

BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL REGULATION

MINUTES

The Board for Professional and Occupational Regulation met on Monday, March 17, 2025, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

The following members were present for all or part of the meeting:

Sathish Anabathula
Grace Flores-Hughes
Jemmalyn Hewlett
Alice Kendrick
Gaby Rengifo

Board members Enid Candelaria-Vega, Fernando Espinoza, H. Scott Johnson and Charles Vaughters were not present at the meeting.

The following agency staff was present for all or part of the meeting:

Brian Wolford, Director
Steve Kirschner, Deputy Director LRPD
Tom Payne, Deputy Director CID
Joe Haughwout, Regulatory Affairs Manager
John Robertson, Communications & Digital Media Manager
Jennifer Sayegh, Policy and Legislative Affairs Manager
Amy Goobic, Executive Assistant

Elizabeth Peay, from the Office of the Attorney General, was present.

Ms. Flores-Hughes called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Haughwout reviewed the emergency evacuation procedures.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Mr. Haughwout informed the Board that Ms. Hewlett was stuck in traffic and would be arriving late. As such, there was no quorum until she arrived. The vote for approval of the agenda and minutes would be held when Ms. Hewlett arrived.

Approval of Agenda & Minutes

Mr. Haughwout provided email correspondence from Ms. Paige Pruett and her concerns with DPOR.

Communications

Board members were provided written Public Comment from Ms. Paige Pruett as she was unable to attend the meeting. Ms. Pruett wanted to inform the Board of her concerns regarding the complaint she filed with the Agency. Ms. Pruett addressed issues she had with the investigation of the complaint, the process for resolving complaints, the FOIA process, and various agency practices. She also commented the Agency lacked investigative integrity.

Public Comment

Mr. Haughwout informed the Board that since their last meeting, Jeb Wilkinson was appointed Chief Deputy Director, formerly Senior Advisor to the Director. Mr. Wilkinson was unable to attend the meeting and sends regrets. Steve Martin, former State Senator, is now in the position of Senior Advisor.

Welcome & Introductions

Jen Sayegh, Policy and Legislative Affairs Manager, provided a report on the 2025 General Assembly Session. Ms. Sayegh informed the Board that 3,107 bills were entered during the session, and that DPOR tracked 50 bills throughout the session. Ms. Sayegh provided information on the agency bills submitted; and detailed information on all bills pertaining to DPOR regulants.

2025 General Assembly Report

Board Members were given a handout regarding HB2553/SB1096 which pertains to the Board's powers and duties. Ms. Sayegh explained the bill provided the Board with additional powers and duties including: to review and comment on the Agency budget; to advise the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Director on matters of regulating or deregulating profession; and to review each currently regulated profession on a periodic basis to determine whether the profession is appropriately regulated. Ms. Sayegh informed the Board regarding Agency bills did not pass. One measure proposed to deregulate the Athlete Agent registration program. Another proposed to deregulate the Residential Building Energy Analyst licensure program. These Agency bills would have moved these professions to the Consumer Protection section of the Office of the Attorney General. Another bill would have reduced the number of years of professional experience required to serve as a Board Member for several DPOR regulatory boards.

Ms. Sayegh stated that bills that are signed by the Governor are effective July 1, 2025.

**Presentation attached.*

Ms. Flores-Hughes stepped out of the meeting at 10:55 am

Board Member Stepped Out of Meeting

Mr. Haughwout provided a presentation on DPOR operations. Mr. Haughwout provided statistics on the processing time for license applications, Universal License Recognition, and remote proctored exams; updates on the Agency's regulatory actions; and an overview of the Board Member Training Conference held in October 2024. Mr. Haughwout also provided statistics on the activity of the Agency's Compliance and Investigations Division; updates on the EPICx licensing and enforcement software project, anticipated to go live beginning in June 2025; information on the agency policy refresh initiative by the Office of Performance and Innovation; and updates on on Agency communications and outreach.

Update on DPOR Operations

Ms. Rengifo inquired about the pass rates for the proctored exams. Mr. Kirschner stated that staff will provide stats at the next meeting. Mr. Haughwout informed the Board that the Executive Director reports were provided for informational purposes (attached).

Ms. Rengifo also inquired about the pass rates for Spanish language contractor exams. Mr. Kirschner reported that the pass rates were not great, but explained it is possibly due to reference materials not being translated. He further commented that the building code and NASCLA reference material have been translated, and DPOR will continue to look at pass rates at the six month and one year marks.

**Presentation attached*

Ms. Hewlett arrived at 11:09 a.m.

Board Member Arrival

Ms. Flores-Hughes returned to the meeting at 11:26 am.

Board Member Returned

Ms. Rengifo reported that she attended several board meetings including Contractors; Asbestos, Lead, and Home Inspectors; and the Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, Certified Interior Designers and Landscape Architects.

Board Member Reporting

Ms. Kendrick and Mr. Anabathula commented that they had not received meeting notifications for their board liaison assignments. Ms. Flores-Hughes reported that she attended a meeting of the Boxing, Martial Arts and Professional Wrestling Advisory Board. Mr. Haughwout advised the Board that he would check with board program staffs to ensure all liaisons are included on meeting notifications.

Mr. Haughwout asked Board members if they had any recommendations for staff or had any items for the Director or the Administration to consider. No additional comments were provided by Board Members.

Ms. Kendrick moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Rengifo seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by members: Anabathula, Flores-Hughes, Hewlett, Kendrick, and Rengifo.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Kendrick moved to approve the September 16, 2024, board meeting minutes. Mr. Anabathula seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by members: Anabathula, Flores-Hughes, Hewlett, Kendrick, and Rengifo.

Approval of Minutes

There was no other business.

Other Business

Board members signed Conflict of Interest forms and travel vouchers.

Conflict of Interest Forms

& Travel Vouchers

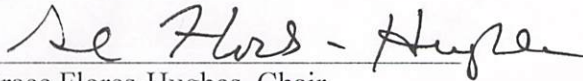
Board members were reminded of the next 2025 meeting date:

- June 16
- September 15
- December 8

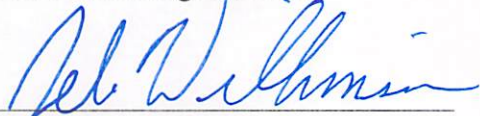
Future Meeting Dates

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

Adjourn



Grace Flores-Hughes, Chair



Brian P. Wolford, Director

James B. 'Jeb' Wilkinson Jr.