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STATE OF OKLAHOMA



ADVISORY BOARD ON MASSAGE THERAPY

MEMEBERS

Laura Grisso-Eyster, Chair
Kelli Lene Benoit, Vice Chair
Jeffrey Coffey
Pamela Matherly
Jani Williams-White

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

March 7, 2025

1. Call to Order

Chair Laura Grisso-Eyster called the meeting of the Advisory Board on Massage Therapy to order at 10:07 A.M. on Friday, March 7, 2025. The meeting was held at the State Cosmetology Board Office.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

- Laura Grisso-Eyster
- Kelli Lene Benoit
- Jeffrey Coffey
- Pamela Matherly

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

- Jani Williams-White

AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT

- MiMi Casebolt, Interim Executive Director
- Matt Burton, Principal Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT

- Kylie Cooper, Assistant Attorney General

2. Quorum

A quorum was confirmed, and the meeting proceeded according to the agenda. This special meeting of the Advisory Board on Massage Therapy has been convened in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

3. Introduction and Swearing In of Jeffrey Coffey

Overview: Jeffrey Coffey is a lieutenant with the Oklahoma City Police Department, overseeing the VI department, and has been with the department for 17 years.

- **Action:** Swearing in of Jeffrey Coffey.
 - **Outcome:** Jeffrey Coffey was sworn in by Chair Grisso-Eyster.
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4. Approval of Previous Board Minutes

Overview: Discussion regarding the Board minutes from November 19, 2024. Corrections to be made: "Presiding Chair Laura Eyster" should be "Laura Grisso-Eyster or Laura E."

- **Motion:** To approve with correction.
 - **Moved by:** Matherly
 - **Seconded by:** Benoit
 - **Vote:**
 - Benoit: Yes
 - Matherly: Yes
 - Coffey: Yes
 - **Outcome:** Motion passed
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5. Senate Bill 545

Overview: Senate Bill 545, presented by Senator Bergstrom, which concerns transferring certain powers and duties to the Board of Chiropractic Examiners and modifying licensure requirements.

- The bill failed in Committee on February 17th with a 5 to 5 vote, lacking a majority.
 - **Motion:** No motion was made.
 - **Outcome:** No action was taken after discussion.
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6. House Bill 1606

Overview: Senate Bill 1606, presented by Representative Guys, aims to establish an Oklahoma Massage Therapy Board, transitioning from an advisory board to an independent board.

- The bill was referred to Health and Human Services, then Public Health, then Rules Committee, where it currently resides without being read.
 - There is doubt that the bill will move forward due to fiscal concerns and the low licensee count, making it difficult to sustain a board through massage therapist fees.
 - **Motion:** No motion was made.
 - **Outcome:** No action was taken after discussion.
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7. House Bill 2233

Overview: House Bill 2233, presented by Cindy Munson and Senator Daniels, proposes moving massage therapy licensure to the Oklahoma Board of Medical Supervision, while maintaining a Massage Therapy Advisory Board. The bill mirrors current rules and setups, but transfers authority to the Medical Board and grants inspection authority.

- The bill passed 10 to 1.
- There was a rumor that the bill raised the hours to 600 in the future but that could not be found in the bill.
 - The reason for raising the hours is due to federal financial aid requirements.
 - The 150% rule is currently in the courts.

- **Financial Aid Lawsuit**
 - The current administration is moving forward with their court of the lawsuit.
 - The 150% rule may no longer be applicable for financial aid.
- **Massage Therapy and Insurance**
 - Member Matherly doesn't think most massage therapists want to deal with insurance.
 - Vice Chair Benoit doesn't want to legislate business decisions.
- **Bill Discussion**
 - Originally, it was thought the bill wouldn't go anywhere because it was authored by Representative Brunson, a Democrat without much power.
 - Senator Daniels, the floor leader in the Senate, has joined in, increasing the chances of passing by the bill. "She decides what hits the Senate floor bill and legislation wise."
 - Concern is raised about moving to the Medical Board without inspection authority.
 - The Oklahoma Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision is empowered to perform investigations.
- **Inspection Authority Concerns**
 - Current investigations only involve talking to the complainant, not inspecting the establishment.
 - Member Matherly recounted an instance where a Health Department representative stated they couldn't inspect massage therapy establishments.
- **Bill Status**
 - The bill passed 10 to 1 in the Health and Human Services Oversight Committee and is waiting to be read on the House floor.
 - There is a discussion about Senator Daniels' past opposition to the Cosmetology Board.
 - There is a possibility of adding an amendment for establishment authority or changing "investigations" to "institute inspection."
- **Legislative Liaison**
 - The legislative liaison would need to register with the Oklahoma Ethics Commission and file monthly reports.
 - If registered as a legislative liaison, one can lobby for or against a bill's passage.
 - A legislative liaison could meet with Senator Daniels or Member Munson to lobby to add verbiage in the bill.
- **Motion:** To decide to have a legislative liaison.
 - **Moved by:** Matherly
 - **Seconded by:** Coffey
 - **Vote:**
Benoit: Yes

Matherly: Yes

Coffey: Yes

- **Outcome:** Motion passed

 - **Motion:** To elect a legislative liaison.
 - **Moved by:** Matherly
 - **Seconded by:** Benoit
 - **Nominations:** Member Matherly declines; Member Coffey is uncertain if he is eligible due to his law enforcement role, abstains; Vice Chair Benoit declines, leaving Chair Grisso-Eyster as the only viable candidate by default; Laura Grisso-Eyster is nominated
 - **Vote:**
 - Benoit: Yes
 - Matherly: Yes
 - Coffey: Yes

 - **Outcome:** Laura Grisso-Eyster is elected as legislative liaison, uncontested.
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8. House Bill 2234

Overview: House Bill 2234, presented by Cindy Munson, proposes creating an oversight committee for massage therapy under the Massage Therapy Act. The bill keeps massage therapy under the Oklahoma Cosmetology Board.

- The bill creates an oversight committee to assist the board in reviewing complaints and professional conduct issues.
- The bill was read in committee and referred to Rules on February 10 but hasn't been heard or voted on in the Rules Committee.
- The oversight committee would consist of three to five members selected by the advisory board, serving a four-year term.
- The oversight committee would establish and oversee a formal complaint, investigation, and hearing process, recommend disciplinary actions to the board, and require annual training for sexual harassment, assault, and professional conduct.
- **Concerns and Clarifications**
 - There's a question of which board is being referred to, as the Cosmetology and Barbering Board already has the power to take disciplinary action.
 - There's a feeling that the proposed measures in the bill already exist in some form.
 - There's a perception that the legislature may be confused about the roles of the Massage Advisory Board and the Cosmetology and Barbering Board.

- One board member almost didn't renew because they weren't notified of complaints.
- **Notifications and Awareness**
 - Cosmetology Board members can't get information about complaints ahead of time to remain neutral.
 - Actions taken against massage therapists are sometimes put on the agenda.
 - Going forward, any action taken will be on the agenda for the Advisory Board.
 - The Oklahoma Cosmetology and Barbering Board is doing an excellent job supporting the mission of the Advisory Board on Massage Therapy.
- **Discussion on Massage Therapy and Agency Updates**
 - Acknowledgment of Vice Chair Benoit's point about therapists being unsure about trends and updates.
 - Mention of dealing with issues partly due to agency turnover.
 - There was an Edmond City Council meeting discussing massage therapy.
 - The Edmond Police Department was under the impression that the Cosmetology Board hadn't taken action against anyone, which was incorrect.
 - The agency has been undergoing many changes, including leadership turnover, and while they're working hard to stay updated, some things have fallen by the wayside.
 - Chair Grisso-Eyster appreciates Vice Chair Benoit bringing up the issue and thanks everyone for their hard work and for renewing and being on the board.
- **Motion:** No motion was made.
- **Outcome:** No action was taken after discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

- **Time:** 10:44 A.M.

Outcome: Meeting adjourned.

End of Board Meeting Minutes for March 7, 2025.