

Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission  
550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1236  
Anchorage AK 99501  
ADOPTED MINUTES  
February 2-3, 2023  
Via Zoom

**Call to Order:** Lem Wheelles called the meeting to order at 8:05a.m. There were 7 members present so there was a quorum. Deborah Riddle joined the meeting at approximately 8:10am.

**Members Present:** Secretary Jamie Burgess, Chair Lem Wheelles, Vice-Chair Adam Reid, Kim Bergey, Emma Melkerson, Mary Carlson, Deborah Riddle (late) and Jennifer Stafford. Melody Mann, PTPC Executive Director was also present.

**Members Absent:** Danette Peterson.

**Agenda Approval:** Kim Bergey moved and Adam Reid seconded to approve the agenda as presented. No discussion or amendments were proposed. The agenda was unanimously approved. Lem noted some items may be taken out of order.

**Introductions/Updates from Communities:** All members briefly re-introduced themselves, their role in education and shared something exciting/interesting from their area.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Approval of Minutes:** It was moved by Emma Melkerson and seconded by Kim Bergey to approve the minutes of the October 6-7, 2022 meeting. Corrections were noted. The motion passed to adopt the amended minutes. Kim Bergey moved and Deborah Riddle seconded to approve the minutes of the December 15-16, 2022 meeting. Corrections were noted. The motion passed to adopt the amended minutes. Deborah Riddle moved and Kim Bergey seconded to adopt the minutes of the January 13, 2023 meetings. Minor corrections were noted. The motion passed to adopt the amended minutes.

**Executive Director's Reports:** Melody Mann delivered her reports in the following areas.

Activity Report:

Ms. Mann referred to her submitted report. She mentioned two additional complaints had been submitted. There has been much discussion with complainants regarding contractual obligations. She additionally has counseled potential complainants to ensure that local procedures and processes have been fully followed prior to filing any complaint. No additional hearing requests have been received. Background checks – Melody noted an increase in background check requests. Most of the crimes that are showing up are consistently low level in nature and do not bar an individual from receiving a certificate. She discussed how Washington reviews new actions monthly from the NASDTEC clearinghouse and compares that to their list of current certificate holders, and contacts the state to determine if they will open their own investigation against that individual.

She reviewed the recent presentations she has made and conferences scheduled to attend. She reviewed members who were being confirmed or who are interested in reappointment. She also noted she is working with APEI regarding the possibility of NASDTEC presenters at local meetings.

**ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING:** At 9am, Susan Mitchell, Judge Swanson, Lester McCormick and paralegal Olivia Rolfe joined the meeting. In the matter of Lester McCormick OAH #22-0370PTP, PTPC Case #21-25, an administrative hearing, Administrative Law Judge Danika Swanson presiding, was held. Judge Swanson gave a brief overview of the process prior to the hearing. Susan Mitchell is attorney for the Executive Director, and Mr. McCormick represented himself.

The meeting paused for a lunch break at 12:45p and resumed at 1:45p. Roll call was held and 8 commissioners were present.

**DELIBERATIVE SESSION:** Adam Reid moved and Kim Bergey seconded to go into deliberative session as permitted by AS 44.62.310(d) solely to consider a decision on the administrative hearing referenced above. The motion passed unanimously. The commission moved into deliberative session at 5:32 pm. Judge Swanson was in the deliberative session.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03pm in deliberative session.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lem Wheelles at 8:01am in executive session. Roll call was taken. 8 members were present with Danette Peterson absent. A quorum was established.

**It was moved by Kim Bergey and seconded by Emma Melkerson to move out of executive session at 8:03am. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Executive Director's Reports, continued:**

Financial Report: Melody reviewed the financial report. She noted that funding for three in-person meetings has been approved. There will be an increase in services due to increased legal expenses with hearings, etc. She noted the number of mediated settlements and hearings are higher than usual.

Case Report: The commission was provided a summary of the cases the PTPC office has investigated since the last meeting. Breach of contract is the most common complaint. Discussion was held around potential reasons why the number of breach of contract cases has increased recently.

#### **Discussion Items**

Chair Lem Wheelles discussed the issue of scheduling hearings and administrative reviews, and the time burden on commission members. Having a set end time for a hearing day was expressed as desirable, as well as the possibility of a third day for meetings was discussed.

Chair Wheelles also discussed the possibility of a statement to the legislature regarding issues of concern. He shared that there were a lot of concerns around the number breach of contract cases, as well as educators becoming burned out, combined with the budget uncertainty that he thought it might

behoove the Commission to inform the legislature. It was also shared that there may be gaps in administrative preparation programs in the university regarding administrative competence. Support was stated for Melody if she needed to testify in front of a committee as a result of any communication from the commission.

**DELIBERATIVE SESSION:** Kim Bergey moved and Jennifer Stafford seconded to go into deliberative session as permitted by AS 44.62.310(d) solely to consider a decision on the administrative hearing referenced above. The motion passed unanimously. The commission moved into deliberative session at 8:54am.

**It was moved by Kim Bergey and seconded by Deborah Riddle to move out of deliberative session at 11:46am. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **Action Items - Administrative Hearing**

OAH #22-0370PTP, PTPC Case 21-25: *The Commission orders the revocation of the Professional Teaching and Administrative Certificates of Lester W. McCormick.*

Moved: Kim Bergey

Second: Emma Melkerson

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Jamie Burgess

Emma Melkerson

Kim Bergey

Mary Carlson

Deb Riddle

Jennifer Stafford

NAY

ABSENT – Danette Peterson

Motion passed unanimously 8-0.

**EXECUTIVE/DELIBERATIVE SESSION:** Deborah Riddle moved and Jamie Burgess seconded to go into executive session as permitted by AS 44.62.310(d) to consider cases before the PTPC. The motion passed unanimously. The commission moved into executive session at 11:53am.

The meeting paused for a lunch break in executive session at 11:55am. The meeting resumed in executive session at 12:33 pm.

**It was moved by Kim Bergey and seconded by Emma Melkerson to move out of deliberative session at 2:40pm. The motion passed unanimously.**

**DEED Report** – Sondra Meredith joined the meeting at 2:40pm and shared some information regarding the Alaska Reads Act Educator Qualifications. New endorsements that will appear on educator

certificates were presented along with their criteria. A discussion was held about various ways teachers can meet the requirements. Clarification was made that these requirements will be for EL teachers, special education teachers and administrators who work with or oversee students in K-3. This will also apply to homeschooling teachers who work with children in K-3.

Sondra also discussed emergency certificates – individuals who apply for a renewal will need to show progress towards becoming regularly certified, such as enrollment in a teacher preparation program, completion of required exams, etc. She also discussed that these individuals must also pass the fingerprint background check, etc. so the safety controls are still in place the same as for regularly certified teachers.

Sondra discussed the SB20 regulations will be before the State Board in March for signature – this will allow teachers who are certified in another state with at least two years of experience to receive an Alaska Certificate with the testing requirements waived.

**Lem Wheelles noted that Jamie Burgess left the meeting at 3:15pm.**

#### **Action Items – PTPC Cases**

PTPC Case 22-16: *The Commission accepted the one-year suspension effective January 7, 2022 of the Special Services Certificate of Molly K. Vaughan.*

Moved: Adam Reid      Second: Kim Bergey

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Kim Bergey

Mary Carlson

Deb Riddle

Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 22-24: *The Commission rejected the stipulated agreement and recommends a one-year suspension.*

Moved: Emma Melkerson      Second: Jennifer Stafford

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Kim Bergey

Mary Carlson  
Deb Riddle  
Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 23-02: *The Commission accepted the warning of the Limited Type M Teaching Certificate of an educator.*

Moved: Kim Bergey

Second: Deborah Riddle

AYE  
Lem Wheelles  
Adam Reid  
Emma Melkerson  
Kim Bergey  
Mary Carlson  
Deb Riddle  
Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 23-10: *The Commission accepted the one-year suspension effective September 26, 2022 of the Special Services Certificate of Alyse M. Smith.*

Moved: Kim Bergey

Second: Emma Melkerson

AYE  
Lem Wheelles  
Adam Reid  
Emma Melkerson  
Kim Bergey  
Mary Carlson  
Deb Riddle  
Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 23-16: *The Commission accepted the one year suspension effective September 26, 2022 of the Initial Teaching Certificate of Billy D. McAfee.*

Moved: Adam Reid

Second: Deborah Riddle

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Kim Bergey

Mary Carlson

Deb Riddle

Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 23-17: *The Commission rejected the stipulation agreement and dismissed the case.*

Moved: Kim Bergey

Second: Mary Carlson

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Kim Bergey

Mary Carlson

Deb Riddle

Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 23-18: *The Commission accepted the one-year suspension effective October 23, 2022 of the Professional Teaching Certificate of Sonja L. Mills.*

Moved: Deborah Riddle

Second: Jennifer Stafford

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Kim Bergey

Mary Carlson  
Deb Riddle  
Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 23-19: *The Commission rejected the stipulated agreement and recommended a one-year suspension with conditions.*

Moved: Kim Bergey

Second: Adam Reid

AYE  
Lem Wheelles  
Adam Reid  
Emma Melkerson  
Kim Bergey  
Mary Carlson  
Deb Riddle  
Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 22-26: *The Commission accepted the surrender of the Professional Teaching Certificate of Bryan P. Collison.*

Moved: Emma Melkerson

Second: Deborah Riddle

AYE  
Lem Wheelles  
Adam Reid  
Emma Melkerson  
Kim Bergey  
Mary Carlson  
Deb Riddle  
Jennifer Stafford

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

**Information Items - None**

**Commission Comments:** Kim Bergey made a comment that they are seeing a trend in a lack of appropriate actions on the part of supervisors and administrators, which is concerning. Lem Wheelles reminded everyone that the April meeting will be in person in Anchorage, and Melody reviewed the process for travel arrangements.

**Adjournment:** Emma Melkerson moved and Kim Bergey seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved. Lem Wheelles adjourned the meeting at 3:39 pm.

Submitted by,

Jamie Burgess