ALABAMA PROFESSIONAL BAIL BONDING BOARD
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Board Meeting
February 27, 2026

The Alabama Professional Bail Bonding Board met on Friday, February 27, 2026 at the Board's office located at 2740 Zelda Road, Montgomery, Alabama for a regular business meeting. The following Board members were in attendance: Mr. Jimmie Lay (Board Chair), Ms. Jennifer Collard (Board Vice Chair), Ms. Carla Woodall (Board Secretary), Mr. Chris McNeil (member), Mr. Barry Johnson (member), Mr. Gustavius Maxie (member), Judge Zack Moore (member) and Ms. Alexis Elloitt (member). Member absent was Mr. John Vaughn. Others present at the meeting were Mr. Keith Warren (Executive Director), Ms. Tara Hetzel (Assistant Attorney General-Board Legal Counsel), and Ms. Renee' Reames (recording secretary), Ms. Brenda Holden (licensing specialist), Ms. Karen Harlow (Legal Assistant), and Mr. Denny Merritt (Investigator) and guests.

Public notice of this regular meeting was submitted to the Secretary of State www.sos.alabama.gov in accordance with the requirements of the Alabama Open Meetings Act and published on the Board's web site at www.apbb.alabama.gov.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lay, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m. Mr. Warren called the Board member roll and reported that a quorum was present to conduct Board business. Chairman Lay welcomed everyone attending the meeting and called for a moment of prayer.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Lay presented a copy of the February 27, 2026 meeting agenda for the Board's approval. A copy of the agenda was reviewed by the members.
MOTION: Mr. McNeil made a motion to approve the February meeting agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Moore and unanimously approved by the Board (agenda available for viewing in the Board's Official Book of Minutes).

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Lay presented a copy of the November 12, 2025 regular meeting minutes and January 9, 2026 special meeting minutes for the Board's approval.
MOTION: Mr. McNeil made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve the November and January meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Moore and unanimously approved by the Board (minutes available for viewing in the Board's official Book of Minutes).

IV. REPORTS

A. <u>Licensing Requests:</u>
Ms. Hertzel introduced licensee Mr. Matthew Helms, owner of A.K.A Bail Bonds of Alabama, who had requested to appear before the Board concerning a request for change from bail bondsman to owner. Mr.

Helms was issued a new bail bondsman license on May 6, 2025 and had renewed his license in a timely manner, which expired October 31, 2026. On October 7, 2025,

Mr. Helms submitted the company renewal application as owner rather than a new application and the renewed company license was issued showing Mr. Helms as owner. As a new owner, Mr. Helms lacked the 3 years as a licensed bondsman in accordance with §15-13-160(b): *a professional bondsman may not own a professional bail company until he or she has been licensed as a professional bondsman for at least three years. If the owner of a professional bail company dies or becomes completely incapacitated, as determined by the board, his or her professional bail bond company may be sold to an unlicensed individual. The unlicensed individual shall have 90 calendar days, from date of purchase, to obtain a license and shall employ a minimum of one employee who has been licensed for at least three consecutive years.*

Mr. Helms reported that he had purchased the company from the previous owner who had health issues and he had been told that there would be no problem with the licensing process. The Board considered the intent of the law and Chairman Lay tabled further discussions to later in the meeting.

Ms. Hertzel reported that Melvin Calhoun had requested to appear before the Board to discuss denial of his license due to background criminal history information, but Mr. Calhoun was unable to attend due to a death in the family.

She also reported that Kylan Dennis had requested to appear before the Board to discuss denial of his license due to background criminal history information, but Mr. Dennis had not appeared for the meeting.

Chairman Lay reported that Solomon A. Williams Jr. had requested to appear before the Board.
MOTION: Mr. McNeil made the motion to amend the agenda to add Mr. Solomon's request. The motion was seconded by Ms. Collard and unanimously approved by the Board.
Mr. Solomon reported that he had applied for apprentice license that had been denied and indicated that he had misunderstood the application criminal background questions when answering the question.

The Board discussed the situation concerning Mr. Helms' ownership requirements for licensure and Mr. Helms had applied for renewal of the company license rather than the previous owner, who had sold the business due to health reasons.

MOTION: Ms. Wooden made the motion that the Board adjourn into Executive Session for approximately 5 minutes to discuss the good name and character concerning application requests presented earlier in the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Collard. Ms. Hetzel certified the reason for the Executive Session and Mr. Warren called for a roll call vote: Ms. Woodall, aye, Mr. Chris McNeil, aye, Ms. Alexis Wooden, aye, Ms. Jennifer Collard, aye, Mr. Barry Johnson, aye, and Judge Moore, aye. Chairman Lay called the Board into Executive Session at 11:00 a.m.

MOTION: Mr. McNeil made the motion to adjourn from Executive Session to the regular business meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Woodall and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairman Lay resume the regular business meeting at 11:05 a.m. and called a break at 11:05 for approximately 5 minutes. Chairman Lay resumed the business meeting at 11:11 a.m.

MOTION: Ms. Woodall made the motion to approve an emergency suspension of the company license, 2022C0125, A.K.A Bail Bonds, and allow Mr. Helms to employ a bondsman, and upon compliance with §15-13-160(b), authorize the Executive Director to lift the suspension, requiring a new application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wooden and, following a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved by the members, with Chairman Lay and Mr. McNeil recused from voting as members of the Investigative Committee, along with Ms. Collard.

MOTION: Ms. Woodall made the motion to deny Melvin Calhoun's renewal application for bondsman. due to background criminal history information. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson and unanimously approved by the Board, with Chairman Lay and Mr. McNeil recused from voting as members of the Investigative Committee.

MOTION: Ms. Woodall made the motion to deny Kylan Dennis's initial application for bondsman due to background criminal history information and notify the applicant that a new corrected application may be submitted for reconsideration along with submission of licensing fee and late fees, and the Executive Director to issue license if in compliance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson and unanimously approved by the Board, with Chairman Lay and Mr. McNeil recused from voting as members of the Investigative Committee.

MOTION: Ms. Woodall made the motion to deny Solomon A. Williams, Jr's renewal application for bondsman due to background criminal history information and notify the applicant that a new corrected application may be submitted for reconsideration along with submission of licensing fee and late fees, and the Executive Director to issue license if in compliance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson and unanimously approved by the Board, with Chairman Lay and Mr. McNeil recused from voting as members of the Investigative Committee.

The Board discussed whether a surety bond company license could be obtained in the name of the individual/self. Ms. Woodall indicated that she would obtain additional information on the matter and Chairman Lay tabled further discussion until the next Board meeting.

B. <u>Board Chairman Report:</u>
Chairman Lay indicated that he had no report at this time.

C. <u>Executive Director Report</u>:
Mr. Warren reported on the current number of licenses (#677), along with business (#209) and apprentice (#29) licenses, as of January 31, 2026, along with the status of complaints received in fiscal years 2023 through current fiscal year 2026 (report available in the Board's official Book of Minutes).

1. Mr. Warren presented a list of new licenses that had been issued from November 1, 2025 through February 23, 2026, along with issued new company licenses, apprentice licenses and reinstated licenses during the same period (report available in the Board's official Book of Minutes).
MOTION: Ms. Collard made the motion to ratify the approval of new and reinstated licenses, along with company and apprentice licenses issued between November 1, 2025 through January 23, 2026, with the exclusion of licenses 2026S1416 and 2026S1398. The motion was seconded by Judge Moore and unanimously approved by the Board.

2. <u>Licensing Application – Criminal Background History Question:</u>
Mr. Warren presented revisions to the license application questions concerning criminal background history (copy available in the Board's official Book of Minutes). The Board discussed further modifications to the questions to clarify the often mis-answered questions by the applicant. It was the consensus of the Board to approve the changes to the license application as discussed.

3. <u>Financial Report:</u>
Mr. Warren presented the financial activities of the Board for FY 2026 covering October 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026 (report available in the Board's official Book of Minutes). He reviewed the cash flow analysis indicating cash receipts and expenditures for the reported period. He presented the total amount of expenditures compared to budget and reported a projected positive cash balance at the end of the fiscal year.

MOTION: Mr. Johnson made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Moore and unanimously approved by the Board.

D. Legal Counsel Report:

Ms. Hetzel presented the Investigative Committee (IC) report to include the Committee's recommendations concerning the following complaint cases:

- Case 2024-050.01 - recommended to administratively close case as founded. Respondent plead guilty of reckless endangerment and license renewal was denied.
- Case 2024-050.02 recommended to administratively close case as founded. Respondent plead guilty of reckless endangerment and license renewal was denied.
- Case 2025-042 - recommended to close case as unfounded, with no violation of Board's jurisdiction.
- Case 2025-043.01 - recommended to close case as no probable cause due to allegations not substantiated.
- Case 2025-043.02 - recommended to close case as no probable cause due to allegations not substantiated.
- Case 2025-043.03 - recommended to close case as no probable cause due to allegations not substantiated.
- Case 2026-002BR – recommended to close case as founded, with a $1,000 fine and one-year probation and case referred to local county law enforcement.

MOTION: Ms. Woodall made the motion to approve the recommendations of the Investigative Committee as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wooden and approved by the Board with Chairman Lay recused from voting as members of the Investigative Committee.

E. Scam Awareness Committee Update:

Ms. Wooden presented copies of brochures and flyers prepared to educate the public on potential scams concerning the bail bond industry. She reported that copies were being placed in public places, along with Sheriffs' offices, jails, etc. The Board discussed further modifications to the brochures and flyers.

MOTION: Mr. McNeil made the motion to approve the brochures and flyers used for bail bond scam awareness, to include the modifications discussed by the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson and unanimously approved by the Board.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Legislative Update:

Mr. McNeil reported that HB302 was under consideration by the Legislature and the Bill had been amended out of the House Chamber. Ms. Wooden reported that the Bill was filed not as previously discussed by the Board; however, a later Bill substitute was filed in the Legislative Committee of Boards, Agencies and Commissions, to correct the Bill concerning new surety companies and the Bill was amended on the floor of the House Chamber.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Out-of-State Travel – PBUS conference

Mr. Warren reported that some Board members had indicated interest in attending the PBUS conference held in February 2026. A copy of the travel guidelines was provided to the members to review, which included the list of documents required for pre-approval to travel and a list of receipts to submit upon return to justify reimbursements. Mr. Warren indicated that Ms. Reames could assist with any further questions about the checklist and process pre-travel requests and reimbursement of expenses requests.

MOTION: Mr. Maxie motioned that the Board authorized reimbursement of expenditures up to $3,500 per member requesting reimbursement for PBUS conference. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson and unanimously approved by the Board.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

Licensure Activities:
Ms. Holden reminded the members that licenses were automatically issued via email, upon approval of an application, to prevent mailing and further delay in receiving the license.

Next Board Meeting: Chairman Lay reminded the members that the next meeting of the Board had been changed, and the Board was scheduled to meet on Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Board Transitioning to State Government:
Mr. Warren recommended that the Board consider transitioning to State government rather than continuing under contracted management services. He reported that the Alabama Security Regulatory Board (ASRB) had approved to transition into State government, with him serving as Executive Director, and the staff of Smith Warren would become employees of ASRB. He recommended the Board consider an Inter-agency Agreement with ASRB for continuity of services.

Upon a proposal being submitted to the Board regarding the Board entering into an interagency agreement with the Alabama Security Regulatory Board, all employees of Smith Warren Management Services, Inc., left the Board meeting. Discussions were held regarding the proposal.

MOTION: Mr. McNeil made the motion to give a 30-day notice to terminate the current contract with Smith Warren Management Services, Inc., that was signed by Governor Ivey January 23, 2026.

In-depth discussions continued by the Board regarding the proposal and motion. Mr. McNeil stated his concerns and reasons therefore and offered suggestions of alternatives. Discussions were held and responsibilities of daily Board business which would require oversight, absent an Executive Director, were enumerated. Discussions were held to pinpoint and identify any concerns or issues since entering into the current contract.

MOTION SECONDED: Mr. McNeil's motion was seconded by Gus Maxie wherein after continued discussions a roll call vote was taken. Ms. Jennifer Collard, no; Judge Zack Moore, no; Ms. Alexis Wooden, aye; Ms. Carla Woodall, no; Mr. Jimmie Lay, no; Mr. Chris McNeil, aye; Mr. Barry Johnson, no; Mr. Gus Maxie, aye. Motion failed by a 5 to 3 vote.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Mr. McNeil made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Maxie and unanimously approved by the Board. Chairman Lay adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Jimmie Lay, Board Chairman
Chairman

Carla H. Woodall
Carla H. Woodall, Board Secretary

Date Approved: May 28, 2026 /