

BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY

December 29, 2016

Woolfolk Building

Jackson, MS

Board Members Present:

Donald Hinton, Esq.	Chair	2012-2017
Patricia Alexander, Ph.D.	Executive Secretary	2012-2018
Joe Olmi, Ph.D.	Treasurer	2012-2017
Natalie Gaughf, Ph.D.	Credentialing Coordinator	2016-2021
Steve Ellis, Ph.D.	Member	2016-2021

Also Present:

Onetta Whitley, Esq.	Deputy Attorney General
Helen Crocker	Board Administrator
Mardi Allen, Ph.D.	Board Consultant

Not Present

John Askew, Ph.D.	CE Coordinator	2013-2018
Lisa Yazdani, Ph.D.	Recording Secretary	2014-2019

Call to Order

At 2:00 p.m., Mr. Hinton called the meeting to order for a discussion the draft letter responding to Senator Eugene Clarke, Budget Working Group. He made a motion that the following content be sent to Senator Clarke by Mr Hinton from the Board. The motion was seconded by Dr Olmi and passed unanimously with Drs Askew and Yazdani absent and not voting.

Dear Senator Clarke:

The Board of Psychology has received your letter of December 2, 2016 concerning possible agency structures for Boards and Commissions. We are thankful for being given the opportunity to respond to what we believe is

a very important issue. The Mississippi Board of Psychology is tasked with the primary job of safeguarding the public while they are seeking psychological services. The Board is made up of seven members, one of which is a non-psychologist public member. I have the privilege of serving as the public member. As you are probably aware, the Board of Psychology is currently a special fund agency. The Board generates approximately \$100,000 in annual revenues from annual licenses and new applications. We have an annual budget that is approximate to what we generate in revenues, accounting for cash flow reserves. Although we are a special fund agency, we must still request spending authority like a general fund agency. The Board attempts to keep license fees at the minimum necessary for the Board to operate. All of the Board's members are volunteers, and the Board only has one contract employee. Currently, the Board does not have a need for office space and operates out of the home office of our contract employee. The monthly meetings are held in the Woolfolk Building. The contract employee of the Board does not utilize either PERS or the State Health Insurance Plan.

A special meeting was called to discuss the information discussed in your letter. It is clear from that meeting that we do not have all of the information that we would like with regard to the information in the letter. We were not aware of the Budget Working Groups; and therefore, did not attend those meetings. Taking our lack of information into account, the Board would respond to the questionnaire as follows:

1) Which of the three models would we prefer?

It is the feeling that the consolidation of certain expenses makes financial sense, but the Board has significant concerns as to how a consolidation of services could be obtained while still maintaining the independence of the Board in its licensing capacity. Further, it is likely that this option would in fact be more costly to the taxpayers as it would create administrative facilities and costs that are not currently utilized or required by the Board. The Board is very uncertain about what is meant by the Hybrid model and how it would affect our current operations and mission. As stated

previously, our contract employee does not utilize PERS or State Insurance. Further, the Board is unsure what might be lost in a transition to the Hybrid model, such as assistance from the Attorney General's Office. The Board would request additional information on this model before we could give our opinion, but if we are required to make a choice the Hybrid model is the most logical choice for both the Board's operations in protecting the public and cost savings to the taxpayers.

2) What are some things you believe that the legislature is not taking into consideration when it comes to the three models?

We would encourage the legislature to consider that with some of the Boards the current model may make the most sense. The Boards are not all the same and do not necessarily require a change in the agency's structure.

3) Do you believe that the makeup of your board needs to be revisited?

The Board consists of a non-psychologist, currently an attorney, and six psychologists. The psychologists represent private, public and educational practices. There is a mixture of members and non-members of the guild association, the Mississippi Psychological Association. All members are appointed by the Governor who has currently insured that there is a mixture of the various interest groups. This mixture insures that the protection of the public is the focus of the Board. So long as Governors continue to appoint a diverse Board, the requirements are fine.

4) Does your agency offer a license that you feel is unnecessary?

Not only is the current licensure necessary, as the public member I would state that it would not be in the public's interest to operate with any less protections than the current process affords. The license currently held by psychologists is an indication to the public of a health care provider's level of proficiency, competency, and ethics.

I thank you again for considering our thoughts on this important decision. I would further state that members of the Board would be available to meet and provide any further information that would be helpful to the Legislature.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide additional information at any future meetings of the Budget Working Group.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be held with oral examinations on January 20, 2017 at the Woolfolk Building in Jackson, MS.

Respectfully Submitted

Signature on File

Patricia Alexander, PhD.

Executive secretary

January 20, 2017

Date