

**BOARD OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY EXAMINERS
PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 8, 2006**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:23 a.m. by Board Chair James Verser who read the notice of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Board Chair, James Verser
Board Member, Ben K. Beitin
Board Member, Gina Kassel
Board Member, Dawn M. Lacy
Board Member, J. Barry Mascari
Board Member, Verice Mason
Board Member, Amy E. Meckeler
Board Member, Judith A. Owens
Board Member, Edward Reading
Board Member, Ronald K. Walthall

Excused:

Board Member, Barbara Andrews
Board Member, Samira Haddad

Staff Present:

Executive Director, Elaine L. DeMars
Deputy Attorney General, Mileidy Perez
Administrative Staff, Celeste Sweeper
Administrative Staff, Aishah Figueroa

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Verice Mason, seconded by Gina Kassel, and unanimous vote the Public Session Minutes of the May 11, 2006 meeting were approved as amended.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Fiscal Year 2006 Executive Director, Elaine DeMars informed the Board that all receipts for travel reimbursement must be submitted to the Board office no later than June 30, 2006.

B. License Renewal Application Processing The Board was informed that of the 699 active licensees, 131 have completed the online renewal process and 118 have completed the paper renewal process. The expiration date for licensees who have completed the renewal process is June 30, 2008.

V. LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY

The Board reviewed the amended version of N.J.S.A.13:34-1.2 - 5.3 presented by the Regulations Committee. On a motion by J. Barry Mascari, seconded by Gina Kassel, the Board approved the revisions and directed

Regulatory Analyst Danielle Swenson to process the proposal for the Division and Department review required for publication in the New Jersey Register. Public member Verice Mason abstained from the vote.

VI. CONSENT ORDERS

Thomas Merlo, Ph.D.

A Consent Order was jointly filed by the Board of Psychological Examiners and the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners for the suspension of the license of Thomas Merlo. The first year of the four year suspension shall be active and the remaining three years of the suspension shall be stayed and served as a period of probation. Total costs to the State in the amount of \$5734.00 and a civil penalty of \$7500 are assessed.

VII. BOARD MEMBER MATTERS

Robert Campanelli, Ethics Officer for the Division of Consumer Affairs, attended the meeting to address questions regarding relevant ethics and confidentiality laws. Board members are considered to be "special state employees" and are therefore included in the jurisdiction of the governing laws. It was noted that the New Jersey Conflicts of Interest Law at N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq. establishes specific standards of conduct for State employees and officers. A Code of Ethics is promulgated by the Department of Law and Public Safety to preserve public confidence in the administration of justice and the enforcement of laws.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Board Chair Jim Verser informed the Board that the Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards (AMFTRB) has established a "Portability Committee" and has begun to work on defining their task. AMFTRB is attempting to determine whether or not it should endeavor to promote portability of licensure.

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Professional Counselor Examiner Committee

Committee Liaison J. Barry Mascari noted that a revised regulation (N.J.A.C. 13:34-11.2(a)3i) became effective on April 20, 2006 requiring that "an acceptable graduate degree means that the word "Counseling" or the word "Counselor" appears in the title of the graduate degree awarded and that the institution offering the degree states in the catalog or in another format acceptable to the Committee that the purpose of the graduate degree is to prepare students for the professional practice of counseling." Despite the publication of the regulation, the Committee continues to receive applications for those who are not able to document the qualifying degree and must, therefore be denied licensure.

B. Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee Committee Liaison Edward Reading reported that a public member has been appointed to serve on the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee.

X. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held September 14, 2006 at 9:00 a.m., 124 Halsey Street, Newark, New Jersey.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Edward Reading, seconded by Gina Kassel, the Board moved to Executive Session at 10:58 a.m. to discuss pending confidential matters.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ben Beitin, seconded by Verice Mason, the meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

