

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF A MEETING FOR  
STATE OF NEVADA BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINERS  
MEETING MINUTES**

---

**March 6, 2026**

**1. Call To Order/Roll Call to Determine the Presence of a Quorum.**

Board President Lorraine Benuto, PhD, called to order the meeting of the Nevada State Board of Psychological Examiners at 8:06 a.m. on March 6, 2026, online via "Zoom" and physically at the office of the Board of Psychological Examiners, 3080 S. Durango Drive, Suite 102, Las Vegas, Nevada 89117.

**Roll Call:** Board President, Lorraine Benuto, PhD, Secretary/Treasurer, Stephanie Woodard, PsyD, and members, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, PsyD, Robert Moering, PhD, and Catherine Pearson, PhD were present at roll call. Soseh Esmaili, PsyD, was absent. There was a quorum of the Board members.

Also present were Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Harry Ward; Board Investigators Dr. Sheila Young and Dr. Whitney Owens; Executive Director, Sarah Restori, and Board Staff, Laura Arnold. Members of the public who were present were: Adrienne Renwick, Akiko Hines (NPA), Andrew Perrin, Anne-Elizabeth Northan (Nevada Certification Board), Ashley Noelle Pruitt (BeHere Nevada), Dawn Yohey (Dept of Human Services Director), Donald Hoier, Brian Lech, Dr. Gerardo Wentz, Ester Quilici, Eugenia Weiss (UNR), Heather Eaton (Vitality Unlimited), Joan Waldock (NV Dept. of Human Services Director), Jennifer Ross, Jodi Thomas, Kimberly Sarandos, Leah Cartwright (Cartwright Government affairs), Michael McNamara, Michelle Paul, Noël Chounet (Healthy Communities Coalition), Oscar Sida (Great Basin College), Roberta Miranda-Alfonzo (BeHere NV), Takesha Cooper, Tara Hamlin, Becky Savio, Tara Raines (Balmer Institute), Jamie Ross (Nevada Statewide Coalition Partnership), Carla Franich, Beth Scott, and two unidentified callers.

**2. Public Comment.** Note: The Board welcomes public comment, which may be limited to three (3) minutes per person at the Board President's discretion. Public comment will be allowed at the beginning and end of the meeting, as noted on the agenda. The Board President may allow additional time to be given a speaker as time allows and in their sole discretion. Comments will not be restricted based on viewpoint; however, public comment will not be taken on complaints that are pending before the Board. No action will be taken upon a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken (NRS 241.020).

Dr. Benuto reminded members of the public that no public comment be made on pending complaints, and asked that those who were present to make public comment

on the proposed regulations to be considered during the regulation workshop hold those comments until that agenda item is opened for public comment.

There was no general public comment. Written comment that was provided to the Board office in advance of the meeting for the regulations workshop was made part of the meeting materials.

**3. (For Possible Action) Workshop to Solicit Comments on Proposed Regulations to Align with 2025 SB165 (Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioners and the Practice of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention) and Possible Action to Forward the Proposed Regulation Revisions to a Hearing at a Future Meeting of the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners in Accordance with NRS Chapter 233B.**

Dr. Benuto deferred to Dr. Michelle Paul to provide information regarding the proposed regulations in advance of opening the workshop to public comment.

Dr. Paul, who chairs the Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner (BHWP) Advisory Group, began by introducing the other members – Eugenia Weiss (UNR Department of Social Work), Whitney Owens (former Board member familiar with regulation), and Tara Raines (Ballmer Institute). She also acknowledged Board staff (Executive Director Sarah Restori and Ms. Arnold) for their work in preparing the SB165 regulation draft. Dr. Paul noted that the Advisory Group was assigned by the Board and charged with a phased scope of work, Phase 1 being foundational development and drafting regulatory recommendations based on national and international models, and stated that the regulatory draft that the Advisory Group prepared is what is before the Board for consideration.

Dr. Paul went on to explain that the draft regulations address the education and training required for BHWPs, supervision structure, state examination, scope of practice, and continuing education. She stated that the Advisory Group is there to receive public comment on the regulations draft and to support the Board in its role to ensure that the regulations protect the public, establish clear standards, and are consistent with statute.

Dr. Paul suggested taking the regulation draft section by section and taking public comment after each, to which Dr. Benuto agreed and opened public comment. Ms. Arnold noted that the Board office received written public comment regarding the proposed regulations, which follow the regulations draft in the meeting materials. Dr. Paul stated that she is aware of those comments. The Board agreed that the written public comment would be addressed as they related to any of the regulation draft sections.

Definitions. Beginning with the first three sections, which are definitions, Dr. Paul noted the written public comment from the Social Work Board, which offered suggested language in reference to the definition of low intensity behavioral health interventions.

Issuance of License to BHWP. For the proposed regulation regarding the issuance of licenses to BHWPs, Dr. Paul noted the edits suggested by the Social Work Board in their written public comment in reference to the provision regarding an applicant who has been previously been denied licensure by the Board, and the Social Work Board's suggested language intended to prevent a BHWP license from being a backup plan. Member of the public Noël Chounet commented that there are a number of different behavioral health practitioners who practice with training, such as CHWs and certified prevention specialists who specialize in the behavioral health prevention field and have extended training as an internationally recognized certification, but do not have licensing boards. She said her concern is that this narrows the field and eliminates opportunities for other professionals who are trained to practice behavioral health services and support, as the issuance of license section seems to be narrowed to fields that are licensed and neglects fields that have certification. Dr. Paul clarified that SB165 is very specific to Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioners and that the intent is to be sensitive to debating individual professional turf concerns. She said the Advisory Group can be prepared to answer questions as to what this does and does not regulate. Member of the public Jodi Thomas said there were similar questions at UNR's counseling services, where they have a robust outreach team and where they train and supervise their providers (graduate assistants or other trained professionals with degrees who provide outreach and consultation). Dr. Thomas wanted clarification as to whether this will restrict any of the behaviors their professionals are doing or if they will be deemed to be operating without a license. Dr. Benuto was curious if that is the intention. Dr. Paul stated that the intention is to define Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner as specific but not to restrict or define the scope of practice of others.

Educational Requirements. In reference to the section on educational requirements, Dr. Paul explained that the Advisory Group spent time looking at standards that exist in Washington, Oregon, and the UK, and worked to find where there was convergence around the educational requirements and competencies specific to this Bachelor level professional. Member of the Public Dr. Adrienne Renwick, Teaching Associate Professor at UNR's Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies within the School of Public Health and a licensed CPC and Alcohol, Drug, and Gambling counselor, provided comment related to educational requirements and scope of practice, as follows:

I support the Board's work on these regulations and want to raise a concern I hope the Board will consider before finalizing.

The proposed regulations do not explicitly prohibit addiction prevention within the Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner scope of practice, yet Licensed

Clinical Alcohol, Drug, and Gambling Counselors are excluded from the list of authorized supervisors. That exclusion sends a clear signal about intent. But if the intent is to keep this credential outside the addiction space, the regulations should say so explicitly.

This concern is not new. During the legislative session, this question was raised directly with the bill's drafters, and it was explicitly communicated to stakeholders that the intent of this new license was to "stay out of the addiction space." We have written documentation of that representation. The exclusion of LCADCs as authorized supervisors is consistent with that intent. However, the scope of practice language and educational requirements as currently drafted does not reflect that assurance, and I would urge the Board to close that gap.

Nevada already has a certified prevention specialist workforce with specific addiction prevention training and credentialing. Allowing Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioners to practice in that same space, under supervisors who may have no addiction training, risks duplicating an existing workforce and diluting the quality of those services.

I would ask the Board to clarify whether addiction prevention is intended to fall within Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner scope. If it is, I strongly recommend adding educational requirements addressing substance use screening, SBIRT frameworks, and co-occurring conditions so that practitioners are prepared for that work. If it is not, I recommend the regulations say so clearly.

Dr. Benuto stated that she was curious to hear the Advisory Group's thoughts on that. Dr. Raines stated that she had those conversations with Dr. Renwick during the legislative session, and that is something that the Advisory Group could take back and talk through how to best reflect and integrate that in the regulations. The Group respects that the addiction prevention space is nuanced and requires specific training, and that should be properly reflected in the regulations.

Continuing with the educational requirements section of the proposed regulations, Dr. Paul noted the written public comment from the Social Work Board regarding the competency requirements, which included several questions. Dr. Paul explained that this is a new and emerging profession, so there is not currently a national accreditation for a BHW program, but the Social Work Board's questions are what accreditation provides guidance around. She suggested that the Advisory Group could go back and spend some time discussing what role regulations play in that space versus policy or other groups doing the implementation.

For the supervised practicum requirement section of the educational requirements, Dr. Paul noted the written comment that was received. The Social Work Board questioned whether 150 hours of direct client contact was sufficient. Dr. Lillian Wichinsky, Dean of UNR's School of Social Work, suggested that those who have a bachelor's degree in

Social Work, who complete 450 hours of practicum, be eligible for BHWP licensure with an additional 250 hours of post-degree BHWP training. Dr. Paul stated that would be something the Advisory Group would need to look at.

In reference to the documentation section of the educational requirements, Dr. Paul noted the Social Work Board's suggestion that there be a definition of or clarity around what competency mapping is and how competency will be evaluated.

Dr. Paul stated that Dr. Christopher Kearney from UNLV and the chair of the Bachelor's program that is working toward preparing graduates for BHWP licensure submitted public comment on the educational requirements, and recommended adding specifically the UNLV Children's Behavioral Health Psychology degree.

Supervision of licensed BHWPs. Dr. Paul stated that, in his public comment, Dr. Kearney recommended expanding the list of qualified supervisors based on the potential paucity of such individuals in Nevada, and noted that the Ballmer Institute only requires that the supervisor hold a Master's degree. Dr. Paul stated that this section is limited by the SB165 legislation, which defines who is qualified to supervise. Dr. Raines stated that expanding that list would require amendments to the legislation in the next legislative session, and that it is a conversation the Advisory Group can have in reference to getting more supervisors who meet the current criteria and potentially expanding that.

Dr. Paul stated this provision caps the number of supervisees to three under a single supervisor, noting that the Board has to think about public protection as well as work force development, so this will be something to discuss further. Having too few may be too restrictive, whereas having too many may risk inadequate oversight. She suggested that there may need to be more thought about supervisor to trainee ratios. Dr. Benuto wondered about the complexity of the cases being supervised as it relates to the volume of what a supervisor can supervise. Dr. Raines stressed that the BHWPs are referring up the more complex cases. If there is a complex case, it should be referred by the BHWP to a higher degreed professional. Dr. Paul added that the BHWPs' scope of practice is meant to be within a stepped-care model at the very bottom steps.

During the discussion on this section, member of the public Dr. Jamie Ross provided the following public comment:

My name is Jamie Ross and I am speaking on behalf of the Nevada Statewide Coalition Partnership, which coordinates substance use prevention coalitions throughout Nevada.

While we are in material support of more programs and pathways to progress in the community, when speaking of behavioral health, this concerns both mental health and substance use. As a Certified Prevention specialist, I have had 2000

hours of training on best practices in substance use prevention. Based on the regulations laid out, I see no standard expertise in substance use prevention. What we know in this field is that bad prevention is worse than no prevention, and it will harm children.

I would like to add a request that any substance use prevention programs are done in concert with a certified prevention specialist to ensure children are given the best chance at success. Certified prevention specialists are embedded in many schools and throughout all communities within Nevada.

As a representative for many prevention specialists throughout the state, we stand ready to assist this new project and ensure that we serve our youth in the safest matter while relying on the expertise of our respective fields of practice.

Qualifications of Supervisors. Dr. Paul noted that the Social Work Board's written comment inquired about whether the Board will develop and publish a list of approved supervisors and how it will keep track of them, and the comments it made around those inquiries. Dr. Paul stated that this will be a policy/administrative workload implementation question, and an Advisory Group discussion around the value of having a regulation that speaks to the Board maintaining a list of approved supervisors.

Powers and Duties of Supervisors. Dr. Paul stated that the Social Work Board recommended under subsections 3(b) and (e) to remove the word "clinical" to underscore that BHWPs do not have any scope that allows for clinical interventions.

Supervision involving potential conflict of interest. There was no public comment on this section.

Duties of supervisor regarding records and Board notification. There was no public comment on this section.

State Examination. Dr. Paul stated that the Social Work Board and Dr. Kearney provided public comment regarding the state examination requirement, and that their comments revolved around there not being a national examination, who will write the exam, and how will the Board ensure the exam is a valid and reliable measure of competency. Dr. Paul also noted some confusion around the language regarding the number of retakes. She said that the Advisory Group can go back and look at those comments in reference to the State Exam regulation, and further explained that any examination that the Board develops will have to be psychometrically defensible and a clear retake policy needs to be in place.

Continuing Education. In his written public comment, Dr. Kearney wondered if there could be a swap where the evidence-based practice CEs be increased and the cultural competency / DEI requirements be decreased such that the evidence-based practice CE requirement be the highest number. Dr. Paul said her question for the Advisory Group

to explore is the cultural competency requirement that is across multiple behavioral health professions, and she is not sure if that would apply to the BHWPs. Dr. Benuto thought the increasing cultural competency / DEI training that is clinically relevant is rooted in evidence-base, and wondered if there was a way to word that with the emphasis on both. Dr. Moering thought the six-hour requirement for cultural competency / DEI should be retained based on the well-understood importance of it.

Scope of Practice. Dr. Paul stated that the Social Work Board recommended defining stepped care framework, recommended training around telehealth practices, and suggested removing the word "clinical". Dr. Paul noted that the comments by Dr. Renwick and Dr. Ross are also applicable under this section.

Display of License. There was no public comment on this section.

Professional and Ethical Compliance Code. There was no public comment on this section.

Based on the public comment received, Dr. Paul inquired if the Board wants the Advisory Group to do some work on incorporating public comment around some of the major themes raised (i.e., 700 hour requirement, competency evaluation, scope of practice, ensuring the regulations are not restricting other qualified individuals from working in this space, state exam, continuing education). Dr. Benuto said the options are to do more work and another workshop with public comment integrated or move it toward a hearing. Dr. Moering agreed with having another workshop with feedback integrated would be helpful. Dr. Moering also had a comment regarding the supervision of BHWPs, suggesting that the "may work under" be revised to state "must work under" to avoid the supervision sounding optional. Dr. Holland stated that she would appreciate another review with the revisions based on comments during the workshop. Dr. Paul confirmed that the Advisory Group would make revisions to the regulation draft based on the public and other comments by tracking and explaining those changes, or, if the Group decided not to make a change, it would provide a rationale for not doing so.

*On motion by Stephanie Woodard, second by Catherine Pearson, the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners approved scheduling a second Regulation Workshop for the SB165 Regulation Draft. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

#### **4. Minutes. (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Minutes of the State of Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners' January 23, 2026, Meeting.**

*On motion by Robert Moering, second by Monique Abarca, the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners approved the meeting minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board held on January 23, 2026. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

## **5. Financials**

- (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Final Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025).

Ms. Arnold stated that as of February 28, 2026, Board had a combined total of just over \$304,000 in checking and savings, with the Board being at about 76% of its budgeted expenses and a little over 93% of its budgeted income, most of which is the deferred income allocated to the second and third 2025-26 biennium quarters. Ms. Arnold went on to explain the adjustments she included in the budget side of the financial spreadsheet as it concerned why some of the Board's expenses are a little higher for this time of the fiscal year. She stated that those expenses include unexpected fee increases by state agencies for FY26 that were not known to the Board until nearly half-way through the fiscal year, such as the Attorney General's 40% increase in billing fees that were retroactive to July 2025 and the fees for the disciplinary hearing in November that were higher than expected and requested. She highlighted, for example, the Board office decision not to send anyone to the ASPPB mid year meeting in favor of moving about \$5,300 from out of state travel to the budget for legal fees (AG's office), as well as other adjustments based on some of the expenses that are known and completely paid for the fiscal year. Ms. Arnold stated that she would continue to monitor and adjust the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year to try to ensure that the Board is at least revenue neutral by the end of June, and expected the next fiscal year, which includes a renewal period, to ease up.

*On motion by Catherine Pearson, second by Robert Moering, the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners approved the Treasurer's Report with the noted budget revisions for Fiscal Year 2026. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

## **6. Legislative/Regulation Update**

Ms. Arnold stated that the Board continues to make its way through the regulatory changes that are required as a result of a few of the legislative changes and mandates from the 2025 Legislative session. She said that the regulation revisions in R001-25 and R041-25 were approved by the Legislative Commission during its February 26, 2026, meeting, and those will be made available on the Board's website once the Board office receives the approved version from the Secretary of State. Ms. Arnold went on to



state that, as for the legislation referenced (SB165), and as was discussed during the regulation workshop, the Behavioral Health and Wellness Advisory Group has prepared draft regulations and will continue its work in complying with the Board's charge for it.

## **7. Report from the Nevada Psychological Association.**

Dr. Akiko Hinds with the Nevada Psychological Association stated that the NPA has its annual conference in Las Vegas on May 8, and announced that the NPA is in the process for looking for a new executive director, as its current executive director, Wendi O'Connor, is retiring.

## **8. Board Office Operations.**

Executive Director Sarah Restori provided an update on the Board's licensure, applicant, state exam, and registrant statistics for January and February, 2026. She stated that the Board licensed 8 psychologists and administered 10 state exams, and that the Board currently has 149 open applications for licensure. She further stated that the Board currently has 758 licensed psychologists, 40 provisionally licensed psychological assistants and psychological interns, and 39 registered psychological trainees.

## **9. (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Action on Pending Consumer Complaints:**

DAG Ward explained a new process by which the Board would present the complaints to the Board during its meetings. To that end, DAG Ward stated that summary updates on pending complaints will be provided in writing and included with the Board's meeting materials, and that only complaints on which Board action is being requested will be discussed during the Board's meetings.

- Complaint #25-0721. DAG Ward stated that this is a complaint by a social worker against a psychologist for inappropriate and unethical conduct with complainant's client, who was previously respondent's client. The complainant provided authorization to forward the complaint to the respondent for response, which has been received. The investigator has made recommendations for a stipulated consent agreement, which was sent to and the terms accepted by the respondent. The signed agreement is included in the meeting materials and is before the Board for approval. DAG requested that the Board take action on Complaint #25-0721.

*On motion by Stephanie Holland, second by Robert Moering, the Nevada State Board of Psychological Examiners approved the Stipulated Consent Agreement in Complaint #25-0721. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

- Complaint #25-1125 - DAG Ward stated that this is a complaint for unprofessional conduct and was forwarded to the respondent for a response. Respondent has provided a response to the complaint, which the Board investigator has reviewed and based upon which recommends dismissal of the complaint. DAG requested that the Board dismiss Complaint #25-1125. Investigator Young provided additional information regarding the complaint and the basis of her recommendation for dismissal. She explained that the complainant was a parent who complained about a lack of communication from a psychologist regarding an adult child. Because the psychologist did not have permission from the adult child to communicate with the parent, and because the psychologist otherwise followed all laws and ethical standards in this situation, she determined that dismissal is warranted.

*On motion by Stephanie Woodard, second by Monique Abarca, the Nevada State Board of Psychological Examiners dismissed Complaint #25-1125. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

**10. (For Possible Action) Review and Possible Action on Applications for Licensure as a Psychologist or Registration as a Psychological Assistant, Intern, or Trainee. The Board May Convene in Closed Session to Receive Information Regarding Applicants, Which May Involve Considering the Character, Alleged Misconduct, Professional Competence or Physical or Mental Health of the Applicant (NRS 241.030). All Deliberation and Action Will Occur in an Open Session.**

The following applicants are recommended for approval of licensure contingent upon completion of licensure requirements: **Kristi Walter, Kristina Disney, Madison Hurley, John Firkus, Billie Carter, George Dabdoub, Grady Osten-Garner, Michellane Mouton, Patricia Albrecht, Julie Sanchez, and Alexandra Schlager.**

*On motion by Robert Moering, second by Monique Abarca, the Nevada State Board of Psychological Examiners approved the following applicants for licensure contingent upon completion of licensure requirements: Kristi Walter, Kristina Disney, Madison Hurley, John Firkus, Billie Carter, George Dabdoub, Grady Osten-Garner, Michellane Mouton, Patricia Albrecht, Julie Sanchez, and Alexandra Schlager. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

- **Dr. Michael McNamara's Appeal from the ATEAM Panel decision denying his application for registration / provisional licensure as a Psychological Assistant.**

Dr. Benuto stated that Dr. Michael McNamara has appealed the ATEAM Panel's decision denying his application for registration / provisional licensure as a Psychological Assistant based on his educational program not meeting Nevada's equivalency requirements. She inquired as to whether the Board had an opportunity to review the information provided regarding Dr. McNamara's appeal and whether any Board members had questions or concerns for Dr. McNamara. Executive Director Restori noted that Dr. McNamara was present if the Board had any questions for him.

Dr. Holland acknowledged that she had to recuse herself from the decision, but inquired as to whether she could ask questions to the Board or the ATEAM. Executive Director Restori stated that Dr. Holland was required to recuse herself, but could participate in the discussion. Dr. Holland stated that she wanted to ensure that the ATEAM considered concessions around Covid during the time that Dr. McNamara attended his program, and request that the Board consider the entirety of his documented hours prior to and during his internship that included what is outlined in the NAC as it relates to residency.

Dr. Benuto noted that, according to the Board's current ATEAM procedure policy, the Board can either affirm the ATEAM's decision, reverse the ATEAM panel's decision and approve the provisional licensure, or send this application back to the ATEAM panel with a request to Dr. McNamara for additional information for the panel to consider.

Dr. Moering stated that he looked at the application and all of the documents that were submitted, and he has questions related to the residency component. He noted that some of the hours that Dr. McNamara included are CE hours, which are outside of the educational program and are not evaluated by the program itself. To that end, Dr. Moering did not believe those hours should count toward the residency component. Dr. Moering further noted that, even according to the letter provided by Dr. McNamara's educational program, it does not meet Nevada's residency requirements. He said that, in looking at its website, Meridian identifies the states in which its doctoral graduates can be licensed as a psychologist or in another behavioral health field, and Nevada is not listed among them for licensure in any category. Dr. Moering further noted that Meridian's website has a section that addresses the states that it has not yet evaluated as it relates to licensing requirements, and Nevada is not listed there either. What that said to Dr. Moering is that Meridian has looked at Nevada's requirements and determined from their own perspective that their program does not meet Nevada's criteria for licensure as a psychologist. On those bases, Dr. Moering said he had concerns about approving Dr. McNamara's application.

Dr. Woodard recalled several conversations related to the implications caused by Covid on meeting minimum requirements for licensure while contending with the pandemic and thought Dr. Holland's context was helpful. She stated that she was leaning toward sending the application back to the ATEAM for further deliberation regarding the extenuating circumstances as it relates to the pandemic.

Dr. Moering agreed that there were adjustments made for Covid, but those individuals who attended other universities and colleges, they had one year out of three years impacted by Covid and they were still able to get their residency based on other non-Covid years. He said he takes the adjustments for Covid into consideration, but that does not account for the other years where there just was not a residency.

Dr. Pearson offered comment as part of the panel that reviewed Dr. McNamara's application as it concerned the extenuating circumstances related to Covid. She said what occurred during Covid were 2 week-long residencies, and even if they had occurred in person, the question is whether those 2 week-long intensives satisfy the residency requirement. Dr. Pearson noted that, according to the ASPPB model act, multiple long weekends and/or summer intensives are specifically excluded from what is considered a residency.

Dr. Holland inquired as to whether the intent is in-person or synchronous learning – the ability to participate in a live format. She said her understanding is that Meridian's program and residency requirement did change and is different than when Dr. McNamara attended, and she believed it would meet Nevada's equivalency requirement. She also referenced the first letter from Meridian and then the second follow up letter that distinguished the difference from when he attended to when the request was made regarding their program requirements.

Dr. Owens, who was a second reviewer on Dr. McNamara's application and who has reviewed hundreds of applications for the Board and for ASPPB, stated that one of the requirements for a PLUS application review is that the residency requirement be attested by the doctoral program. In this case, Meridian did not attest to it for the reasons Dr. Moering stated – it does not meet Nevada's residency requirement. Thus, the Board does not have the attestation from the program that is required to pass the application.

Dr. McNamara referred to the updated letter from his program that addressed the residency requirement and how he did fulfill it, and said his understanding is that the Board considers each applicant on a case-by-case basis and not necessarily by what the university says. He said his education was different than the other students in the program, and he had 1600 hours of field work experience over 19 months under the supervision of his university, and all of his work was synchronous and it was live with interactions with both their cohort and professors. He said the structure is not much different than other programs that are allowed to sit for licensure such as Walden,

where all of their residencies were turned into virtual residencies. Dr. McNamara also stated that he did an in-person residency in Athens, Greece.

In summarizing the points of the discussion, Dr. Benuto referenced Dr. Moering having noted that Meridian's website states that it does not meet the requirements for licensure in Nevada, and also referred to Dr. Holland and Dr. McNamara indicating the program was different when Dr. McNamara attended it. Dr. Benuto agreed with Dr. Moering that the CE training that occurred outside the program would not count toward the residency requirement. She also thought it was important to consider what occurred during Covid and the adjustments that had to be made.

For the benefit of those who have not done application reviews for non-APA accredited applicants, Dr. Owens explained that the review process includes the applicant providing information as well as attestations from supervisors and the university, and the reason for that is to ensure there are checks and balances in what the applicant is reporting and that to which supervisors and the programs are attesting, and that they are in alignment. She said that, in this case, the university is stating that it does not believe its educational requirements are aligned with Nevada's residency requirements. Dr. Owens said it is important that the Board considers that and to ensure that the information is in alignment in order to pass an applicant, and that there are numerous examples during Covid where universities were able to attest to the residency requirement being met even though it was potentially a little different during that time. Going back to Dr. Moering's comment, Meridian's program does not attest to its residency requirement being met, and it further states that its program does not meet Nevada's standards. Dr. Owens emphasized that, not only in this case but in all application reviews, that the Board is consistent in its application reviews and that it recognize whatever decision is made in this case will potentially apply to other applicants. She noted that Nevada has standards for a reason – to ensure the protection of the public and to ensure that when the Board provides a license, it is saying that the person being licensed meets Nevada's minimum standards.

Dr. Benuto noted that there are two letters from Meridian, the first of which states that Meridian's program does not meet Nevada's requirements, but the second letter seems to suggest that it does. Executive Director Restori stated that the second letter from Meridian was provided for the Board's review after the ATEAM panel made its determination, and that it was not something the ATEAM panel reviewed as part of its decision. Dr. Holland explained that the first letter was written and signed by an administrative staff member and the second letter is signed by the director and speaks to when Dr. McNamara was a student because the requirements of the program changed after Covid. She noted that there are some nuances to this particular application. Ms. Restori noted that the two letters are consistent in that Dr. McNamara attended two learning labs that were implemented by the university and that he attended a third learning lab in Athens, Greece. Dr. Moering stated that he has reviewed the second letter from Meridian, and it does not say that Dr. McNamara has

met the requirements for a yearlong residency as required in Nevada, only that he met the requirements for weeklong residencies, and those weeklong residencies do not satisfy the requirement for a one year residency. He said that the two letters are similar, with the second clarifying that Dr. McNamara attended the multiple weeklong residencies.

*On motion by Robert Moering, second by Monique Abarca, the Nevada State Board of Psychological Examiners affirmed the ATEAM panel's decision to deny Dr. Micheal McNamara's application for registration / provisional licensure as a Psychological Assistant. Dr. Holland and Dr. Pearson abstained from voting. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, and Robert Moering.) Motion Carried: 4-0.*

**11. (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Action on Updates Regarding the Work of the 2025 SB165 Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner Advisory Group.**

Dr. Benuto inquired as to whether there were any updates from the BHWP Advisory Group regarding whether there is any funding to help defray the cost of SB165's impact on the Board. Dr. Raines stated that the Advisory Group has been making efforts to find funding opportunities, and provided some information about those with whom she has been in contact in pursuit of the same. She emphasized that the Advisory Group is actively working to identify funding sources to offset and cover the cost of this work.

Dr. Paul added that the Advisory Group, in anticipation of public comment, has set its next meeting for March 27, 2026, so that it can provide its next regulations draft to the Board as quickly as possible. She also stated that the general timeline and goal is to have the draft moved to a hearing and then before the Legislature by the fall and before the Legislative session and to show the Legislature that the Board worked efficiently in reference to the regulations that SB165 requires.

**12. (For Possible Action) Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Moving Forward with Regulatory Language that Provides for Criminal and Other Conduct as a Basis for Disciplinary Action and the Duty of Licensees to Report Such Conduct.**

Ms. Arnold stated that, during its January meeting, the Board took action to approve moving forward with developing regulatory language that would allow for disciplinary action based upon criminal and other conduct not directly related to the practice of Psychology. She said there were Board members who indicated that the language should be minimally in broad-based language based upon some of the examples from other licensing boards that had been provided to the Board for its consideration, and that the Board also indicated a preference for reporting only adjudicated administrative,

civil, and/or criminal matters (as opposed to the requirement that they report both unadjudicated claims or charges and adjudicated matters).

Ms. Arnold referred to the proposed regulatory language that was drafted for the Board's consideration based on the Board's preferences for the language that were indicated and examples from other licensing Boards that align with those preferences.

Dr. Moering stated that he likes the proposed language, and as for the 10, 15, or 30 day reporting deadline, he recommended the 30-day option. Dr. Benuto and Dr. Holland agreed with that. Dr. Woodard also agreed with the 30-day reporting requirement, but took issue with the proposed subsection C as it concerned the conduct subject to discipline – engaging in habitual or excessive use of alcohol or controlled substances as a basis for discipline. Dr. Woodard explained that those two actions do not constitute criminal activity outside of the practice of psychology, and creates a slippery slope for the Board to be put in the position of determining what it means to have habitual or excessive use. She inquired with Ms. Arnold as to whether that language appears in other Boards' regulations, to which Ms. Arnold answered that it does, and clarified that the proposed language does not just go to criminal conduct, but also other conduct not related to the practice of psychology. Dr. Benuto agreed with Dr. Woodard that the habitual and excessive use of alcohol or controlled substances language should not be included. Dr. Pearson inquired as to whether the terms habitual or excessive have been provided definitions, as they can be interpreted very differently. Ms. Arnold stated that she could go back and look at how the different Boards have drafted similar language, noting that some Boards provide for disciplinary action for having a substance use disorder, or something to that effect. Dr. Benuto stated that it would be very difficult to operationally define those terms with all of the variables that could go into them, and thought that language should be excluded. Ms. Arnold noted that proposed subsection B would encompass substance use disorders that lead to criminal conduct, and that she would remove that language from the proposed regulation revision. Dr. Benuto said the next step would be a regulation workshop.

*On motion by Stephanie Woodard, second by Stephanie Holland, the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners approved moving to a regulatory workshop the proposed regulatory language regarding criminal and other conduct not related to the practice of psychology as a basis for disciplinary action and the reporting requirements with the revisions to the language as discussed. (Yea: Lorraine Benuto, Stephanie Woodard, Monique Abarca, Stephanie Holland, Robert Moering, and Catherine Pearson.) Motion Carried: 6-0.*

**13. (For Possible Action) Schedule of Future Board Meetings, Hearings, and Workshops. The Board May Discuss and Decide Future Meeting Dates, Hearing Dates, and Workshop Dates.**

Dr. Benuto stated that the next regular meeting of the Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners will be Friday, April 17, 2026, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Dr. Pearson noted that she may have a conflict with that date. Otherwise, there were no conflicts with that date.

**14. Requests for Future Board Meeting Agenda Items (No Discussion Among the Members will Take Place on this Item)**

There were no requests for future Board Meeting agenda items.

**15. Public Comment** - The Board welcomes public comment, which may be limited to three minutes per person at the Board President's discretion. Public comment will be allowed at the beginning and end of the meeting, as noted on the agenda. The Board President may allow additional time to be given a speaker as time allows and in their sole discretion. Comments will not be restricted based on viewpoint; however, public comment will not be taken on complaints that are pending before the Board. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken (NRS 241.020).

Members of the public were reminded that they were not permitted to comment on pending complaints before the Board.

There was no public comment.

**16. (For Possible Action) Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Board, President Dr. Benuto adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.