

AGENDA
South Carolina Board of Cosmetology
Emergency Board Meeting –Conference Call
4:00 p.m., March 7, 2017
Synergy Business Park
Kingstree Building
110 Centerview Drive, Conference Room 204
Columbia, South Carolina 29210

1. Meeting Called to Order

- a. Public notice of this meeting was properly posted at the S. C. Board of Cosmetology office, Synergy Business Park, Kingstree Building and provided to all requesting persons, organizations, and news media in compliance with Section 30-4-80 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Introduction of Board Members and All Other Persons Attending

Chairperson Melanie Thompson called the meeting of the S.C. Board of Cosmetology to order. Other Board members participating in the meeting included:

- ❖ Laquita Clark-Horton
- ❖ Eddie Jones
- ❖ Selena Brown
- ❖ Stephanie Nye

Staff members present included: Mary League, Advice Counsel; Theresa Richardson, Administrator; Darra Coleman, Chief Advice Counsel; Dean Grigg, Deputy Director of Board Services; Robbie Boland

All Other Persons Attending: Kitty Linder, Court Reporter; V. Davis

2. Discussion of Renewal Process

Chairperson Thompson stated that on two (2) years ago for renewals, there was an influx of licensees who waited until the last minute. There were over 10,000 calls to the board, where 2,000 were dropped because the system could not handle it. The deadline is Friday, March 10th. Ms. Coleman and Ms. League contacted Chairperson Thompson on this morning to submit the problem, as it is an issue. The change that has caused this problem and the number of licensees who have already renewed will be needed to fill in the blanks. Ms. Coleman needed the Board to state on the record that there are exigent circumstances that necessitated an emergency meeting, pursuant to 30-4-80, without the 24 hour notice period that is needed. We are in the renewal period with a deadline of Friday. Complaints are coming in from licensees who are attempting to renew, indicating they were trying to get through, so it was requested that the Board convene this emergency meeting to give guidance to staff on the designated deadline.

A motion was made by Ms. Clark-Horton that exigent circumstances existed that warranted the convening of this emergency meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown and it carried.

Ms. Coleman stated that two (2) potential sources of difficulty were found with online renewals.

- 1.) If the licensee did not have CE verification, they would automatically be kicked out of the online process.
- 2.) If the licensee did not have a valid e-mail online with the agency, they could not retrieve their password. Passwords were not provided on renewal notices on this year, which was a reflection of tightened security, pursuant to recognition by the Department of Administration and our agency that we needed to adopt more robust security measures across the board. It did not only affect the Board of Cosmetology.

After reviewing communication sent out by Ms. Richardson, it was seen that she was alerting licensees about the process of updating their passwords since December. Staff has gone to great lengths to avoid what we are encountering now.

There is a high volume of licensees who are trying to renew this week. There are four (4) questions that Chairperson Thompson identified and wanted answered in this meeting:

- 1.) Who made the decision to exclude the password mailed out to licensees on the renewal notice and on what basis? This was already answered by Ms. Coleman.
- 2.) Why wasn't the Board advised on this decision, since it is a departure from prior protocol? The Board members were copied in the communication from Ms. Richardson, although it was not identified explicitly.
- 3.) How many licensees have successfully renewed already? According to Matt Faile (LLR – IT), as of 1:04 p.m. today, (RC, NT, ES, and Instructors) 14,351 online renewals have successfully been completed for 2017. This number consists of Registered Cosmetologists, Nail Technicians, Estheticians, and Instructors of those professions. There are 16,187 licensees that are still available to renew via paper applications or online. With the last renewal cycle in 2015, the total number of licensees that renewed online was 20,926.
- 4.) How many licensees still need to renew? There are 16,187 licensees that are “active in renewal”.

The current issue is that we still have a considerable pool of candidates with approximately 3 days left to renew their license. According to the statute and regulations, all existing licenses will expire at the end of the cycle designated by the Board. The Board has the authority to designate a different deadline.

Mr. Grigg stated that staff has been working on the issue. He mentioned the 10,000 phone calls and the 2,000 calls that were dropped. The calls come in and wait in the queue. Spirit Communications, LLR's telephone provider, set the number of phone calls that could stay in the queue. They have been contacted to double the number that could stay in the queue to 32 calls. More people will now be able to stay on hold. Four (4) additional staff members from another part of the agency have been pulled to help the Board of Cosmetology. The agency is limited in what can be stated on what the Department of Administration has required of LLR. A verification process has been designed to identify persons and give them their passwords via telephone by answering 3 out of 4 basic questions to speed up the process.

Chairperson Thompson mentioned other issues that included licensees not receiving verification of their hours from USC, which was an issue with the CE providers. Another issue was that there are procrastinators. Can there be a breakdown between all issues involved? Ms. Coleman stated that she was unsure if it could be broken down that way. It is impossible to discern it from that. The paper applications are very heavy right now, possibly 300-400. The Board never wants to penalize the responsible licensees who are trying to do what they're supposed to do. One scenario that needs to be addressed is continuing education providers and another scenario is those who had computer issues. Chairperson Thompson does not want this to be an ongoing cycle for every renewal. This date has been in place since 1934. Ms. Brown stated that this is a circumstance that has not occurred before and staff is overwhelmed, as well as users with it not working properly. If a licensee has proof that they have sent their information after being seen working by an inspector, they will not be fined or have a citation written.

A motion was made by Ms. Selena Brown to extend the deadline for renewals to March 24, 2017, and it was seconded by Ms. Clark-Horton. The motion carried.

A report will be provided on Monday, as far as the number left to renew. The agency director of LLR made this a priority for everyone on today, as she took an interest to resolve the concerns of the licensees. Chairperson Thompson asked Ms. Coleman to thank the director on behalf of the board.

A motion was made by Mr. Jones to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Ms. Clark-Horton. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.