STATE of OREGON
BOARD of LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS
Special Board Meeting

Friday, January 7. 2026
Via Microsoft Teams
3218 Pringle Road SE, Salem, OR 97302

Board Members Present: Amy Ashton-Williams, *LCSW, Board Chair*
Mollie Janssen, *LCSW, Vice Chair*
Paddy Farr, *LCSW*
Troy Costales, *Public Member*
Nicole Pantley, *Public Member*
Olivia Bormann, *CSWA*

Board Counsel Present: Kyle Martin, *AAG, Oregon Dept. of Justice*

Staff Members Present: Ray Miller, *Executive Director*
Kim Coleman, *Legislative and Licensing Analyst*
Mindy Tucker, *Sr. Compliance Specialist*
Wende Thatcher, *Investigator*
Noelle Johnson, *Licensing Compliance Specialist*
Cassie Kanaeholo, *Licensing Assistant*

Public Present: No members of the public were present.

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1. **CALL TO ORDER:**
   Chair Ashton-Williams called the Board Meeting to order at **3:05 PM**.

2. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**
   i. Board removed Item #4 Executive Session and replaced Item 4 with Public Comment to Board Agenda.
   ii. Costales moved to approve and adopt the agenda as amended.
   iii. Farr seconded the motion.
   iv. Roll call taken as follows: Ashton-Williams: Aye, Farr: Aye, Bormann: Aye, Costales: Aye, Pantley: Aye.
   v. Motion passed 5- 0, 0 abstention(s).

3. **NEW BUSINESS:**

   Executive Director (ED) Miller provided background information about Behavioral Health Talent Council (BHTC) and discussed the BHTC proposal for Legislative Concept (LC) 216. ED Miller shared that the goal was to provide the Board with the most current information.

Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Kyle Martin prefaced that he is using the same information as Board members. AAG Martin stated that the current proposal for LC 216 is not currently available to the public at the time of the meeting. AAG Martin explained that the current proposal that was provided would require a statutory change to alter the structure of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers (BLSW). AAG Martin then explained that under the proposal for LC 216, the BLSW would be supported administratively by the Mental Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which is what it does for the Board of Psychology and Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists.

AAG Martin explained as an administrative support agency, MHRA, currently provides support to the Board of Psychology and Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists by providing an executive director and employing staff. AAG Martin also shared that both boards function independently and maintain authority over their professions. AAG Martin stated that from a legal standpoint, the proposal for LC 216 wouldn't change the BLSW the Boards statutory authority, regulatory powers or their ability to make rules regarding social work. However, AAG Martin did state that it would change it from a policy standpoint and how the work of the BLSW is done because the work would be done by workers and employees of MHRA, not BLSW.

AAG Martin emphasized that this is ultimately a policy decision that would be required to go through the legislative process.

Board asked how this will affect current staff and Executive Director. And the Board asked if this would mean the firing of current employees. AAG Martin shared that he did not have that information. AAG Martin provided a brief history of what happened when MHRA was created previously and what next steps could look like for BLSW should the LC 216 proposal move through the legislative process. AAG Martin suggested that BLSW contact the Department of Administrative Services to find out what that may look like.

Board asked what the purpose of the LC 216 proposal is and how it would be a positive change for the BLSW and the regulation of social workers. Board also asked where this legislative concept came from. Board also shared that proposal may be intended to streamline the licensing process. Board then asked when this decision was made, and the Board asked why the BLSW was not consulted prior to LC 216 proposal being written.

Board suggested looking into scheduling another meeting after Friday, January 9, 2026, after the legislative language is presented to the legislative committee. The Board explained that there may still be additional changes to the current proposal after it has been submitted to the legislature. Board stated that there will be an implementation plan and additional information after January 9, 2026, legislative concept presentation. Board shared that the proposed LC 216 will stay as legislative concept and may not become public until assigned a bill number.

ED Miller emphasized that the goal of this meeting was to present the most current information regarding the proposed LC 216 to the Board. ED Miller also emphasized that he is not a member of the BHTC, and he did not attend the decision meetings and discussions. ED Miller provided background to Board about how proposal will turn into an LC or legislative concept, and then eventually has the possibility of becoming a bill. ED Miller re-emphasized the current priority for the Board is to change the rule to allow for fee increases that would promote the Board being able to implement a licensing system change. ED Miller shared that the current licensing system is in a

receivership, which is like bankruptcy in the United States. ED Miller stated that Board does not have staff to do implement both a fee increase and merge with MHRA.

Board shared concerns about expanding the license types allowed to supervise social work associates, regardless of experience with topics such as social justice and advocacy. Board stated additional concerns around allowing other license-types to provide supervision for entirety of required clinical social work supervision hours.

Board decided to write a letter to BHTC and possibly governor's office, sharing their stance on legislative concept and providing additional data to the legislature. Board shared that discussed legislative deadline. Board decided to wait to meet again until the legislative concept has been released and additional information is available.

Board directed ED Miller to monitor legislation and find out from Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) if Board members can collaborate on a letter to BHTC. ED will monitor legislation for the proposed LC 216 and clarify with OGEC how Board members can work on a letter while complying with public meetings law.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
   [No public comment]

5. **ADJOURNMENT:**
   Chair Ashton-Williams adjourned the Board meeting at **4:26 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Noelle Johnson, *Licensing Compliance Specialist*