

**DRAFT**

**Virginia Board of Social Work  
Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.  
9960 Mayland Drive, Henrico, VA 23233  
Board Room 4**

- BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sherwood Randolph Jr., MSW, LCSW
- BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Martha Meadows, MA, LCSW
- BOARD STAFF PRESENT:** Jaime Hoyle, JD, Executive Director  
Jennifer Lang, Deputy Executive Director- Discipline (*remote via Webex*)  
Charlotte Lenart, Deputy Executive Director- Licensing  
Sharniece Vaughan, Licensing Supervisor  
Rebecca Walker, Licensing Specialist
- STAKE HOLDER ATTENDEES:** Mark Smith, Virginia Society of Clinical Social Workers (VSCSW)  
Denise Daly Konrad, Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF)  
Susan Witt, LCSW, VSCSW (*remote via Webex*)  
Kevin Holder, LCSW, Richmond Chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers (*remote via Webex*)  
Joseph Lynch, LCSW (*remote via Webex*)  
Matthew DeCarlo, Ph.D., LCSW (*remote via Webex*)
- CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Randolph called the Committee Meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. Mr. Randolph stated that the Ad Hoc meeting was being held to discuss the racial disparities in the Association of Social Work Borad (ASWB) examination and discuss alternative pathways to licensure.
- Mr. Randolph also announced to everyone that since Ms. Meadows, the other committee member, was not present, that there would be no decisions made at this meeting, but the floor is open for discussion.
- STAFF REPORTS:** Ms. Hoyle addressed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and how it relates to Board and Committee meetings.
- Ms. Hoyle stated that after ASWB released the 2022 Pass Rate Analysis Examination Data Report, the Board discussed and received public comments at its September 23, 2022 board meeting. The Board requested staff to invite ASWB to its meeting in December 2022 and agreed to release a statement to its licensees and applicants which was published on November 15, 2022.
- On behalf of the Virginia State Board of Social Work, we acknowledge the racial disparity recently highlighted in the ASWB clinical and masters' level exam pass rates. This disparity is unacceptable and alarming. The VA State Board of Social Work does not condone any discrimination, institutional or otherwise, and strives for equal opportunity and accessibility to entering the field of Social Work. Additionally, we recognize the need for effective, educated, and professional clinicians and we are certain that we can identify an equitable solution. We will work with the ASWB, the community, and other stakeholders to obtain more information on the possible causes of any disparities and pursue solutions to any issues found.*

At its December 9, 2022 meeting, ASWB provided a presentation on its findings and answered questions from the Board. After discussion, the Board agreed to form an Ad Hoc Committee to address the results and determine if the Board had a further role.

## **DISCUSSION WITH STAKEHOLDERS:**

Mr. Holder stated that he would like to participate on the Ad Hoc Committee. He added that other states have alternatives to passing the exam such as additional supervision hours and time and suggested that the Virginia Board of Social Work to consider these alternatives.

Mr. Lynch expressed concern that finding an alternative pathway to the exam could possibly affect current LCSWs and does not want it to undermine the current systems in place. He highlighted the Board role to protect the public. He stated he does not want a potential change to the requirements for examination to damage Virginia LCSW licensees ability to earn income in Virginia or other states.

Dr. DeCarlo mentioned that the Board should look at alternatives similar to Oregon, Illinois and Minnesota that allow additional supervision in lieu of passing the ASWB examination. He provided some helpful links (links listed below) and suggested a podcast for the Board to study. He also stated that Illinois required applicants to first fail the exam at least one time before an alternative pathway can be considered. He stated that these methods have yielded no ethical challenges. He stated that he would like to know how he can help the Board.

- <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384147411>
- <https://socialworkpodcast.blogspot.com/2023/02/NASWIL.html>
- <https://www.socialworktoday.com/archive/MJ20p24.shtml>

Ms. Witt suggested that it would be helpful for ASWB to speak to the Board and provide updates on how they plan to address the issues with the examination.

Mr. Randolph added that the Board has previously invited ASWB for a meeting that he believes was beneficial.

Ms. Hoyle talked about her recent return from the ASWB Annual Conference and how alternative pathways to the exam was a very significant topic. She discussed that ASWB has been working very hard to address public concerns. ASWB will not be ready to release more data on some of the approaches they are exploring to address these issues until January 2025.

Ms. Daly Konrad briefly spoke about how any alternatives to the examination would affect the Virginia's ability to remain in the compact and how this alternative would hinder the licensee's mobility in the future.

Mr. Holder added that ASWB has made some changes to the exam such as reducing the 4 option questions to 3 to help with passing and by changing the testing centers due to cultural biases. He mentioned that the National Association of Black Social Workers knew the data was there when it came out on August 5, 2022, and that ASWB has no intention of implementing alternative pathways due to the possible reduction of revenue. He stated that he is not encouraged by ASWB coming back to talk with the Board since they do not support alternative pathways to the exam.

## **NEXT STEPS:**

Mr. Randolph stated that in preparation for the next Ad hoc meeting staff should:

1. Research which states allow alternative pathways to examination and identify

those pathways.

2. Reach out to ASWB to participate in the next Ad hoc meeting to discuss their plan to address the racial disparities in their examination.
3. Ask stakeholders for a written official stance on alternative pathways.
4. Staff should include both social work reports in the agenda for the next meeting.

**NEXT MEETING DATES:**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 4:00p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Randolph adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

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Sherwood Randolph Jr., MSW, LCSW

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Jaime Hoyle, JD, Executive Director

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