



ALABAMA PRIVATE INVESTIGATION BOARD (APIB)

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Alabama Private Investigator Regulatory Board (APIB)

Minutes of Meeting

July 10, 2024

With proper and required notice provided to the Alabama Secretary of State and published on the Alabama Secretary of State's website, a meeting of the Alabama Private Investigator Regulatory Board was held on July 10, 2024, at 60 Commerce Street, Suite 1440, Montgomery AL.

Present were Chairman Charles Knight, Vice-Chairman Jim Casteel, Jeff Hammock, and Darrel Tatum. Also attending are Attorney Albritton, Will Parker, Claire Austin. Scott Hawk was present during the meeting via conference call. The meeting was called to order at 1030 a.m. by Chairman Charles Knight with a quorum of board members present. Upon opening the meeting, a prayer by Charles Knight.

Upon review of the agenda, a motion to approve the agenda was made by Jeff Hammock and seconded by Jim Casteel.

Upon review of the minutes, a motion to waive the reading of the minutes was made by Jim Casteel and seconded by Darrel Tatum. Jeff Hammock made an additional motion to approve the minutes and seconded by Darrel Tatum.

Chairman Charles Knight addressed the board with regards to the administrative hearing conducted last month. Attorney Albritton was recognized and thanked for the leadership and guidance provided during the process. Also discussed was August being the annual calendar end date of the 5-year contract with The Austin Group.

Claire Austin discussed the administrative hearing and provided the board with expected outcomes once the Administrative Judge has completed the final order. Jim Casteel and Jeff Hammock were assigned to the investigative committee and met prior to the board meeting to review pending complaints. The financial expenditures for the administrative hearing are still being calculated. The invoice for the court reporter was \$2,800.00. With respect to current licensing applications and issuances, there are currently 65 Agency licenses and 12 applications for apprenticeship licenses. Only 3 of the 12 have passed the test. Discussion continued regarding a standardization of education or classes for the apprenticeship and sponsorship program. The classes will be made available upstairs from the boardroom and will be offered to all current investigators licensed by APIB. Ethical and other housekeeping issues derived from a commonality of earlier complaints will be covered during the CLE. APIA will be tasked with the educational part of the model with APIB sending the notices and providing the classroom. Will Parker informed the board that the 2025 budget has been completed.

Attorney Ben Albritton discussed several pending matters regarding complaints.

1. Case number C202310272023; In the matter of Eugene Hearing; APIB license number 313.
2. The board accepted the results from a consent hearing where additional CLE's will be required from the licensee in lieu of the complaint being dismissed.
3. The board agreed to accept a consent order requiring the licensee to refund monies charged to a client and attend additional CLE's in lieu of the complaint being dismissed.
4. The board approved to initiate investigative actions by the executive director and the investigative committee regarding a complaint against licensee number 226. A roll call vote was taken with each attending board member voting yes to the ratification. No opposing vote offered.

Regarding reciprocity with Florida, Jim Casteel has been in contact with the licensing counterparts in that state. From his conversations, he believes achieving reciprocity is gaining forward momentum. The structured agreement is still being negotiated. Due to the detailed and varied licensing structures of Florida, some licenses offered by Florida will not be covered by reciprocity.

Charles Knight discussed the current contract between APIB and the Austin Group. In August, consideration can be made to increase the fees paid to The Austin Group. Currently, a 5% increase is available for award to The Austin Group. At present, the monthly fee for their work is \$7,000.00. A 5% increase will be approximately \$4,200.00 annually or \$350.00 monthly. Upon consideration, a motion to increase the annual amount paid to the Austin Group to \$88,200.00 was made by Jim Casteel and seconded by Darrel Tatum. Upon consideration, the motion was passed unanimously.

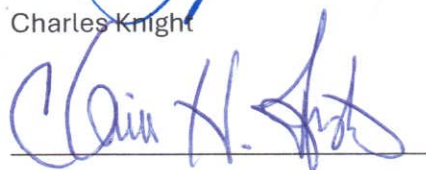
Scott Hawk discussed the current pay increases provided by the indigent defense fund to lawyers. He will begin the work to seek a pay increase for appointed investigators. He feels the association should take an active role in seeking the increase.

With no other business, a motion to adjourn was made by Jeff Hammock at 12:10 p.m. and seconded by Jim Casteel. Without objection, the board ended the meeting.

Approved



Charles Knight



Claire H. Austin