



State of Nevada
Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology & Hearing Aid Dispensing Board

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology & Hearing Aid Dispensing Board

January 20, 2021

Members Present: Tami Brancamp, Andrea Menicucci, Michael Hodes, Timothy Hunsaker, Bonnie Lamping, Thomas Rainford

Members Absent: Nighat Abdulla

Staff Present: Jennifer Pierce, Executive Director
Stacey Whittaker, Licensing Coordinator
Henna Rasul, Sr. Deputy Attorney General, Board Counsel
Sarah Adler, Board Lobbyist
Alex Tanchek, Board Lobbyist
Kristyn Leonard, Board Lobbyist

Public Present: Nancy Kuhles, NSHA NV Coalition; Kim Reddig, NSHA

Call to Order, Confirmation of Quorum

Tami Brancamp, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm. A roll call confirmed a quorum was present.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Board Meeting of October 21, 2020

Tami Brancamp asked if there were any corrections or revisions to the minutes of the meeting of October 21, 2020. Bonnie Lamping noted a correction on page 5 to clarify that the interventions described were completed by “the staff she supervises”, not her own. Andrea Menicucci made a motion to approve the minutes of October 21, 2020 to include Ms. Lamping’s correction. Bonnie Lamping seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Update on Practitioner Needs and Board Response to COVID-19

Jennifer Pierce reported that there have been no changes since the October 2020 Board meeting and this agenda item was included as a standing item to address any new issues or matters brought by licensees, Board members, and/or staff. Kim Reddig shared that ASHA is currently advocating for Speech-Language Pathologists to be included as Tier 1 recipients for vaccine distribution. No needs were noted, and no action was taken.

Work Session on Implementation of Licensee Jurisprudence Exam

Jennifer Pierce summarized the revision to NAC 637B that was adopted and approved in June 2020, which included the addition of a provision granting the Board authority to consider requiring applicants take and pass a Jurisprudence Examination as a condition for initial license or reinstatement of an expired license. Ms. Pierce reported that she has begun reviewing NRS 637B and NAC 637B to draft potential exam questions and is seeking the Board’s recommendation and approval for implementation, which has not yet been discussed in detail.

Ms. Pierce suggested the Board could consider options to make the exam optional and separate from the licensing system initially, using a set of general Board/ethics/professional conduct questions, with license-specific questions that would follow depending on the practitioner type. Ms. Pierce also shared that she consulted with the Board’s current licensing database vendor, Albertson Consulting, who demonstrated an established jurisprudence exam module that could be added to our system and integrate with new and renewal online applications. This additional module would cost \$6,000 for a one-time build, and Ms. Pierce suggested this would not be a current need but a helpful tool when/if the Board decided to require an exam.

There was agreement to move forward with implementation of the exam and establishing timelines, questions, formats, tools, etc. It was suggested Board members could submit potential questions and feedback offline to Ms. Pierce to protect the integrity of questions, rather than sharing during an Open Meeting. A question came up around continuing education requirements and it was suggested that the Board review its requirements and compare to other states in a future meeting.

Legislative Update

Sarah Adler, Board Lobbyist provided an update to the Board on legislative activity, sharing that the Legislature will convene on February 1, 2021 and it is likely that the entire Session will be conducted virtually. Ms. Adler explained the path that she expects the Board’s BDR to take and sought feedback from the Board about how it would prefer to stay informed on the process. There was consensus that Board Members would like regular updates and Ms. Pierce confirmed that she could schedule a special meeting as needed between now and the next regularly scheduled meeting in April to discuss any urgent issues that require response from the Board. Ms. Adler indicated that she would plan to send at least bi-weekly updates for Ms. Pierce to disseminate as “FYI” for the Board.

This item was informational only and no action was taken.

Work Session on Legislative Priorities and Review of 2020 Licensee Survey Results

Tami Brancamp introduced the item and asked Jennifer Pierce to summarize. Ms. Pierce first reported on the Board’s effort to obtain a BDR to raise fee caps in NRS. The BDR has been assigned a number (603) and educational materials have been sent to licensees and posted to the Board website. We are currently waiting for legislative/statutory language from LCB. Ms. Adler explained that this may be the only fee bill this session, and there was discussion around how the bill would be heard and the stakeholders the Board should connect with to help support and/or testify.

Tami Brancamp next introduced the matter regarding licensing Audiology and SLP Assistants, and asked Ms. Pierce to summarize. Ms. Pierce provided an overview of the Board’s prior discussions regarding Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Assistants and discussions regarding future legislation that would create authority and criteria for licensing Speech-Language Pathology Assistants and Audiology Assistants in the State of Nevada.

Bonnie Lamping asked to clarify whether the Board took a vote to pursue SLPA licensing, as her read-through of the survey indicated most respondents either did not favor or see a need for this role. Ms. Pierce confirmed that the Board previously only voted to move forward with this matter as a legislative priority but could take future action to discontinue as needed. Tami Brancamp concurred and noted that the academic programs in the state are not likely in a position to take this on now, especially with the focus on the master’s program at Nevada State College. It was also noted that many responses from SLPs in the medical sector were not supportive, with some concern that SLPAs could threaten the SLP role. Ms. Lamping also noted that there would need to be consideration for supervision in school settings, of which there would not be capacity currently. It was confirmed that NDE requires all SLP practitioners to hold their endorsement including contractors, as NRS language states “must”), but there is no requirement that they also hold Board licensure if only employed by the school setting. However, Kim Reddig stated there is a financial incentive for many to hold dual licensure, as SLP’s holding both licenses receive a salary supplement of 5% in Clark County and 8% in Washoe County. A little over half of our SLP survey respondents indicated they hold the NDE endorsement.

Kim Reddig, NSHA President shared for the record that NSHA and the NV Coalition to Address Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services are actively partnering with NDE Licensing to sunset the NDE bachelor’s level SLP license/endorsement. They are working on a five-year plan to begin requiring a master’s degree for all newly licensed SLPs and predict a steady pipeline from Nevada State College and UNR. Nancy Kuhles confirmed that bachelor’s level practitioners will be grandfathered in, as allowed by the NAC, unless they let their license lapse, but any new applicant would have to meet the new requirement. Ms. Reddig further shared that once this transition occurs, there may be a gap wherein it would be advantageous to the Board to license an SLPA role, as a new standard could be set for those holding a bachelor’s degree. Both Ms. Reddig and Ms. Kuhles confirmed that there is no conversation with NDE now about a SLPA-type role once the master’s degree becomes the requirement.

Bonnie Lamping suggested the Board revisit SLPA licensing at a later date following the proposed transition, and there was discussion about the best timing to coincide with future legislative sessions. There was consensus to table active discussion for now but keep the matter as a standing agenda item and invite Ms. Reddig and Ms. Kuhles to update the Board on the sunset efforts by NSHA, NV Coalition, and NDE Licensing.

The discussion moved to Audiology assistants. Ms. Lamping reported that Audiology is not a critical labor shortage in school districts. Timothy Hunsaker shared that he feels there is a need for this role, and it would be nice (as a dispensing audiologist) to have these support staff available. Michael Hodes agreed, but wondered if there would be enough demand, with so few Audiologists and Hearing Aid Specialists in Nevada. Ms. Pierce referenced the current NAC that allows delegation of some basic

tasks to unlicensed office staff, and discussion around whether the NAC could be expanded versus pursuing a licensed role. Thomas Rainford explained that the history of the NAC language was to allow unlicensed staff to assist with minor tasks on hearing instruments only, with no direct patient contact.

Ms. Pierce reviewed the three pathways that ASHA has outlined for Audiology assistants, one of which would allow an individual to pursue certification starting with a high school diploma, eliminating the worry about demand for academic programs. Michael Hodes pointed out that the ASHA pathways require clinical supervision by an ASHA-certified audiologist and reported that very few audiologists hold this.

It was agreed that this is a separate and different conversation from SLPA licensing, and that the Board should continue to research and consider discuss this as a new license type. Tami Brancamp suggested that Ms. Pierce could reach out to ASHA regarding the ASHA-certified audiologist requirement, and also research the American Academy of Audiology's position on assistants. Ms. Pierce agreed to do so and there was consensus to bring this matter back as a future agenda item, separate from SLPAs for further discussion.

No action was taken.

Executive Director's Report

Tami Brancamp called on Jennifer Pierce who directed the members to the written report and summarized as follows:

a. Licensure Statistics

Licensing totals for the period October 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 resulted in a net increase of 29 licenses (+2%). This is higher than FY19 Q2 totals, which saw a decrease (-.32%) from the 1st quarter of 2019.

b. FY21 Q1 Financial Report & Balance Sheet

FY21 Q2 totals were not complete in time for this meeting but will be presented at the Board's next meeting. FY21 Q1 financials were reviewed, with net income at \$9,487.27 at the end of Q1, with revenue totaling \$54,934.69 (35.22% of budget), and expenses totaling \$45,447.42 (24.67% of budget). The only unexpected deviation/overage this quarter was in legal fees, of which we spent 87.68% of budget in Q1, attributed to one significant disciplinary case and multiple other issues for which counsel was needed. We will see cost-savings in other areas, including the office lease as a result of the renegotiated agreement with the OT Board. Cash assets total \$136,195.50, and liabilities total \$72,437.66, with total equity at \$70,113.73 for FY21 Q1.

c. ASLP Compact Update

Ms. Pierce reported that per ASHA and the compact website, the following six (6) states have enacted compact legislation to date: Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Legislation is also pending in the following 14 states: Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. The compact will become operational

when 10 states enact legislation to participate. Ms. Pierce suggested inviting compact representatives to our next Board meeting to better understand the compact and benefits/requirements for participation. Tami Brancamp suggested the compact presentation be scheduled for the July 2021 meeting as April may be busy with legislative work.

d. Board Member Appointments/Reappointments

Ms. Pierce reported that no applications have been received to date to fill the public member position vacated by Nighat Abdulla in July and suggested sending an email out to licenses to recruit for this role. Tami Brancamp has applied for reappointment and the Governor’s Office reports this should be completed in the very near future.

e. Complaints

Ms. Pierce reported that there is one (1) outstanding Complaint currently in the investigative process.

No action was taken.

Report from Legal Counsel

Henna Rasul, Board Counsel had no new information to report.

Reports from Board Chair and Board Members

a. Report from Board Chair and Board Members

There were no reports.

b. 2021 Proposed Meeting Schedule

The next regular Board Meeting was confirmed for Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 4:30pm via ZOOM Teleconference.

c. Future Agenda Items:

Items for the next Board meeting will include:

1. Continued work on Legislative Priorities:
 - NRS 637B.175 - Increase Statutory Caps on Licensing Fees
 - NRS New - Speech-Language Pathologist Assistant, Audiologist Assistant;
2. Review of Draft Jurisprudence Exam.
3. Continuing Education Requirements
4. ASLP-IC Compact (Summer 2021)

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Tami Brancamp adjourned the meeting at 6:16 p.m.