Alabama Professional Bail Bonding Board
400 South Union Street, Suite 340
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
334-851-8919

MINUTES
Board Meeting
September 11, 2026

The Board met in a regularly called meeting on Friday, September 11, 2026, at its offices located at 400 South Union Street, in Montgomery, Alabama, to conduct business. Board members present were Mr. Jimmie Lay (Board Chair), Ms. Jennifer Rubio (Vice Chair), Mr. Chris McNeil (Secretary), Hon. Carla Woodall, Mr. Barry Johnson, Mr. John Vaughn, Hon. Charles Moore and Ms. Alexis Elliott (initially via Zoom, then in person). Mr. Gustavius Maxie joined the meeting in person at 10:06. Also present were Ms. Tara Hetzel (Board Attorney), Patrick McWhorter (Executive Director), Randy Barrows (Administrator), Brenda Holden (License Coordinator) and Karen Harlow (Paralegal). Mr. Wayne Garret, Jr., also attended the meeting.

The special-called meeting was advertised on the Board's website, www.apbb.alabma.gov, and the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.alabama.gov, in accordance with requirements of the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lay called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Mr. John Vaughn offered prayer.

The Board accepted the travel expense forms submitted by the members for attending the meeting. Mr. McWhorter reminded everyone of his email noting that there were outstanding travel expenses, and those would need to be resubmitted to get them paid during this fiscal year.

Mr. McNeil moved with Mr. Vaughn seconding to agree that in the future the Board will remove the notice that meetings are to be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Twelfth Edition. Instead, it is agreed and understood that this will be the regular policy of the Board going forward. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The motion was made by Ms. Rubio, seconded by Mr. Maxie, to approve the agenda. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Maxie made a motion to approve the corrected minutes of the May 28th meeting, carried over from the previous meeting. Mr. Vaughn made the second. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

Ms. Woodall then moved to carry over approval of the August 5th meeting minutes, with Ms. Rubio making the second. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

Executive Director McWhorter reported that staff was getting a handle on everything and currently engaged in license renewals. He introduced Ms. Harlow to the Board and commented on the benefit of having brought her on staff as a retired state employee, and the great help she has been already in getting all the outstanding complaints organized. Mr. McWhorter also introduced Brenda Holden, who has been working on staff of the Board for several years, and Randy Barrows, Board Administrator for Arete. Mr. Barrows reported that as of August 19th, we had 447 professional bondsmen licensed, 100 surety bondsmen, 44 recovery agents, 150 owners' licenses, and 26 apprentice licenses. Members commented that renewing licenses online was new licenses very quickly. Ms. Holden reported that so far 133 applications for renewal have been received and 108 licenses have been issued. Some concern was expressed that there seems to still be some problems with Tyler Technologies' ease of use online.

Mr. McWhorter asked Mr. Barrows to help with the financial report (Provided in detail in the Book of Minutes). Our annual budget is $250,000 and the Board is on track to finish the fiscal year on September 30th with roughly a $144,642 balance. Ms. Woodall raised the question about $1,050 line in the revenue category. It was later explained that this comes from fees charged for late filings. Mr. McWhorter told the Board that this would be investigated and if necessary, a new code would be established to better explain what the item is.

Ms. Woodall moved to carry over the Executive Director's Report and the Financial Report, seconded by Judge Moore. Voting in favor of the motion were Lay, Rubio, McNeil, Woodall, Moore, Elliott, Johnson, Maxie and Vaughn. Passed unanimously. (Full Financial Report available in the Book of Minutes)

INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE LICENSE RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Rubio moved, and Ms. Elliott seconded a motion to approve all licenses issued. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

Mr. Wayne Garrett of Talladega, Alabama, was called on to speak to the Board to explain and answer questions regarding his pardon. After consideration, Ms. Woodall moved and Judge Moore seconded the motion to approve Mr. Garrett's license. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

The Board then returned to the Executive Director's Report and the Financial Report. Ms. Woodall made the motion that both be approved contingent on creating a new code for late fees, Judge Moore seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

The Investigative Committee reviewed 34 open complaints and identified six cases requiring 90-day suspensions for operating without proper licenses or working unlicensed individuals. IC also addressed several unfounded complaints and cases with no jurisdiction.

Ms. Woodall moved to approve the 90-day suspensions, with Judge Moore making the second. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Elliott. Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee. (BBB 2025-044, BBB 2025-045, BBB 2025-047, BBB 2026-005BR, BBB 2026-009, BBB 2026-062)

Ms. Woodall moved, and Judge Moore seconded, to accept the IC recommendation on those complaints determined to be unfounded. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Elliott. Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee. (BBB 2026-006.01, BBB 2026-006.02, BBB 2026-006.03, BBB 2026-011.01, BBB 2026-011.02, BBB 2026-061.01, BBB 2026-061.02)

Ms. Woodall moved and Judge Moore seconded the motion to approve the IC recommendation on claims which the Board was determined to have no jurisdiction. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Elliott. Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee. (BBB-2025-007, BBB 2026-010.01, BBB 2026-010.02)

Ms. Woodall moved to approve letters of concern. Judge Moore seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Elliott.

Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee. (BBB 2026-016, BBB 2026-055)

Ms. Woodall moved and Judge Moore seconded the motion to approve letter of concern on BBB 2026-051. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Elliott. Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee. Mr. Maxie was also recused due to knowing the respondent.

Ms. Woodall moved Judge Moore seconded the motion to approve the IC's recommendation BBB 2026-053, adding a $500 fine and 1 year suspension. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Elliott. Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee.

IC also recommended that two other cases be administratively closed, one due to proper notification requirements and another that was opened in error. Ms. Woodall moved to approve the recommendation with Judge Moore providing the second. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Ms. Elliott. Mr. Lay, Mr. McNeil, and Mr. Vaughn recused themselves from voting due to their membership on the Investigative Committee. (BBB 2026-001BR, BBB 2026-008)

The Board discussed the issue of late license renewals, particularly licenses that were not renewed for extended periods. The existing penalty structure from 2024 was received, which included tiered consequences for late renewals, but noted that this structure may not fully apply to business licenses that were introduced after the original protocol was established. Ms. Woodall made a motion to rescind letters of concern sent to late license renewals, seconded by Judge Moore. Voting yes was Ms. Woodall and Judge Moore; voting no was Ms. Elliott, Ms. Rubio, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Maxie. Motion failed.

Ms. Elliott moved to keep 2024 business license requirements and to ratify previous letters sent in August 2026, adding clarification on business licenses, maintaining lists, and reporting back to the Board. Mr. Maxie made the second. Voting in favor was Ms. Elliott, Ms. Rubio, Mr. Maxie, and Mr. Johnson. Voting no was Ms. Woodall and Judge Moore. Motion carried. (BBB 2026-013BR, BBB 2026-014BR, BBB 2026-015BR, BBB 2026-017BR, BBB 2026-018BR, BBB 2026-019BR, BBB 2026-020BR, BBB 2026-021BR, BBB 2026-022BR, BBB 2026-023BR, BBB 2026-024BR, BBB 2026-025BR, BBB 2026-026BR, BBB 2026-027BR, BBB 2026-028BR, BBB 2026-029BR, BBB 2026-030BR, BBB 2026-031BR, BBB 2026-032BR, BBB 2026-033BR, BBB 2026-034BR, BBB 2026-035BR, BBB 2026-036BR, BBB 2026-037BR, BBB 2026-038BR, BBB 2026-039BR, BBB 2026-040BR, BBB 2026-041BR, BBB 2026-042BR, BBB 2026-043BR, BBB 2026-044BR, BBB 2026-045BR, BBB 2026-046BR, BBB 2026-047BR, BBB 2026-048BR, BBB 2026-049BR, BBB 2026-050BR)

NEW BUSINESS

There being no old business, the Board discussed an email from Toria Lee regarding her application to become a CEU provider. It was agreed to look at what she could provide; no further action taken.

Mr. McWhorter then introduced former Talladega Police Chief Diann Thomas who is being discussed for hiring by the Board as a retired state employee investigator. Chief Thomas presented her extensive 35-year law enforcement background, including leadership roles in investigations and as Chief of Police.

The Board After discussion among the members, Mr. McWhorter was called into the meeting and answered several questions posed by Board members regarding his proposal. He was then excused.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Rubio/Chairman Lay, seconded by Mr. Maxie to accept the proposal for management services submitted by Arete Impact Management LLC. Voting in favor of the motion was Mr. Lay, Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Elliott, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie and Mr. Vaughn. Ms. Woodall voted no. Final vote 8-1 in favor. Motion passed.

Chairman Jimmie Lay left the meeting at 12:20 p.m. Ms. Woodall left the meeting at 12:30 p.m., but shortly after rejoined via Zoom.

The Board directed Mr. McWhorter to develop a method whereby the Board could know how to access all the files of the Board; passwords to websites, etc.

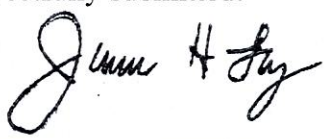
The Board then considered the hiring of Chief Thomas. After a short discussion, Mr. McNeil made a motion to hire Chief Thomas as investigator for the Board. Mr. Maxie seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Judge Moore, Ms. Woodall (who had rejoined via Zoom), Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie, Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Elliott. Unanimous.

Finally, the Board had a brief discussion of a case involving Jeannette Smith, who had pleaded guilty to a Class A misdemeanor and surrendered her license. No determination was made as to her specific situation, but the Board agreed to the need to develop clearer guidelines for cases involving pretrial diversion programs, and Judge Moore promised to draft and distribute his thoughts on the issue.

Vice Chair Rubio announced the next regular scheduled meeting to be November 9, 2026. Judge Moore said that he might have a problem with that date due to a scheduling conflict with his court docket. He thought he would be able to work it out.

Ms. Elliotte made a motion to adjourn at 12:50 p.m., seconded by Judge Moore. Voting in favor of the motion was Ms. Rubio, Mr. McNeil, Ms. Woodall, Judge Moore, Ms. Elliott, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Maxie and Mr. Vaughn. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted:



Jimmie Lay, Chairman