



Mississippi State Board of Optometry  
Regular Scheduled Meeting  
October 2, 2025  
5 Old River Place, Suite 105, Jackson, MS 39202

MINUTES

In accordance with MCA § 25-41-11

NOTE: New Board Member training was conducted at 2:00 PM, immediately preceding the meeting. Dr. Dax Eckard, Dr. Kimberly Ragan, Leyser Hayes, and Yvonne Laird were in attendance.

I. Call to Order

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry regular scheduled meeting was called to order by Board President, Kimberly Ragan, O.D. at 3:11 PM on Thursday, October 2, 2025.

II. Roll Call

Cynthia Brown called the roll indicating the following members present:

Lori Blackmer, O.D.	Dax Eckard, O.D.
Anna Middleton, O.D.	Hilary Parrish, O.D.
Kimberly Ragan, O.D.	

A quorum was present for voting purposes.

Board representatives present:

Cynthia Brown, Administrative Assistant  
Leyser Hayes, Special Assistant Attorney General/Counsel for the Board  
Yvonne Laird, Executive Director

Members of the Public Present:

Noel Morgan – Simmons Consulting

III. Approval of the Agenda

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard to approve the agenda as presented. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

IV. Financial Status Report

The financial report for FY2025 year ending June 30, 2025, reflects the following:

FY2025 Budget	\$257,659.00
Revenue	\$162,971.68
Expenditures	\$204,360.36

The financial report for FY2026 year-to-date ending August 31, 2025, reflects the following:

FY2025 Budget	\$256,272.00
Revenue	\$ 2,968.00
Expenditures	\$ 16,307.47
Balance in Clearing Account	\$304,876.96

Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton that the financial report be accepted, pending audit. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

V. Hearing / Executive Session / Report of Counsel [MCA § 25-41-7(4)(b)(d)]

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Parrish moved to go into closed session to determine whether as Executive Session is needed. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Dr. Middleton moved, seconded by Dr. Parrish, that the Board had reason under Miss. Code Ann. §25-41-7 (4)(b) and (d), as amended, to go into Executive Session namely investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct or violations of law with respect to prospective litigation or issuance of an appealable order when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to come out of Executive Session. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Executive Director Yvonne Laird announced actions taken during Executive Session, as follows:

A. 02-03-24

Counsel advised that the Board of Nursing had entered into a Consent Agreement. No further action required by MSBO. This case will be closed upon receipt of the executed Stipulation and Consent Agreement between the respondent and the Board of Nursing.

B. 2025-817-05

Upon recommendation by the Board Investigator, Dr. Blackmer, Dr. Parrish moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard that the complainant and the respondent be notified that there were no violations of law or rules. Case will be closed. Dr. Blackmer will make appropriate recommendations to the optometrist in response to the complainant. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

C. 2025-434-06

Upon recommendation by the Board Investigator, Dr. Blackmer, Dr. Parrish moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard that the complainant and the respondent be notified that there were no violations of law or rules. Case will be closed. The Executive Director will prepare a letter to respondent that to avoid conflict in the future the attending optometrist be aware of contract provisions and obligations. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

D. 2025-677-07

Upon the recommendation by the Board Investigator, Dr. Middleton, Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard that the complainant and the respondent be notified that there were no violations of law or rules. Case will be closed pending resolution of the investigator and the respondent after consultation with the Board attorney. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

VI. Approval of the Minutes

A. Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard to approve the Regular Scheduled Board Meeting Minutes of July 12, 2025. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to approve the Special Called Meeting Minutes of July 24, 2025, with one amendment. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

VII. Officers and Committee Reports

A. President's Report

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard to establish Board protocol for continuing education submittals, as follows:

1. Continuing Education course is submitted to the Board Office for compliance review.
2. Continuing Education course is forwarded to the Board Secretary for review and clearance.
3. The Board Office notifies the Continuing Education course provider, upon receipt of email from the Board Secretary, that the course has been "cleared" by the Board representative.
4. Continuing Education course is placed on the agenda for the next regular scheduled meeting for full Board approval.

The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Committee Reports

1. Continuing Education

a. Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard to approve the continuing education courses, as follows:

- 1) MOA Southern Society #7 – 5/15/2025 (Topic – The Oxervate Experience);
- 2) MOA Southern Society #8 – 5/20/2/2055 (Topic – Water Innovations)
- 3) MOA Southern Society #7 – 1-hour non-COPE CE – 8/28/2025 (Topic – INFUSE – Redefine Possibilities); and
- 4) MOA Northwest Society #8 – 1-hour non-COPE CE – 9/23/2025 (Topic – BioTissue Science Platform and Cam360/Prokera)

The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

- b. Dr. Parrish moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to approve the issuance of four (4) hours continuing education credit in practice management for sitting Board members annually. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

## 2. Examination

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Parrish moved to go into closed session to determine whether as Executive Session is needed. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Dr. Middleton moved, seconded by Dr. Parrish, that the Board had reason under Miss. Code Ann. §25-41-7 (4)(d) to go into Executive Session namely to transact business and discussion concerning the preparation of tests for admission to practice in recognized profession. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to come out of Executive Session. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

### RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Executive Director Yvonne Laird announced actions taken during Executive Session, as follows:

- a. YAG Board Test – Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to modify the YAG examination to reflect a total of 100 points. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

### RETURN TO AGENDA

- b. PEP Testing – Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to continue the January PEP certification examination with alternate locations for completion of the practical. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
  - c. Renewal Fee for PEP Certification  
Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to implement the proposed rule under MSBO Rules and Regulations, Rule 3.1 *Licensure and Renewal* to reflect an annual PEP Certification renewal fee of \$100.00 upon receipt of the Resolution of Acceptance from the Occupational Licensing Review Board (OLRC). The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.
- ## 3. Legislation
- MOA has advised that there is no pending legislation related to MCA § 73-19 *et seq.* However, MOA did indicate “that they are working on getting the window tint statute updated to include Optometrists as authorized to sign the letter.” That is not in the optometry statute, but it will affect optometrists. The statute is MS Code 63-7-59 Subsection 4.  
<https://law.justia.com/codes/mississippi/title-63/chapter-7/general-provisions/section-63-7-59/>

In 2010, the language said, "by a licensed physician in this state". This was interpreted to include optometrists.

In 2012, the language changed to "by a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of Mississippi". It looks like the Department of Public Safety is now actually following specifically what the code says."

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Website Analysis

Cynthia Brown presented the website analysis for the following:

1. July 1 through July 31, 2025: 852 views to the MSBO website consisting of 186 new viewers and a total of 237 total users;
2. August 1 through August 31, 2025: 661 views to the MSBO website consisting of 173 new viewers and a total of 225 total users;
3. September 1 through September 3, 2025, which reflected 772 views to the MSBO website consisting of 220 new viewers and a total of 274 total users.

No board action required.

B. Motion History Log

A copy of the motion history log was distributed for informational purposes as a referral resource for board actions as they are approved in the minutes. No board action required.

C. Discussion Topics from Meeting with John Newsom (TylerTech)

A meeting was held with Mr. Newsom to discuss modifications to the existing payment processor to accommodate necessary changes to include:

- a. CEU clearance prior to renewal;
- b. adding optometry school and graduation date;
- c. confirmation of email addresses; and
- b. removing the question in the CE renewal portal allowing for the licensee to check for an exemption.

After discussion, Dr. Middleton moved with a second by Dr. Blackmer to:

- a. authorize Yvonne Laird to execute the Statement of Work between TylerTech and MSBO not to exceed \$7,500.00; and
- b. place a hold on the existing Request for Bids for a system-wide modification.

The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

1. Continuing Education Entries in the Renewal Portal

Cynthia Brown demonstrated the system flaw which allows for renewal without meeting the requirements for renewal. Dr. Eckard moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to instruct TylerTech to correct this as soon as possible without additional cost to the Board (other than what was previously authorized above). The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

XI. Old Business

No old business was introduced to the Board.

X. New Business

A. 2026 Regular Schedule Board Meetings

Dr. Ragan announced the tentative 2026 regular meeting schedule, as follows:

1. Saturday, January 10, 2026, 12:00 PM
2. Saturday, April 11, 2026, 9:00 AM
3. Saturday, July 11, 1026, 12:00 PM
4. Thursday, October 8, 2026, 3:00 PM



This information will be posted to the website as well as to DFA Transparency. Special meetings will be held as required not to exceed a total of ten (10) meetings per calendar year.

B. Annual Report

Dr. Eckard moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to authorize signatures and submittal to the Governor's Office and the MS Library Commission as required by MCA §§ 25-51-1 and 27-101-1. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Scope of Practice – Photobiomodulation (PBM)

This matter was tabled after discussion, and upon advice of legal counsel, it was recommended that MOA be contacted to consider requesting a declaratory opinion on whether photobiomodulation (PBM) is within the scope of practice as provided by MCA §73-19-1. Photobiomodulation, also known as low-level laser therapy (LLLT), induces cell proliferation and enhances stem cell differentiation as a non-invasive method that contributes to pain relief and reduces inflammation, parallel to the enhanced healing and tissue repair processes. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried. Dr. Ragan also request that MOA be notified to request a demonstration of the equipment used in photobiomodulation at the January 10, 2026 meeting.

D. Preceptor Application

Dr. Eckard moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish to approve the preceptor application for Chelsea M. McKnight, OD, #927-PY, Tupelo, effective October 2, 2025. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

E. Request for Continuing Education Hardship Waiver

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to deny a hardship waiver for licensee # 561 and #649 due to extenuating circumstances as provided by Rule 4.1.B.10 as the following requirements were not met:

Third party verification supporting your request, including but not limited to doctor's note, police report, military orders, court correspondence, etc. in the following categories:

1. severe personal illness or injury;
2. death or serious injury of a close family member;
3. significant trauma from being a victim of crime;
4. serious personal disruption like a house fire;
5. emergency military orders; and
6. jury duty.

The request must be made in writing and shall include an explanation of how you have taken steps to manage the situation or how you plan to manage your circumstances going forward. The exemption request also requires full Board approval at the next regular scheduled meeting after receipt of the request. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

F. Reinstatement of Licensee from Retired Status

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard to approve the reinstatement of licensee #1007 as all requirements for reinstatement had been met. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

G. Newsletter Topics

President Ragan requested that any recommendation for topics for the November Newsletter be forwarded to Cynthia Brown no later than November 3, 2025. No further action required.

H. Website Forms (U.S.Next)

In an effort to streamline board operations, Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Middleton to authorize approval of a Statement of Work to provide that forms completed online could be forwarded directly to MSBO upon completion. The maximum authorized amount cannot exceed \$5,500. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

I. FAQ Addition

Dr. Middleton moved, with a second by Dr. Eckard to approve the addition to the FAQs to include that the AED courses required by PEP certified optometrist may be an add-on to a CPR course. No additional CE credit will be available for AED course completion. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

XI. Approval of Expenses

Dr. Blackmer moved, with a second by Dr. Parrish, to approve the expenses of the Board for the period July 12, 2025, through October 2, 2025, as previously cleared for payment by Dr. Regan and Dr. Parrish. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

XII. Adjournment

Dr. Parrish moved, with a second by Dr. Blackmer to adjourn the meeting at 5:43 p.m. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY WILL BE HELD AT 5 OLD RIVER PLACE, SUITE 105, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026, AT 12:00 NOON.**

APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly Ragan, O.D., Board President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hilary Parrish O.D., Board Secretary

Distributed for Board President & Secretary's Review: Friday, October 3, 2025

Distributed to Board Members: Friday, October 10, 2025



# **PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Mississippi  
State Board of Optometry**

**Regular Scheduled  
Board Meeting**

**Thursday  
October 2, 2025  
3:00 PM**

**5 Old River Place, Suite 105  
Jackson, Mississippi**

Posted pursuant to *Miss. Code Ann.* §25-41-5