Minutes of the Meeting of the
Board of Law Examiners
April 17, 2026
205 West 14th Street, Suite 500, Austin, Texas 78701

1. Call to order, determine quorum, and consider requests for excused absences – Chair

On Friday, April 17, 2026, Chair Augustin Rivera, Jr. called the meeting to order in open session at 9:04 a.m. Board Members in attendance were:

- Augustin Rivera, Jr.
- Cynthia Orr
- Anna McKim
- W. Stephen "Steve" Benesh
- Harold "Al" Odom
- Teresa Ereon Giltner
- Carlos Soltero, and
- Alexis Howard Lewis.

Also present in person was:

- Justice Brett Busby

The following staff were present in person:

- Nahdiah Hoang, Executive Director
- Michael Sullivan, Director of Admissions
- April Shaheen, Assistant Director of Admissions
- Ky Strunc, Assistant Director of Admissions
- Celine Johnson, Staff Services Officer
- Rod Shaheen, Chief Accountant
- Geneviev Ramirez, Legal Assistant
- Noelia Villarreal, Administrative Assistant

The following joined via Zoom:

- Kendelyn Schiller, Director of Investigations
- Michael Bennett, Texas State Auditor's Office
- Chad Buckndahl, ACS Ventures

2. Recognize staff – Chair, Liaison

The Chair and Justice Busby recognized certain staff for their service to the Board. They presented Board lapel pins to Michael Sullivan and Genevieve Ramirez to recognize their 5 years with the Board, a commemorative mug to Val Lopez for her 10 years with the Board, and a plaque to April Shaheen for her 25 years with the Board.

3. Consider approval of minutes and certified agendas of Board meetings, hearings panels, waiver panels, and Accommodations Review Committees – Chair

Before the meeting, Board Members were provided with drafts of the minutes for:

- 09/18/25 Hearings Panel 2
- 2024 Waiver Minutes
- 2025 Waiver Minutes

Upon motion submitted by Soltero and seconded by Benesh, the Board unanimously approved all minutes as submitted.

4. Consider communication from the public, if any – Chair

No members of the public were in attendance to present comments.

5. Report of accountant – Shaheen

5.1. Review Investment Reports

Shaheen presented the investment report.

5.2. Review Financial Reports

Shaheen presented the variance report and overall financial standing.

6. Report of Finance Committee – Ereon Giltner

Ereon Giltner, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the Finance Committee asked the Executive Director to look into insurance for cyber fraud and administration of the bar exam, and that the Finance Committee plans to meet in May to discuss the 2027 budget details.

7. Consider budget proposal for fiscal year 2027 – Hoang; Shaheen

Hoang discussed that staff had performed salary analyses and would request increased salaries for many employees. Hoang also discussed that adding a full-time attorney position may be warranted so that attorneys could continue to maintain the current schedule of hearings while also giving due attention to other tasks, such as requests for accommodations, requests for waivers, implementing the NextGen UBE, and developing the Texas Law Exam.

The Board discussed possible changes to the hearing procedures, including agreed orders, and asked the Executive Director to meet with Odom, Soltero, and Benesh on this issue before the next Board meeting.

8. Report of Executive Director – Hoang

8.1. General agency operations

Odom asked "Deliberations" could be observed by the SAO.

Hoang reported that the State Auditor's Office was conducting an efficiency audit of the Board efficiency audit under Texas Government Code chapter 327, which was added in 2025 and requires an agency to undergo an efficiency audit during in advance of its Sunset review. by SAO. The SAO had begun phase 1 of the audit to learn about the agency, meet with management, survey employees and the public. The focus of the audit was to investigate fraud, waste, financial security, and efficiencies. The SAO's report is due in October. Rivera suggested Hoang consider hiring a consultant to assist with audit.

Hoang responded to questions about whether the auditors could observe confidential deliberations, how often the Sunset Commission recommended restructuring agencies, and her experience with past Sunset reviews.

8.2. Calendar update, including July 2026 formal review schedule

Hoang reviewed calendar updates with the Board and reminded Board Members to schedule formal reviews with Johnson.

8.3. Articles of interest

Hoang reviewed developments in ABA standard 206, and the Board discussed what actions it should take to prepare to assist the Court with developing standards for adding schools to the Court's list of approved schools. Hoang noted that staff had received inquiries—including from an unapproved law school, graduates of unapproved law schools, a person considering attending an unapproved law school, and a person interested in starting an on-line law school. The Board suggested Hoang share these inquiries with the Court.

The Board discussed alternative pathways to licensure. Hoang reminded the Board that Justice Busby was interested in what staff can do to get public service and state agency attorneys licensed more quickly.

8.4. Complaint resolution report

Hoang reported she had received a new complaint about how staff handled an examinee who was coughing in a reduced distraction testing room.

8.5. Administrative waiver decisions

Hoang referred the Board to the waiver report. The Board discussed that waiver requests regarding MPRE requirements seemed to be increasing. Sullivan noted the complexity of other waiver requests has increased, as well.

8.6. Report on Efficiency Audit-Texas State Auditor's Office

Hoang reported on this in item 8.1, above.

9. Report of Director of Investigations – Schiller

9.1. Probationary License Conversion to Regular License Report

Schiller states three probationary licensees successfully completed their conditions or successfully completed modifications and now have regular law licenses.

10. Report of Director of Admissions – Sullivan

10.1. Report on February 2026 Texas Bar Examination

Sullivan reported that staff worked well as a team, and thanked Orr for helping both days. He noted that Strunc, Shaheen, and Schiller were well organized and administered a successful exam at the Waco site. He thanked Johnson for running the Austin site.

Sullivan reported on improvements that staff implemented in training proctors for the accommodated rooms.

Sullivan reported that staff made changes to procedures for using

Yonder pouches to store cell phones—examinees were allowed to access their phones during the lunch break, and yonder pouch usage increased to 80%.

Grade release Hoang gives kudos for the Board for getting regrading done with new timeframe.

10:40 a.m. Rivera called for a 5-minute break.

10:45 a.m. Rivera called the meeting back into open session.

10.2. Report on July 2026 Texas Bar Exam, including Board Member assignments

For the July 2026 exam:

- Orr agreed to cover San Antonio both days.
- Benesh agreed to cover Austin both days
- Howard Lewis agreed to cover Houston both days.
- Odom agreed to cover Waco both days.
- McKim agreed to cover Lubbock both days.
- Ereon Giltner agreed to cover DFW on the first day, and Rivera agreed to cover DFW on the second day.

10.3. Update on Texas Law Exam – Sullivan

Sullivan thanked Rivera, Odom, and Benesh for reviewing questions and providing feedback on the process. His goal is to get questions reviewed and draft a form by end of July. The Board discussed the content and purpose of the TLE, and the role of the Board Members, consultants, staff, and others in developing the questions. A consensus appeared to develop around having Board Members take the lead in developing outlines and questions, rather than reaching out to other Texas lawyers.

11. Report of General Counsel – Mayhew

11.1. Litigation Report (*This review may be conducted in executive session pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code sec. 551.071.*)

Hoang reported that there had been no changes in the litigation report from the last meeting.

11.2. Accommodations report (Part of this review may be conducted in executive session pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code sec. 551.071.)

Hoang reported that adjustments had been made to extended-time schedules to help ensure that extended-time examinees still got about an hour for lunch, and that staff would continue to refine the schedule as needed. Hoang also reported that more staff had been trained in accommodations.

11.3. Consider minimum passing score for transfer of a NextGen UBE score *(This review may be conducted in executive session pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code sec. 551.089.)* – Chair

The Chair called for a closed session at 1:26 P.M.

At 2:15 P.M., McKim and Ereon Giltner were excused.

At 2:45 P.M., Rivera called the meeting in open session.

Benesh moved that the BLE recommends that the minimum passing score for admission by transfer of a NextGen score be 620, because based on the info available to the BLE at this time appears to be the equivalent of a 270. Orr seconded the motion.

Soltero said the score should be lower and could be reconsidered as more information becomes available.

By a vote of 5 to 1, the motion passed.

12. Consider proposed guidelines for staff for issuing adverse preliminary determinations – Chair; Schiller

Schiller asked the Board to review her proposed updates to the Board's character and fitness guidelines.

Rivera acknowledged time and effort Schiller took to complete these proposed updates.

Board Members discussed the proposed updates, including

- Language on page 95.
- Language on page 105 concerning child support seems extreme.
- "Cheating" is different from exam misconduct. Exam misconduct may be a better phrase.
- A glossary could be useful.
- Information about trends of issues and outcomes could be useful.

The Board agreed to review the proposed updates and send comments directly to Schiller.

12:11 P.M. Rivera called lunch break.

12:38 pm Rivera called the meeting back into open session.

13. Consider proposed guidelines for waiving MPRE requirements, including delegating authority to Executive Director – Chair; Hoang

McKim suggested that, where an attorney is licensed in a state that does not require an MPRE score, the attorney have been licensed for at least 5 years before the Board will consider waiving the MPRE.

14. Consider proposed guidelines for waiving the law practice requirement, including delegating authority to Executive Director – Chair; Hoang

Tabled.

15. Discuss Servicemembers Civil Relief Act; consider proposed changes to Rule 23 – Chair; Schiller

Hoang agreed to present the issue to Justice Busby.

16. Consider applicants' requests for financial assistance with probationary license conditions and certain health evaluations – Hoang

After discussion, the Board tabled this item. In the meantime, if someone makes a request staff will present it at a Board Meeting.

17. Consider Resolution honoring Board Member Charles Alfred Mackenzie – Chair

The Board discussed presenting a resolution at a future meeting.

18. Discuss testing accommodations *(Part of this review may be conducted in executive session pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code sec. 551.071.)* **– Chair**

This item was tabled.

19. Update on NextGen UBE – Chair

No updates were provided.

20. Report of Chair – Chair

21.1 Discuss Annual Evaluation of Executive Director *(This review may be conducted in executive session pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code sec. 551.074(a)(1).)* – **Chair**

At 2:49 P.M., Rivera announced closed session.

At 3:07 P.M. Rivera called the meeting back into open session and announced that no action would be taken on the issues discussed in closed session.

21. Consider issues arising from agenda items – Chair

No issues were discussed.

22. Adjourn – Chair

At 3:07 p.m., with no additional business to discuss, Rivera adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Nahdiah Hoang

Nahdiah Hoang

Approved

Augustin Rivera, Jr., Chair

6-26-26

Date