vote yes to support congress on this bill, it was seconded by Adrienne Ekas and unanimously approved.
- She reported that the committee will support House Bill 755 Senate Bill 106 which is the board's education Bill. The Senate hearing is on Tuesday, February 13th and in the House on Thursday, February 15th. Susan Coppage made a motion to support House Bill 755 and Senate Bill 106. Jamie Wilson seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved.
- Lillian said that House Bill 175 Senate Bill 54 that is the occupational licensing and certification criminal history prohibited disclosures and predetermination review process hearings were held in the House on February 7th and in the Senate on February 4th. The committee voted to join a letter written by the board of Physicians to oppose the bill because the bill would deny an occupational license or certificate to an applicant solely on the basis of their criminal history. Susan Coppage made a motion to approve the opposition of this bill. Adrienne seconded the motion. Kristen Lim gave a further explanation as to why the board was opposing the bill.
- Susan Coppage already testified at the Senate hearing on Sunset Senate Bill 242. She received a question after testifying about complaints and investigation. Senator Reedy put in an amendment to the bill. He wants a special section at the end of the bill, and it will not be a statute. He would like a report completed for the committee by December 1, 2024, that should include the average length of time it takes to investigate a complaint as well as the processing time for initial licensure and renewals. The rate of compliance of Health Occupations should also be addressed. These items were put into the bill as an amendment and the finance committee approved them on Thursday, February 8, 2024.

- House Bill 642 that is called apprenticeships in licensed occupations Act of 2024. This bill is form the Maryland Department of Labor and will require the regulatory boards to issue license certifications and registrations to individuals who complete a Program. It covers several different articles.
- Senate Bill 794 was the last bill that Lillan needed to discuss. It is the State Board of Social Work examiners continuing education programs approval of authorized sponsors. There is a hearing on March 12th by Senate Financing. Adrienne Ekas motioned that the bill be opposed. Susan Coppage seconded the motion because it would be very costly, there is no funding, and there is already a process in place. There were comments from Karen Richards that helped with the determination that the board would oppose the bill. Karen Richards is willing to testify.

BOARD STAFF REPORT

Kara Brooks-Tyson, Director of Compliance

- Kara Brooks-Tyson stated that the new fiscal staff member has an anticipated start date of February 21, 2024.
- Kara also stated that the administrative position was approved, and that the paperwork will possibly be completed within the next couple of days. The position will be posted and possibly filled within the next two months. Kara also stated that there are openings for one Merit and one Contractual investigator and hoping to begin the process to recruit a licensing coordinator.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Statutes and Regulations Committee

Maria Cole, Committee Chair

- No report this month.

Continuing Education Committee

Adrienne Ekas, Committee Chair

- No report this month.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

- No questions or comments this month.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE OPEN SESSION

- A motion was made to adjourn the open session at 11:24 AM and seconded.