

**GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY**  
**Board Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2024 \* 10:00 a.m.**  
**Conference Call/Webex**

The Georgia State Board of Optometry met via teleconference/Webex on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

**Please Note:** A committee of the Board met at 9:00 a.m., prior to the start of today’s scheduled full Board meeting, to conduct an Investigative Interview. The following members and staff were present at the committee meeting. The members will report their recommendations to the full Board during the Executive Session portion of the meeting to be conducted later today.

**Investigative Interview Conducted:** 9:00 a.m.

- OPT240016

**Board Members Present:**

Jeffrey Hackleman, O.D.  
Ellen Fitzgerald, O.D.

**Administrative Staff Present:**

Amanda Allen, Executive Director  
Jalaina Fuller, Licensing Supervisor  
Linsey Joiner, Board Support Specialist

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**Full Board Meeting - 10:00 a.m.**

**Board Members Present:**

Robert “Bob” McCullough, O.D., President  
Paul Ajamian, O.D., Vice-President  
Jeffrey Hackleman, O.D.  
Jeanne Perrine, O.D.  
Ellen Fitzgerald, O.D.  
B. Thassanee Gutter-Parker – Consumer Member

**Administrative Staff Present:**

Amanda Allen, Executive Director  
Jalaina Fuller, Licensing Supervisor  
Linsey Joiner, Board Support Specialist  
Anna Wright, Licensing Analyst

**Visitors Present:**

Becca Hallum

**Attorney General’s Office**

Anna Scartz, AAG

**Dr. Bob McCullough, President, established a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.**

**Agenda:** Approved with additional late items

- Recognition for being nominated by the Georgia Lions Lighthouse - Dr. Perrine
- Board Certification Title – Dr. Ajamian (Exec. Session)
- Virtual Eye Exam – Dr. McCullough (Exec. Session)

**Meeting Minutes:**

- August 21, 2024 CC Board Meeting

**Recommendation:**

Approve as presented

**Dr. Fitzgerald moved, Dr. Ajamian seconded, and the Board voted to approve the August 21, 2024 Conference Call Board meeting minutes as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Application Ratify List:** Licenses Issued between: 8/20/2024 - 11/8/2024

license No	Licensee
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OPT003611	Melissa Kay Frost
OPT003612	Kylea Carver McCay
OPT003613	Christine Dorothy Hajduk
OPT003614	Linsey Alane Bergstrom
OPT003615	Joshua Eric Crowder
OPT003616	Ronald Bruce Sheldon
OPT003617	Terri-Ann Bailey Echague
OPT003618	Kenneth Brooks Gibson, III
OPT003619	Jason Insik Gim
OPT003620	Saima Rafiq Hirani
OPT003621	Dena Ghalib Naaman
OPT003622	John Carl Choate
OPT003623	Katherine Everett
OPT003624	Zachary David Stewart
OPT003625	Thomas Eric Adams
OPT003626	Amy Patel
OPT003627	Annie Khowaja
OPT003628	Peyton Elizabeth Taylor
OPT003629	Victor K Thao
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>19</b>

**Dr. Perrine moved, Dr. Hackleman seconded, and the Board voted to approve the application ratify list as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Dr. Ajamian moved, Dr. Fitzgerald seconded, and the Board voted to enter Executive Session in accordance with O.C.G.A. §43-1-19(h)(2) and 43-1-2(k) to review Applications, review the executive session minutes, receive the Cognizant (Complaints) and Assistant Attorney General reports. Voting in favor of the motion were those present who included McCullough, Hackleman, Fitzgerald, Ajamian, Perrine, and Gutter-Parker.**

**At the conclusion of Executive Session on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, Dr. McCullough declared the meeting back into “open” pursuant to the Open and Public Meeting Act O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq. No votes were obtained during the closed session.**

**Applications:**

- S.D.

**Recommendation:**

Tabled; Pending receipt of additional information

**Dr. Perrine motioned, Dr. Ajamian seconded, and the Board voted to approve the recommendations on all applications as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Public Rules Hearing Conducted: 10:15 a.m.**

Dr. McCullough called the Public Rules Hearing to Order at 10:24 a.m.

*There were no written submissions received during the minimum of thirty days posting of rules for public input and no oral comments were made during today’s public rule hearing of all Board rules presented below.*

**[Note: underlined text is proposed to be added; lined-through text is proposed to be deleted.]**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the proposed adoption is to amend the rule to reflect statutory updates.

• **Rule 430-2-.01. Applications**

- (1) Candidates for licensure in Georgia will be required to pass Parts I, II and III of the National Board examinations, ~~and the~~ Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease (TMOD) examination, and the Georgia State Jurisprudence examination administered by the Georgia State Board of Examiners in Optometry or the National Board of Examiners in Optometry. ~~In addition, after July, 1994, all candidates must have completed all requirements for therapeutic certification before making application to take the Jurisprudence examination.~~
- (2) All candidates' applications ~~must be received 45 days prior to the examination date and~~ must include the following documents:
  - a. ~~Official~~ Official transcripts of all optometric ~~college credits; degree(s).~~
  - b. ~~Certified scores of IAB, NBEO exam and "Treatment and Management of Ocular Disease" (TMOD) examination.~~
  - c. ~~certified scores of Parts I, II, and III of the National Boards.~~ Verification of licensure held in any other state or jurisdiction, currently active or not, if applicable.
  - d. Malpractice Insurance (obtained within thirty days of license issuance).
  - e. Current CPR Certification (obtained within thirty days of license issuance).

**Authority:** O.C.G.A. §§ 43-30-1, 43-30-5, 43-30-7, 43-30-8 and 43-30-9.

• **Rule 430-2-.04 Continuing Education Requirements; Approval of Education Programs**

(1) The Board has pre-approved continuing education (post-graduate) courses from schools and colleges of optometry accredited by the American Council on Optometric Education of the American Optometric Association, and all courses are taught or approved by the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE); ~~a maximum of ten (10) hours per biennium in ophthalmologic related courses taught by the Medical College of Georgia, Emory University, Mercer University and Morehouse College; any courses offered by the American Optometric Association or its regional or state affiliates; the Society of Professional Optometrists of Georgia; the SECO International, LLC, the Council on Optometric Practice Education (C.O.P.E.) and any courses approved by C.O.P.E.; American Board of Optometry and American Academy of Optometry. All preapproved continuing education providers must give notification of their courses on a timely basis to all Georgia Optometrists. Any other individual or organization desiring Board approval of an educational program sponsored by the individual or organization, or particular segments of such a program shall submit a request for approval to the State Board of Optometry, 237 Coliseum Drive, Macon, Georgia 31217, not later than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled date of such program. Each administrator of continuing education credit that gives credit to more than five doctors at any single event shall register all attendees and credits with the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry OE Tracker Program. The Board will act on such request within thirty (30) days after receipt of the request for approval. Any request for Board approval of an educational program must include the following information:~~

(a) The Board preapproves all hours from the following institutions/organizations:

1. Courses offered by the American Optometric Association (AOA) or its regional, state, or local society affiliates.
2. Courses offered by the Society of Professional Optometrists of Georgia; SECO International, LLC; the American Board of Optometry and the American Academy of Optometry.
3. All preapproved continuing education courses should be made available to all Georgia Optometrists.

(b) Any other individual or organization desiring Board approval of an educational program sponsored by the individual or organization, or segments of such a program shall submit the Continuing Education Program Application and Approval Form to the Georgia Board of Optometry not later than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled date of such program or it may not be considered for approval. The form is available on the Board website.

1. Each administrator of continuing education that gives credit to five (5) or more doctors, at any single event, shall register all attendees and credits with the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry - OE Tracker Program.

2. Any request for Board approval of an educational program must include the following information:

(a i) The identity of the sponsor, including:

1 (I) The name and address of the sponsoring individual(s) or organization and a description of any organizational form (e.g., unincorporated association, non-profit corporation, etc.) and the date of organization;

2 (II) The name and address of the principal officers of the sponsor.

~~(b) A description of the program, including:~~

~~1 (ii) With respect to each course for which approval is sought, a description of the program including:~~

~~(i) (I) The name and address of the instructor;~~

~~(ii) (II) The title of the course;~~

~~(iii) (III) A brief biographical sketch of the instructor including a detailed description (curriculum vitae) of his/her academic qualifications and a listing of prior publications including published speeches prior lectures, which relates to the subject matter of the course;~~

~~(iv) (IV) An outline of the proposed content;~~

~~(v) (V) The number of hours for which approval is requested, including a specification of those hours relating to practice management.~~

~~2 (VI) The scheduled time and place of the course;~~

~~3. (VII) A description of the method by which course attendance is to be monitored;~~

~~4. (VIII) The amount of any registration fee, tuition or other charge for attendance, including a statement of any difference in such charges, which depend on membership in the sponsoring organization;~~

~~5. (IX) A sample of any advertisement or announcement intended to be employed concerning promote the program.~~

(e ~~iii~~) Such additional information as the Board may request in the course of its deliberations concerning the application for approval.

(2) The following course content will not satisfy the continuing education requirement:

~~(a) Courses dealing with social and health trends;~~

~~(b a ) Any course unrelated to or not designed to enhance the professional skill of the practitioner; unless approved by the Board.~~

~~(c b) Courses conducted by any individual who is the owner of or is directly connected with any optical wholesale concern unless approved by the Board.~~

~~(d c) CPR.~~

(3) A ~~d~~Doctor of ~~e~~Optometry is expected to ascertain in advance that the courses, which he/she attends, have received prior Board approval, and do not fall within the exceptions of sub-part (2) above.

(4) Board approval of any educational program under this section relates to the program as proposed to the Board. In the event the actual program does not substantively correspond to the proposed program approved by the Board, the board will not give credit for that program under ~~Code Section~~ O.C.G.A. § 43-30-8. The Board will not consider for approval the program as modified.

(5) Minimum hours required. The Board requires a minimum of 36 hours of attendance at Board-approved continuing education programs.

(a) Those licensed in the first year of the biennium will be required to obtain eighteen (18) hours of continuing education. This requirement applies regardless of when you establish practice in Georgia. Licensees in this category shall obtain one (1) hour of CE in Georgia laws and rules. This one (1) hour shall be included in the total eighteen (18) hours required for renewal.

(b) Those licensed in the second year of the biennium are not required to obtain continuing education in that biennium.

(c) All licensees are required to obtain thirty-six (36) hours per biennium beginning in the third calendar year of licensure. Licensees shall obtain one (1) hour of Board-approved continuing education in Georgia laws and rules. This one (1) hour shall be included in the total thirty-six (36) hours required for renewal.

(d) All CE hours on Georgia laws and rules must be prior approved by the Board. A maximum of one (1) hour per biennium will be allowed as continuing education credit in this area. Georgia licensed

optometrists not practicing in Georgia are exempt from acquiring the one (1) hour of CE in Georgia laws and rules.

(e) A maximum of eight (8) hours per biennium will be allowed as continuing education credit for grand rounds. One (1) hour credit will be allowed for every two (2) hours spent in grand rounds.

(f) A maximum of ten (10) hours of continuing education credit will be allowed per biennium for any coursework that is offered by correspondence or electronic medium, which coursework is approved or sponsored by any provider identified in paragraph (1) of this rule.

(g) A maximum of ten (10) hours of continuing education credit will be allowed per biennium for practice management course work, ~~as long as~~ if it is patient care related.

(h) Effective January 1, 2006, of the thirty-six (36) required hours, a minimum of 18 hours of continuing education per biennium is required under the categories of pharmacology and ocular disease. ~~pathology courses as related to ophthalmologic conditions.~~

(6) Reporting and Auditing. The method of reporting and auditing continuing education shall be:

(a) At the time of license renewal, each Optometrist shall certify to the Board that he/she has completed the continuing education required for license renewal. The preferred method of tracking continuing education is through the ARBO OE-Tracker system and the licensee is encouraged to verify that all course work has been posted to OE-Tracker. If the licensee chooses to not participate in the OE-Tracker system and if all of his/her education credits are not posted therein, the licensee may be required to submit paper records ~~email or FAX~~ directly to the board in order to demonstrate compliance with the required continuing education hours.

(b) The Board shall audit the continuing education of a percentage of licensees for compliance with all rules and regulations. Such audits will ~~be completed after the license renewal date and will~~ cover course work ~~completed~~ obtained during the just-completed biennium.

(c) Each licensed Optometrist shall maintain records of attendance and supporting documents for continuing education for a period of three (3) years from the date of attendance.

(d) Deferral of the requirement for education program hours may be considered by the Board. Requests for deferral must be submitted to the Board ~~in writing and by submission of a Petition for a Rule Waiver or Variance and~~ should include complete supporting documentation of the reasons for the request. ~~Deferral will be considered for the following reasons:~~

1. ~~certified illness; and~~

2. ~~hardship.~~

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-30-5 and 43-30-8.**

• **Rule 430-2-.05. Requirements for Inactive License Status. Amended**

Georgia licensed optometrists may make a request in writing to the Board ~~that to place~~ their active license ~~to practice optometry in Georgia be placed in~~ into inactive status under the following conditions:

(a) The ~~request~~ application and fee must be received prior to the ~~license expiration date~~ end of the

late renewal period to be considered. ~~There is no fee required to request inactive status. Please refer to the fee schedule.~~

- (b) ~~In the event that a Doctor of Optometry who holds a valid license to practice Optometry in the State of Georgia notifies the Board that he chooses to retire from active practice of the profession, his license shall be considered to be inactive; Volunteer Licenses are not eligible for Inactive Status.~~
- (c) Doctors holding an inactive license shall not engage in the practice of Optometry and shall not hold themselves out to the public as being available to provide optometric services;
- (d) A Doctor of Optometry holding an inactive license shall not be required to obtain the necessary continuing education credits and no renewal fee shall be assessed.
- (e) In order to return to the practice of optometry, a reinstatement application for licensure must be submitted to the Board. ~~Refer to Board rule 430-2-.09~~ in accordance with Board rule 430-2-.09.

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-4, 43-1-22, 43-30-5 and 43-30-8.**

- **Rule 430-2-.07 Renewal of Licenses**

- (1) Each person holding a valid license to practice optometry shall renew said license with the Division Director by completing and filing the online renewal form. ~~A paper renewal application form shall be furnished by the Board upon request.~~ Said licenses expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of every odd-numbered years and shall be renewed biennially upon payment of the biennial renewal fees and providing proof, if selected for an audit, of the completion of the required continuing education hours. The paper renewal form shall be considered timely filed with the Board upon being postmarked. All paper renewal forms not postmarked by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the odd numbered years shall be considered late.
- (2) Each person holding a valid license to practice optometry who does not renew said license by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the odd-numbered years shall be afforded a late renewal for a period of thirty-one (30 31) days after the deadline date. Late renewals shall be processed after filing the renewal form, payment of the renewal fee and late renewal penalty fee and providing proof, if selected for an audit, of the required continuing education hours. The late renewal form shall be considered filed timely with the Board upon being postmarked on or before January 31<sup>st</sup>, every even numbered year. ~~All late renewal forms not postmarked by January 30 following the December 31 deadline shall not be considered timely filed with the Board.~~
- (3) Any service member as defined in O.C.G.A. § 43-1-31 whose license to practice optometry expired while serving on active duty outside the state shall be permitted to practice optometry in accordance with the expired license and shall not be charged with a violation relating to such practice on an expired license for a period of six (6) months from the date of his or her discharge from active duty or reassignment to a location within the state. Any such service member shall be entitled to renew such expired license without penalty within six (6) months after the date of her or her discharge from active duty or reassignment to a location within the state. The service member must present to the board a copy of the official military orders, or a written verification signed by the service member's commanding

officer to waive any charges.

- (4) After the late renewal time period, all non-renewed licenses will be revoked by operation of law for non-renewal, and will require reinstatement at the discretion of the Board.
- (5) Continuing Education hours are a requirement for the renewal of the Optometrist license or Volunteer Licensure every two years. Licensed Optometrists are required to obtain a total of thirty-six (36) CE Hours within the two years of each biennium, prior to the expiration date of December 31<sup>st</sup> every odd numbered year.

**Authority: O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-4, 43-1-19, 43-1-25, 43-30-5, 43-30-8 and 43-30-18.**

**Dr. Ajamian motioned, Dr. Hackleman seconded, and the Board voted to adopt Board Rule 430-2-.01 Applications, Rule 430-2-.04 Continuing Education Requirements; Approval of Education, Rule 430-2.05 Requirements or Inactive License Status. Amended, and Rule 430-2.07 Renewal of Licenses as posted and presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**In addition, Dr. Perrine motioned, Dr. Hackleman seconded and the Board voted that the formulation and adoption of all above rules does not impose excessive regulatory cost on any licensee and any cost to comply with the proposed rule cannot be reduced by a less expensive alternative that fully accomplishes the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-4, 43-1-19, 43-1-22, 43-1-25, 43-30-1, 43-30-5, 43-30-7, 43-30-8, 43-30-9 and 43-30-18 and that it is not legal or feasible to meet the objectives of O.C.G.A. §§ 43-1-4, 43-1-19, 43-1-22, 43-1-25, 43-30-1, 43-30-5, 43-30-7, 43-30-8, 43-30-9 and 43-30-18 to adopt or implement differing actions for businesses as listed in O.C.G.A. § 50-13-4(a)(3)(A), (B), (C), and (D). The formulation and adoption of these rules will impact every licensee in the same manner and each licensee is independently licensed in the field of Optometry.**

**Dr. Hackleman motioned, Dr. Fitzgerald seconded, and the Board voted that the memo of statutory authority for all the rule revisions heard this date to be released to the Governor's office as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Dr. Perrine moved, Dr. Fitzgerald seconded, and the Board voted to enter Executive Session in accordance with O.C.G.A. §43-1-19(h)(2) and 43-1-2(k) to review the executive session minutes, receive the Cognizant (Complaints) and Assistant Attorney General reports. Voting in favor of the motion were those present who included McCullough, Hackleman, Fitzgerald, Ajamian, Perrine, and Gutter-Parker.**

**At the conclusion of Executive Session on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, Dr. McCullough declared the meeting back into "open" pursuant to the Open and Public Meeting Act O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq. No votes were obtained during the closed session.**

**Cognizant Report:**

- ❖ **Investigative Interview Conducted: OPT240016**  
Recommendation: Tabled Pending receipt of additional information
- ❖ **Recommend Closure:** OPT250001, OPT250003, OPT250004
- ❖ **Pending in AG's Office:** OPT210012/230015 (Companion Cases), OPT220010/220012-(Companion Cases – P. Ajamian Recused), OPT230011, OPT230017, OPT240001
- ❖ **Pending Receipt of Additional Information:** OPT240009, OPT240013, OPT250002, OPT250005, OPT250006, OPT250007

**Dr. McCullough moved, Dr. Fitzgerald seconded, and the Board voted to approve the recommendations of the Cognizant report on complaints as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Attorney General's Report:**

Anna Scartz, Assistant Attorney General provided a written status report which included information on any cases referred for action, requests for advice and /or requests for authority for proposed rules.

**Dr. Hackleman moved, Dr. Fitzgerald seconded, and the Board voted to approve the Assistant Attorney General's report as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**2022-2023 Final Renewal Issues:**

- D.A.
- C.S.

**Recommendation:**

Rescind previous referral to AG's office; Renew License  
Rescind previous referral to AG's office; Renew License

**Dr. Fitzgerald moved, Dr. Hackleman seconded, and the Board voted to rescind the previous referral of D.A. to the AG's office and renew the license as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Dr. Fitzgerald moved, Dr. Hackleman seconded, and the Board voted to rescind the previous referral of C.S. to the AG's office and renew the license as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Executive Session Minutes:**

- August 21, 2024 CC Board Meeting
- October 8, 2024 CC Inv. Int. Cmte Meeting

**Recommendation:**

Approve as presented  
Approve as presented

**Dr. Fitzgerald moved, Dr. Gutter-Parker seconded, and the Board voted to approve the August 21, 2024 Executive Session Board Meeting Conference Call meeting minutes as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Dr. Fitzgerald moved, Dr. Gutter-Parker seconded, and the Board voted to approve the October 8, 2024 Executive Session Board Investigative Interview Committee Meeting minutes as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**Exec. Session Misc. Discussion Items:**

- Board Certification Title – Dr. Ajamian
- ARBO Report – Dr. Perrine
- Virtual Eye Exam – Dr. McCullough

**2025 Optometry Board Meeting Dates:** (All meetings are conducted via Webex starting at 10:00 A.M.)

- Wednesday, February 12, 2025
- Wednesday, May 14, 2025
- Wednesday, August 20, 2025
- Wednesday, November 19, 2025

**2025 Officer Elections** (O.C.G.A §43-30-4 Election of board officers; rules, regulations, and bylaws as to boards proceedings; meetings)

- **President:** Dr. Paul Ajamian
- **Vice-President:** Dr. Jeanne Perrine

**Dr. McCullough moved, Dr. Fitzgerald seconded, and the Board voted to approve the 2025 Officer Elections as presented. None opposed, motion carried.**

**There being no further business for discussion, the Board meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.**

**Minutes recorded by:**

Linsey Joiner, Board Support Specialist

**Minutes reviewed and edited by:**

Amanda Allen, Licensing Supervisor

**DR. ROBERT MCCULLOUGH**

President

**AMANDA ALLEN**

Executive Director HC1

Minutes reviewed and approved **February 12, 2025**

State of Georgia  
County of Bibb

**Affidavit Supporting Closing  
Of Public Meeting**

The Georgia Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. 50-14-1 et seq., requires that all meetings of an entity covered by the statute must be open to the public unless there is some specific statutory exception which permits the closing of the meeting. If such a meeting is to be closed, the law requires that the presiding person execute a sworn affidavit stating that the subject matter of the meeting or the closed portion thereof was devoted to matters within the statutory exceptions and identifying those specific exceptions relied upon. O.C.G.A. Sec. 50-14-4(b). A copy of this affidavit must be filed with the minutes of the meeting in question:

**Comes now, Dr. Robert McCullough, the presiding officer identified below and, before an official duly authorized to administer oaths, makes this affidavit in satisfaction of the statutory requirements outlined above.**

1. I am the presiding officer of the Georgia Board of Optometry.
2. I am over the age of 18 and in all other aspects competent to make this sworn statement. I acknowledge that I am giving this statement under oath and penalty of perjury and that I have read the contents of this affidavit prior to signing it.
3. On November 13, 2024 this entity, which is subject to the Open Meetings Act, met. A majority of the quorum of the members present voted to close the meeting or a portion thereof for the following indicated reason(s). I hereby certify that during the closed portion of the meeting, only those subjects indicated below were discussed. I also certify that I have reviewed the exceptions provided under the Open Meetings Act that may permit the closing of a meeting and that, to the best of my knowledge, the reasons I have described in detail below meet the requirements for closing this public meeting.
4. The legal authority for the closure of this meeting was §§§ 43-1-2(k), 43-1-19(h), and 50-14-2 (1).
5. The subject(s) discussed and the underlying facts supporting the closing of this meeting are:  
**Receive and review disciplinary/complaint files and reports; review applications; meet with applicants; receive the Attorney General's Report; and review Executive Session minutes.**

**Further the affiant sayeth not.**

Robert McCullough  
(Presiding Officer)

with Express Permission  
Amanda Allen, Executive Director

Sworn and subscribed before me,

This 13 day of November 2024

Linsey Joiner  
Notary Public

