

Minutes

Arkansas State Board of Optometry

Regular Board Meeting

Freeway Medical Tower Building

Little Rock, Arkansas

April 27, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Board President, Dr. Bryant Ashley at 1:30 PM.

The following board members were present: Dr. Bryant Ashley, Dr. Dan Hennessey, Dr. Susan DeBlack, Dr. Robert Fitzhugh, Mr. Mitchell Gentry and Mr. Bill White. Also in attendance were Tanya Ford, Board Director, Matt Gilmore from the Arkansas Department of Health, Dr. Allison Hall, and Rebecca Gaston from the Arkansas Medical Foundation.

The minutes from the February 16, 2023 meeting were presented. Mr. White made a motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Fitzhugh made a second. The motion passed.

The financial report was presented by Ms. Ford. She mentioned that some adding funds from license renewals had been accepted since the last meeting. Dr. Hennessey made a motion to accept the financial report. Dr. Fitzhugh made a second. The motion passed.

Dr. Ashley mentioned that Senate Bill 82, the dispensing opticians bill, had not progressed in the legislature.

Ms. Ford reported that 215 doctors completed the online jurisprudence exam. She stated that the system was working well and there was a high passage rate.

An update regarding Diva Beauty Supply was given by Ms. Ford. She stated that they called to check on the deadline for payment, but no payment has been received.

Ms. Ford reported that Dr. Courtney Cobbs completed all continuing education requirements, and her license has been renewed.

PRP (platelet rich plasma) drops were discussed. The board received letters from Oklahoma and Oregon boards which both allow the procedure. Dr. Fitzhugh made a motion that an AP certified optometrist may prescribe PRP drops and an AP certified optometrist who has completed phlebotomy certification may perform phlebotomy and prepare the drops. Mr. Gentry seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dr. William Cheek met with the board via Zoom meeting. He stated that he would like to renew his license. He is currently practicing in Kansas City and had moved his license to retired status. He did not realize that he still needed to pay the renewal fee despite emails from the board office. Mr. Gentry made a motion to allow him to renew his retired license if he sends in payment within 30 days. Dr. Fitzhugh made a second. The motion passed.

Dr. DeBlack reviewed the new training requirement for renewals and initial registration for a DEA certificate. They will require 8 hours of training after June 27, 2023 for renewals and initial registration for doctors graduating before 2019.

Ms. Ford and Dr. Fitzhugh discussed the work of the complaints committee. Mr. Gentry made a motion to accept the report of the committee on three complaints and to send a letter of caution to Dr. Norton. Mr. White made a second. The motion passed.

Dr. Ashley presented topics that could require a change in the rules, including making a PD measurement mandatory on glasses prescription, making an expiration date required on glasses prescriptions and changes in continuing education hours. No rules changes were made by the board. Dr. Ashley will discuss these topics at jurisprudence class at the fall ArOA Convention. Dr. Hennessey made a motion to table the continuing education discussion for now. Dr. Fitzhugh made a second. The motion passed.

Rebecca Gaston, Medical Director from the Arkansas Medical Foundation made a report regarding changes between other medical boards and the Foundation. Recent legislation has provided that other boards will pay the Foundation a set fee per license to help fund their work. Optometry was not included in this legislation, but the Foundation would like to have a more formal agreement with the Optometry Board, which would include a fee to the Foundation and a contractual agreement.

The Board acknowledged that this may be the last meeting for Mr. Gentry and Mr. White. Their service to the board was recognized.

Ms. Ford reminded the board that the June 15, 2023 meeting will also include testing for new licentiates and advanced procedures testing.

Dr. Hennessey made a motion for mileage and per diem. Dr. Fitzhugh made a second. The motion passed.

Mr. Gentry made a motion to adjourn. Mr. White made a second. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Dr. Beatrice Reed, Secretary-Treasurer

Dr. Bryant Ashley, President