Alabama Professional Bail Bonding Board
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Alabama Professional Bail Bonding Board
Minutes, Meeting July 29, 2026

A special called meeting of the Board was held at 11:15 am CDST in the new management office's Conference Room. Chair Jimmie Lay called the meeting to order, and pursuant to a roll call, those present and voting in person were Chair Jimmie Lay, Vice Chair Jennifer Collard, Secretary Chris McNeil, Barry Johnson, Gus Maxie, and John Vaughn. Those present by Zoom were Carla Woodall and Alexis Wooden. Judge Charles Moore was not able to attend. Tara Hetzel of the Attorney General's Office was present as Board Counsel along with her Law Clerk Conner Dill, and Patrick McWhorter (Executive Director) and Randy Barrows (Board Administrator) were also present.

Mr. Vaughn gave the Opening Prayer. As the first order of business, Chair Lay accepted a motion by Ms. Collard, seconded by Mr. Maxie, to approve the Agenda for the meeting. Voting in favor of the motion was Lay, Collard, McNeil, Johnson, Maxie, Vaughn, Woodall, and Wooden. Unanimous.

The Investigative Committee had met prior to this meeting, but since that was not on the agenda it was agreed to defer action until the meeting next week.

The agenda for this Special Called meeting was approved by all members present voting in favor. The meeting was posted on the Open Meetings website of the Secretary of State within the 24-hour time required. Approval of minutes was deferred to the next meeting since new management staff had not had time to assemble the same. Members present submitted their travel expenses for the meeting.

The first item of business on the special agenda was discussion of new hires. Patrick McWhorter explained to the Board that Karen Harlow, currently an employee of the Alabama Security Regulatory Board but who had handled much of the APBBB's previous work as a paralegal, is available and recommended the Board hire Karen directly. McWhorter explained that Karen would handle complaints, licensing, and support duties, with funding from the board's general fund at \$23 per hour and a cap of \$30,000 annually. Carla Woodall raised concerns about the financial impact and the shift from a previous contract that included investigative and clerical services. The motion was made by McNeil, seconded by Maxie to hire Karen Harlow as a retired state employee for paralegal duties. Motion was approved by a roll call vote with Lay, Collard, McNeil, Johnson, Maxie, Vaughn, and Wooden voting in favor of the motion. Woodall voted no. Motion carried 6-1.

Attorney Hetzel noted that there were a substantial number of complaints that she would be working on to try to resolve as many as possible.

Further discussion was held concerning the hire of an investigator by the Board, since the number of complaints has increased substantially. Vice Chair Collard has compared the number of complaints received to that of other Boards of similar sizes and indicated our numbers of complaints were much higher than the others. Attorney Hetzel will provide names from the retired state employee lists for further consideration for employment as the Board's investigator.

The Board then excused management staff to discuss the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Executive Director. Attorney Hetzel provided the Board with a proposed RFP for an Executive Director. A motion was made by Mr. McNeil to amend the RFP by removing the language that included an investigator and the Board hire their own investigator. Ms. Woodall expressed concern with the Board proposing a contract for $7,000/month for an Executive Director that did not include all the services which had previously been covered by the former Executive Director's company and the increase of expenses for less service. Mr. McNeil amended his motion to accept the proposed RFP but remove the language that included an investigator and adjust the contract from $7,000 per month to $6,000 per month. Motion was seconded by Ms. Rubio. A roll call vote was conducted by Secretary McNeil with Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, and Ms. Wooden voting in favor of the motion and Ms. Woodall against. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Ms. Woodall to table the discussions of the RFP for each member to review and the Board meet next week and seconded by Ms. Wooden. A roll call vote was conducted by Secretary McNeil with Ms. Rubio, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Wooden, and Ms. Woodall voting in favor and Mr. Lay and Mr. McNeil voting against. Motion passed 6-2.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. McNeil, seconded by Ms. Rubio. A roll call vote was conducted by Secretary McNeil with Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Woodall, and Ms. Wooden voting in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

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Adjournment:

The Board adjourned at 12:34 pm CDST

Respectfully Submitted:

Jimmie Lay, Chairman

Chris McNeil, Board Secretary