

Minutes of the February 23, 2024 Board of Hearing Instrument Specialists Virtual Meeting

1. ROLL CALL

Chairperson, Ed Granger, called the meeting of the Board of Hearing Instrument Specialists to order at 1:01 p.m. on February 23, 2024, in the Goldenrod Conference Room, Lower-Level, at the Nebraska State Office Building located at 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska. In accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-1411 of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, copies of the agenda were e-mailed to the Board members and other interested parties, posted on the DHHS web site at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx>, and posted in the Licensure Unit on February 14, 2024.

Granger announced that this is an open meeting, and the Open Meetings Act is posted.

Members Present: The following members answered roll call:

Ed Granger, Chairperson
Cameron Ellison, Member
Tomeka Johnson, Member
Nicole Kopetzky, Member
Scott Jones, Secretary

Members Absent:

Dr. Aaron Robinson, Vice-Chairperson

Others Present:

Suzanna Glover-Ettrich, DHHS Attorney (via Webex)
Claire Covert-ByBee, Program Manager
Kim Hitzel, Health Licensing Coordinator
T.J. O'Neill, Assistant Attorney General
Jeff Newman, DHHS Investigator

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: Ellison moved, seconded by Kopetzky to adopt the agenda. Voting aye: Granger, Kopetzky, Johnson, Ellison, and Jones. Voting nay: None. Motion carried.

3. REAFFIRMATION OF MAIL BALLOT

Covert-ByBee stated that this is the opportunity for the Department to read into the minutes any votes that occurred by mail ballot in between regularly scheduled Board meetings. The following mail ballots occurred: Approval of the October 13, 2023, Board meeting minutes. Voting to approve: Lutt-Chmiel, Granger, Robinson, and Johnson. The minutes were approved on October 24, 2023.

4. INVESTIGATIONAL & CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION/REPORTS – CLOSED SESSION

Motion: Ellison moved, seconded by Jones to move into Closed Session. Voting aye: Granger, Kopetzky, Johnson, Ellison, and Jones. Voting Nay: none. The Board went into closed session at 1:09 pm.

Jeff Newman left the meeting at 1:51 pm.

The Board returned to open session at 2:19 pm.

5. BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON APPLICATIONS

Motion: Kopetzky moved, seconded by Johnson to recommend the following to the Department:

In the matter of the application for Temporary Hearing Instrument Specialist of Sarah Beckman the Board recommends denying the application based on misrepresentation of material fact and conviction history.

Voting Aye: Granger, Kopetzky, Johnson, Ellison, and Jones. Voting Nay: none, motion carried.

Motion: Ellison moved, seconded by Granger recommend the following to the Department: In the matter of Christopher Healey, the board recommends approval of the application for Hearing Instrument Specialist.

Voting Aye: Granger, Kopetzky, Johnson, Ellison, and Jones. Voting Nay: none, motion carried.

6. IHS PRACTICAL EXAM

Currently there is no new information to report on the IHS Practical Exam. The Board is interested in the IHS exam for uniformity and ease of reciprocity of applicants. Nicole Kopetzky and Scott Jones expressed interest in learning to proctor the current Nebraska practical exam during the next testing date. The next scheduled date is June 28, 2024.

7. UPDATE ON THE NEW LICENSURE DATABASE

Covert-ByBee advised that the Department of Health and Human Services is working with the contractor to validate data and prepare for the new database.

8. Election of Officers

Motion: Kopetzky moved, seconded by Ellison to elect the officers for 2024. To serve as Chair Edward Granger, Vice-Chair Cameron Ellison, Secretary Tomeka Johnson, Investigative Consultant and Education Consultant Nicole Kopetzky. Voting Aye: Granger, Kopetzky, Johnson, Ellison, and Jones. Voting Nay: none, motion carried.

9. Per Diem Discussion

Motion: Kopetzky moved, seconded by Ellison to have the Per Diem remain the same. The current rate is \$50 per day with one day allowed for preparation. Voting Aye: Kopetzky, Jones, Ellison, Johnson, and Granger. Voting Nay: none. Motion carried.

10. Notice of Meeting Publication

Motion: Ellison moved, seconded by Jones to continue with the current Notice of Meeting Publication. Voting Aye: Kopetzky, Jones, Ellison, Johnson, and Granger. Voting Nay: none. Motion carried.

A break was held from 2:55 pm to 3:13 pm. Kopetzky joined the meeting at 3:16 pm.

11. Legislative Update

LB 1417 has been introduced which, among other items, eliminate the Board of Hearing Instrument Specialists and move the regulation of Hearing Instrument Specialist to the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Board. A Hearing has been set for February 29, 2024, before the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Motion: Jones moved, seconded by Granger to appoint Ellison and Granger to a subcommittee as a representative of the Board of Hearing Instrument Specialist and create a letter of opposition to the proposed Bill LB 1417. Member Johnson will read the letter of opposition to the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee. Voting Aye: Jones, Granger, Ellison, and Johnson. Abstaining: Kopetzky. Motion carried.

Covert-ByBee stated there has not been any movement on LB 593.

12. Update on the ILE

A letter was provided to the Board from the International Hearing Society with information about the International Licensing for Hearing Healthcare Professionals Examination for informational purposes only.

13. LICENSURE APPLICATION PROCESSING REPORT

The Application Processing Report was provided for informational purposes only.

14. TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

The following topics for the next board meeting are Update on the ILE, Legislative Update, New Licensure Database, Public Comment, Application Processing Report, Practical Exam update, and an update LB 1417 and LB593.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were made.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tomoka Johnson, Secretary