

IN THE MATTER OF

MARY BEST, LBSW

RESPONDENT

LICENSE NUMBER: A03280

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BEFORE THE MARYLAND

STATE BOARD OF

SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

CASE NUMBER: 2017-2388

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FINAL ORDER

On or about June 21, 2019 the Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) issued charges concerning Mary Best, LBSW, License Number: A03280, (the “Respondent”), under the Maryland Social Workers Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. (“Heath. Occ.”) §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2014 Repl. & 2019 Supp.). Specifically, the Board charged the Respondent with violating the following:

Health Occ. § 19-311. Denials, reprimands, suspensions, and revocations-Grounds.

Subject to the hearing provisions of § 19-312 of this subtitle, the Board may deny a license to any applicant, fine a licensee, reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee:

- (19) Fails to comply with the requirements of any order entered by the Board as a result of any disciplinary matter with the Board, including payments of costs as required by 19-312 of subtitle;

On October 8, 2020 the Board issued a notice of hearing to the Respondent by regular mail and certified mail return receipt for a virtual hearing to be held on November 13, 2020 at 2:00 pm. The Board held the hearing on November 13, 2020 to decide whether the Respondent violated the pertinent provisions of the Act. A quorum of the

Board was present. The State was represented by Karen Malinowski, Assistant Attorney General. The Respondent was present, but was not represented by counsel. The Board accepted the State's evidence which included testimony from two witnesses, Gail Wowk, LCSW-C, Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners Director of Planning and Continuing Education and Kara Tyson, LCSW, Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners Director of Compliance and Investigations. Ms. Best testified on her own behalf. The Board also accepted the following documentary evidence:

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| Exhibit 1 | License Verification |
| Exhibit 2 | Post Renewal Continuing Education Audit - 2016 |
| Exhibit 3 | Pre-Charge Consent Order |
| Exhibit 4 | Evidence of Compliance with Pre-Charge Consent Order |
| Exhibit 5 | Communications with Board Staff Regarding Compliance |
| Exhibit 6 | Charges Under the Maryland Social Workers Act, dated June 21, 2019 |
| Exhibit 7 | Notice of Hearing, dated February 3, 2020 |

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Board finds the following:

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Respondent was licensed to practice as a licensed bachelor social work in the State of Maryland under License No. A03280.
2. The Respondent was initially licensed to practice social work in Maryland on or about June 20, 1992.

3. The Respondent's license is currently active.
4. As a condition of licensure, in accordance with Health Occupations § 19-309 (d)(3)(ii) and COMAR 10.42.06.03, licensed bachelor social workers are required to obtain thirty (30) credit hours of Continuing Education Units ("CEUs") every two years in programs and categories approved by the Board.
5. The Respondent was randomly selected to be included in a Post Renewal Continuing Education Audit ("Audit") conducted by the Board on licensees requiring renewal by October 31, 2016.
6. The Board's Continuing Education Department reviewed the Respondent's certificates.
7. The review revealed that the Respondent did not meet the continuing education requirements and failed the Audit.
8. The Board offered the Respondent a Pre-Charge Consent Order ("Order") as a way to resolve the disciplinary matter in lieu of instituting formal proceedings against the Respondent for her violations of the Maryland Social Workers Act.
9. The Respondent signed the Order on or about December 12, 2017.
10. The Order reprimanded the Respondent's license and ordered that she pay a fine of \$500.00 and completes the missing 9.0 Category I CEUs and 4.0 Category I or II CEUs within 180 days from the execution of the Order.
11. On December 12, 2017 the Respondent paid \$50.00 towards the fine.

12. The Respondent contacted the Board and requested a payment plan, where she would pay \$75.00 per month over six months beginning in February 2018 and the final payment in June 2018.

13. The Board never received a payment under the payment plan.

14. The Board notified the Respondent in writing on January 25, 2018, May 8, 2018 and August 17, 2018 that their records indicated that the Respondent had only paid \$50.00 towards the \$500.00 owed and that had not completed the missing CEUs.

15. The Respondent currently owes \$450.00 and needs to complete 13.0 CEUs from the 2016 Audit.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Board concludes as a matter of law that a preponderance of the evidence shows that the Respondent violated Health Occ. § 19-311 (19).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this **8th** day of **January, 2021**, by a majority of the quorum of the Board considering this case hereby:

ORDERED that the Respondent's license to practice social work in the State of Maryland shall be **SUSPENDED for a minimum of six (6) months**; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall pay a fine of \$500.00 by cashiers check or money order to the Board; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall submit certificates demonstrating completion of the 9 Category I and 4 Category I or II outstanding Continuing Education Units for the 2014-2016 renewal cycle within 180 days of the effective date of this Final Order; and it is further

ORDERED that Respondent shall present certificates to the Board in chronological order demonstrating completion of Continuing Education Units for the following renewal cycles: 2016-2018; 2018-2020 and 2020-2022; and it is further

ORDERED that the Continuing Education Units obtained during a specific renewal cycle may not be carried over or counted towards a different renewal cycle; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall not serve or continue to serve as a Board Authorized Sponsor, presenter and/or trainer of social work continuing education learning activities, an Ethics Tutor, an evaluator for the Board, or a Board Approved Supervisor for a period of 5 years from the effective date of this Final Order; and it is further

ORDERED that the Respondent shall be responsible for all costs incurred in fulfilling the terms and conditions of this Final Order; and it is further

ORDERED that after the minimum period of six (6) months, and if the Respondent has fully and satisfactorily complied with all of the terms of the Final Order, the Respondent may submit a written request to the Board for termination of the

suspension. After determination that the Respondent has complied with the terms of the Final Order, the Board shall terminate the Respondent's suspension through an order of the Board; and it is further

ORDERED that this Final Order is considered a **PUBLIC DOCUMENT** pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Provisions, §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014) and is reportable to any entity to whom the Board is obligated to report.¹

01/08/2021



Date

Gerard Farrell
Board Chair
Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners

¹ This includes the Board's public website and NPDB.