

ALABAMA BOARD OF OPTOMETRY
June 15, 2020
Teleconference as Allowed by Governor's Proclamation of March 18, 2020

Members present:

Bill Tillman, O.D.	Tim Nichols, O.D.
Doug Clark, O.D.	Rob Svensen, O.D.
Norman Johnson, O.D.	Mazen Sahawneh, O.D.

Members absent:

Ashley Williams, O.D.

Others present:

Fred Wallace, O.D., Executive Director
Maria Catledge, Examiners of Public Accounts
Robin Hutchinson, Examiners of Public Accounts
Candace Turner, O.D., UAB School of Optometry

The Alabama Board of Optometry is statutorily created by the Alabama legislature and delegated with the authority to regulate the optometry profession in the interest of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. With necessary oversight by the government, the board enforces standards and criteria set forth in statute and adds specificity through the promulgation of regulations. An administrative regulatory system provides consumers with an assurance of the qualifications of licensees along with a means of enforcement for the benefit of the public.

The board met via teleconference at noon on June 15, 2020, as allowed by Governor Ivey's proclamation of March 18, 2020. Prior notice of this special meeting was given in accordance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act. All persons participating in the meeting could hear one another at the same time. President Tillman called roll, noted that Drs. Tillman, Johnson, Nichols, Sahawneh, and Svensen were present, declared a quorum, and called the special meeting of the Alabama Board of Optometry to order. He reminded the board members that all deliberations or actions taken during the meeting would be limited to matters within the board's statutory authority necessary to respond to COVID-19 or necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the board.

Dr. Tillman introduced Maria Catledge, Director, Operational Audit, Examiners of Public Accounts for the State of Alabama. Ms. Catledge conducted the exit conference ending the board's recent audit (conducted prior to appearing before the legislature's Sunset Committee). It was noted that the board will be expected to appear before the Sunset Committee in October 2020.

Dr. Doug Clark joined the teleconference at 12:15 PM

A discussion was held concerning the administration of the 2020 standard examination for licensure. It was noted that current public health guidelines make travel to Birmingham difficult for some applicants for licensure. It was also noted that public health guidelines create problems administering an "in person" examination to 30 (or more) applicants for licensure. The Executive Director reported that he has explored the possibility of holding the standard examination for licensure online through existing internet examination administration systems. Dr. Candace Turner (UAB School of Optometry faculty) answered questions about online examination administration and security. A motion was made by Dr. Johnson and seconded by Dr. Sahawneh to authorize the administration of the 2020 standard examination for licensure via an online system offered through the UAB School of Optometry. Additionally, any candidate who cannot sit for this online examination is approved to take the 2020 standard examination for licensure at the board office in Bessemer, Alabama at a date and time agreeable to the candidate and the Executive Director, prior to December 31, 2020. President Tillman proceeded with a roll call vote. All present (Drs. Tillman, Clark, Johnson, Nichols, Sahawneh, and Svensen) voted in favor of the motion.

A discussion was held concerning the cancelled annual meeting for nominating and electing nominees to be presented to the governor for appointment to the board. A motion to reschedule the meeting to August 15, 2020, at 9:00 at the offices of the board's attorney (621 South Hull Street, Montgomery, Alabama) was made by Dr. Sahawneh, seconded by Dr. Nichols. President Tillman proceeded with a roll call vote. All present (Drs. Tillman, Clark, Johnson, Nichols, Sahawneh, and Svensen) voted in favor of the motion.

President Tillman reminded the Executive Director that, per Governor Ivey's proclamation, a summary recounting these deliberations must be posted on the board's website within twelve (12) hours.

There being no further business the special meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Wallace, O. D.
Executive Director

Bill Tillman, O.D.
President