



CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Establishment of Quorum, and Chair's Introduction

Board Chair Diana Love called the meeting of the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) to order on December 13, 2023, at 9:03 a.m. at the Contractors State License Board headquarters, 9821 Business Park Drive, Sacramento, CA 95827.

Board Vice Chair Michael Mark led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, and a quorum was established.

Board Members Present

Diana Love, Chair
Jöel Barton
Rodney Cobos
David De La Torre
Miguel Galarza
Amanda Gallo
Susan Granzella
Alan Guy
Jacob Lopez
Steven Panelli
Michael Mark
James Ruane

Mary Teichert joined the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

CSLB Staff Present

David Fogt, Registrar
Michael Jamnetski, Chief Deputy Registrar
Yeaphana La Marr, Chief of Legislation
Katherine White, Chief of Public Affairs
Jason Perez, Chief of Information Technology
Steve Grove, Chief of Enforcement
Carol Gagnon, Chief of Licensing
Stacey Paul, Budget Manager
Robin Williams, Executive Assistant
Amy Lawrence, Television Specialist
Natalie Rosenberger, Information Officer
Ingrid Witowski-Sedlar, Personnel Manager

**DCA Staff Present**

John Kinn, DCA Legal

Yvonne Durantes, Assistant Deputy Director of Board and Bureau Relations

In Person Public Attendance

Rick Pires

Robert Blunt

Chair Love introduced Assistant Deputy Director Yvonne Durantes of DCA Board and Bureau Relations.

Assistant Deputy Director Yvonne Durantes updated the Board that Tomiquia Moss had recently been appointed as the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency Secretary and will be assuming their new position in early 2024. Assistant Deputy Director Durantes stated the DEI Committee Meeting will take place December 14, 2023, and will provide updates afterwards. Assistant Deputy Director Durantes explained the recent launch of the Military Portal was a success and supported service members and their families. Assistant Deputy Director Durantes advised the Board of upcoming changes to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act on January 1, 2024, and stated there will be four new options available. Assistant Deputy Director Durantes reminded the Board 2022-2023 mandatory training was due by the end of 2023. Assistant Deputy Director Durantes stated the “Our Promise” campaign was still active and offered resources for donations.

B. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda and Future Agenda Item Requests**Public Comment**

Richard Markuson of the Greater Bay Chapter of the American Fire Sprinkler Association complimented CSLB on enforcing sprinkler fitter certification and stated it helped regulate non-compliant contractors and the AFSA appreciated the efforts of CSLB and staff.

C. Presentation of Certificates of Recognition

Board Chair Love presented a plaque to CSLB staff member Renee Davis in recognition for 37 years of state service in the Information Technology Division and acknowledged Renee’s commitment to CSLB and assisting in the implementation of board-sponsored bill SB 216. Chair Love congratulated Renee on their retirement and thanked them for their service to CSLB.

**D. Executive****1. Review and Possible Approval of the June 22 and 23, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes**

Chair Love asked for Board member edits to the June 22 and 23, September 14, and November 2023, Board Meeting Minutes. Chair Love stated Board Member Jacob Lopez was incorrectly excluded from the roll call in the June 22, 2023 and the June 22 and 23 minutes have been corrected and are being resubmitted for approval. Chair Love recommended that a motion be made to approve all the board minutes simultaneously.

Motion: To approve the June 22 and 23, September 14, October 30, and November 15, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes. Moved by Michael Mark; Jim Ruane seconded. Motion carried, 12-0-0.

YEA: Diana Love, Joël Barton, Rodney Cobos, David De La Torre, Miguel Galarza, Amanda Gallo, Susan Granzella, Alan Guy, Jacob Lopez, Steven Panelli, Michael Mark, Jim Ruane.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Mary Teichert

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Review and Possible Approval of the September 14, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

Motion for approval was passed during Agenda item D.1.

3. Review and Possible Approval of the October 30, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

Motion for approval was passed during Agenda item D.1.

4. Review and Possible Approval of the November 15, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

Motion for approval was passed during Agenda item D.1.



5. Registrar's Report

CSLB Registrar David Fogt stated along with conducting a survey for the 2024 CSLB Board meetings, the focus will be the completion of the Sunset Report and transitioning from the current Strategic Plan, expiring in 2024, to a new Strategic Plan. Registrar Fogt explained the CSLB has obtained Trisha St. Clair, an analytic strategic facilitator, to assist CSLB in adopting a new 3-year strategic plan and recommended the Board members offer suggestions on stakeholder surveys.

Board Member Comment

Board member Granzella reminded the board to monitor the mute function of the Webex because it is distorting the sound of the persons speaking.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6. CSLB Budget Update

Budget Manager Stacey Paul stated CSLB has an authorized budget of \$79 million in fiscal year 23/24 and expects to bring in \$91 million in revenue. Manager Paul explained revenue should exceed total expenditures by \$12 million ultimately increasing CSLB's fund reserves. Manager Paul pointed out the 23/24 fiscal year budget and expenses through October is at 33 percent of the authorized budget and revenue for October has exceeded the prior year by 14 percent. Manager Paul detailed the CSLB budget fund condition that will increase fund reserves to \$32 million or 4.5 months at fiscal year-end and the same should continue into next budget year 24/25. Manager Paul discussed the Construction Management Education Account (CMEA) fund has seen consistent increases in annual donations. CSLB has received final approval from the Department of Finance to increase grant disbursements from \$175,000 to \$225,000. Manager Paul highlighted the first quarter of statistical data confirming an increase in original applications received, new licenses issued, and a 2.9 percent increase in renewals compared to two years ago.

Board Member Comment

Board Vice Chair Michael Mark expressed appreciation for CSLB staff's hard work with improving the status of budget reserves.

Chair Love recognized Rick Pires and Robert Blunt from Northern California Carpenters for their support in assisting the CSLB with consumer protection efforts and thanked them for their hard work.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.



7. Administration Update Regarding Personnel and Facilities

Personnel Manager Ingrid Witowski-Sedlar updated the Board on the status of the CSLB administrative operations. Manager Witowski-Sedlar stated of the 425 authorized positions, CSLB averaged 33 vacancies in the first month of fiscal year 2023-24. Manager Witowski-Sedlar explained the Personnel Unit, along with CSLB and DCA Office of Human Resources are continuously working to identify and minimize delays in recruitment for key positions. Manager Witowski-Sedlar provided an update on the Consumer Services Representative (CSR) classification transition. Manager Witowski-Sedlar stated in June 2023, CSLB began transitioning the classification of CSR to Staff Services Analyst (SSA) with the intent to align analytical duties performed by the 32 CSRs as well as increase recruitment and retention efforts with an expected completion date of December 2023.

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

8. Information Technology Update

Information Technology Chief Jason Perez presented to the Board the latest advancements in the Information Technology (IT) Division. Chief Perez stated the IT Division's focus is the business modernization of the Application for Original Contractors License for Sole Owners, with the main goal to design a simplified process for construction industry professionals that prioritizes efficiency, user friendliness, and clarity. Chief Perez anticipated the contract being signed January 2024. Chief Perez added as part of the business modernization effort, a new portal developed for applicants to seamlessly manage their applications and have a window into the licensing process will be equipped with advanced security features, ensuring sensitive information remains protected.

Chief Perez stated CSLB is transitioning to the AWS Connect IVR System, a call center software designed to improve interactions with all stakeholders. Chief Perez explained AWS Connect features: improved call routing, advanced data analytics, enhanced security, and cost efficiency. They noted the AWS Connect project is expected to be operational by April 2024.

Chief Perez also acknowledged the work done to transition CSLB from its prior voice calling system to Microsoft Teams calling, noting that its key features include a unified communication platform, enhanced collaboration, organization-wide implementation, smooth transitioning, and ongoing support. They thanked all staff involved in the project



and stated implementation of Microsoft Teams marks a significant step toward digital transformation.

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

E. Legislation

1. Review, Discussion and Possible Action on CSLB's Draft 2024 Sunset Report

Chair Love explained the legislative section of the meeting relating to the Sunset Review report was provided separately in a handout and offered background about the Sunset Review process. Chair Love explained the Sunset Review is conducted every four years and CSLB's last sunset was five years ago, with the fifth year being an extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Love stated they and Member Galarza were appointed to the Sunset Committee by past Chair Mary Teichert. Chair Love noted the report consisted of 500 pages detailing CSLB's work in consumer protection and addressing new and old issues. Chair Love asked for the Board to consider authorization for staff to submit a final version to the Legislature by the first week of January 2024.

Member Galarza thanked CSLB staff and Chief of Legislation Yeaphana La Marr for their hard work in putting the Sunset Report together. Member Galarza explained there were six items included as new issues that would increase protection for consumers and improve processes related to the construction industry.

Chief La Marr stated the Sunset Report needed various non-substantive edits and stated a motion to approve those edits would need to be made. Chief La Marr explained the Sunset Report sections and template questions 1 through 67 and stated Section 1 covered historical and background data regarding Board and committee meetings and program organization.

Chief La Marr explained question 2, noting the CSLB has always established a quorum. Chief La Marr explained pages 5 through 17 detailed changes to the board since the last Sunset Report, including reorganization, relocation, leadership, and strategic planning while noting that section included legislation that has impacted CSLB, and regulations adopted and approved by the Board.

Chief La Marr explained question 4 asked about studies conducted by the Board, included staff and/or consultant reports on the topics of mandating workers'



compensation for certain license classifications, a fee study, and two other studies regarding battery energy storage systems license requirements.

Chief La Marr stated Section 2 covered CSLB's fiscal status and staffing, with pages 27 through 31 discussing board fiscal issues, noting the fund is getting healthier.

Chief La Marr explained pages 32 through 39 discuss staffing issues and challenges in hiring, vacancies, reclassified and redirected positions, and training.

Chief La Marr stated Section 3 covered the licensing program and highlighted pages 41 through 60, including licensing and renewal processing goals, exam passing rates, and statutes that affect application processing.

Chief La Marr explained Section 4, pages 61 through 74, covered the Enforcement Division's performance and highlighted question 33 related to complaints increasing year over year. Chief La Marr attributed the rise in complaints and processing times to an increase in solar complaints. Chief La Marr discussed the SWIFT unit participating in more disaster response efforts, investigation and cycle time goals and unlicensed activity enforcement. Chief LaMarr confirmed the most common violations are workmanship, false workers' compensation exemption, violation of building standards, and failure to complete contracted work for the agreed upon price.

Chief La Marr explained Section 5, pages 80 through 83, highlight the public information office policies and consumer education efforts and noted question 56 discusses the related activities such as: online documents, media responses, in-person outreach, social media, and disaster responses.

Chief La Marr mentioned Section 6 discussed how online business practices have contributed to unlicensed activity.

Chief La Marr stated Section 7 detailed the workforce development and job creation efforts and noting DCA-approved training programs, internships and other factors that influenced workforce development while focusing on the Construction Management Education Account and the creation of the B-2 to provide opportunities for licensure for contractors with residential experience in multiple areas, often performed by handypersons, that do not include structural work. Chief La Marr added question 63 on pages 87 and 88 asked about reducing licensing inequities experienced by licensees, applicants, and consumers from vulnerable communities including: Spanish examination translation and study guides, creating the B-2 license type, protecting senior citizens with support for AB 2471 to extend cancellation rights for seniors, administering the Solar Energy System Restitution Program, and submitting a proposal to allow tribes to be licensed in California.

Chief La Marr stated Section 8 can be found on page 89, which focused on current issues.



Chief La Marr stated Section 9 on pages 90 and 91 asked what CSLB's COVID response was and what steps were taken to protect employees while continuing to meet consumer protection mandates. Chief La Marr explained the steps included: the closure of the public counters, instituting mask wearing and social distancing, obtaining laptops and reducing in-office staff, increasing educational videos, developing online renewal and payment systems, and implementing Webex board meetings.

Chief La Marr stated Section 10, pages 92 to 123, discussed board action response prior to Sunset Report.

Chief La Marr stated Section 11, pages 124 to 130, discussed new issues.

Chief La Marr stated Section 12, pages 131 to 500, are attachments related to content including the administrative manual, major studies, year-end organization charts, quarterly performance measures, and results from questions on the board's consumer satisfaction survey.

Motion: To approve and authorize the submission of the final version of the Sunset Review Report, along with a cover letter from Chair Love, a table of contents, page number references, December 13, 2023, meeting references, organization charts, grammatical and name corrections, and an index of acronyms. Moved by Michael Mark; seconded by Joël Barton. Motion carried, 12-0-0.

YEA: Diana Love, Joël Barton, Rodney Cobos, David De La Torre, Miguel Galarza, Amanda Gallo, Susan Granzella, Alan Guy, Steven Panelli, Michael Mark, Jim Ruane.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Jacob Lopez

Board Member Comment

Vice Chair Michael Mark thanked CSLB staff for the hard work committed to the production of the Sunset Report and asked if new board member video from the past meeting can be attached to the board manual.

Chief of Public Affairs Katherine White stated the video is not related to the board orientation manual and is separate from board administration manual although it helps with board member orientation.

Vice Chair Mark asked which section board members should pay most attention to for Sections 1 through 9 regarding the breadth of the Sunset Report and asked if there were cliff notes.

Chief La Marr responded the prior issues were to address the last Sunset Report and the template questions recommended focusing on enforcement.



Vice Chair Mark explained the enforcement section contained significant information and the licensing was done very thoroughly.

Chief La Marr agreed the licensing section was important and explained Sections 3 and 4 were sections of interest for board member review.

Chair Love stated they were excited to stand before the legislature and present the Sunset Report and explained they were happy to represent CSLB and all the efforts of CSLB staff.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Mary Teichert joined the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

F. Enforcement

1. Update Regarding November 29, 2023, Enforcement Committee Meeting and Possible Approval of Summary Report

Enforcement Committee Chair Jim Ruane stated during the March 2023 Board meeting the board approved \$75,000 to hire a consultant to conduct an enforcement workload study to determine the viability of Special Investigator goals and if enforcement classifications are appropriate for work being performed. Chair Ruane noted CSLB began contracting with Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) for \$68,587.50 in July 2023. Chair Ruane stated the research is currently being performed with the results and recommendations expected to be delivered in January 2024.

Chair Ruane explained during the March 2023 Board meeting the board authorized another \$75,000 for a second consultant to research the scope of unlicensed activity and disaster response resource requirements. Chair Ruane stated a request for proposal (RFP) was released with a cutoff date of November 28, 2023, but there were no bidders. Chair Ruane noted that prospective consultants advised a study of such complexity would require more than the \$75,000 currently authorized. Chair Ruane explained that staff recommended the Enforcement Committee recommend the board authorize raising the cap from \$75,000 to \$200,000 with a motion being put forward and carried. Chair Ruane added the committee had a fully formed motion with no first or second needed prior to a motion.

Chair Ruane discussed the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and explained the public's satisfaction with CSLB's handling of complaints. Chair Ruane stated the survey showed a steady decrease over the previous five years from fiscal year 2018 to fiscal year 2022 and noted the results of the survey as: satisfaction with clarity of complaint procedure dropped from 76 percent to 63 percent, satisfaction with information regarding case progress decreased from 68 percent to 54 percent, satisfaction with timeliness of case processing dropped from 66 percent to 51 percent, and satisfaction with CSLB services decreased from 61 percent to 50 percent. Chair Ruane attributed budget restrictions,



the COVID pandemic, and a significant increase in solar cases to creating challenges for enforcement staff. Chair Ruane noted previous budget challenges that restricted the use of CSLB industry expert and arbitration programs have been resolved and Special Investigators are again conducting field visits and job site inspections. Chair Ruane stated enforcement management is continuously working to ensure complaints are investigated as soon as possible after assignment and mentioned the development of the Multiple Offender Unit will help with reducing staff caseloads and related complaint-handling cycle times.

Chair Ruane reported to improve customer satisfaction, enforcement staff training initiatives for 2024 are focused on conducting biannual enforcement academies, career development, customer service, and staff development training opportunities.

Chair Ruane stated the final item of the committee meeting was the Multiple Offender Unit (MOU) and explained the committee discussed the concern for the increase in consumer-filed solar complaints and stated CSLB has received a 176 percent increase in solar complaints while non-solar complaints have remained steady. Chair Ruane noted CSLB has 900 open solar complaints, which accounts for 20 percent of all open CSLB complaints. Chair Ruane added due to the volume and egregiousness of the complaints, enforcement staff caseloads have been impacted and as a result the committee established the MOU. Member Ruane explained the goal of the MOU is to focus on solar contractors with the most complaints and take swift action to persuade the contractor to resolve pending complaints and improve business practices addressing complaints to limit CSLB involvement. Chair Ruane added solar contractors will be subjected to legal action, possibly an accusation, if they fail to respond to consumers and CSLB incurs expenses regarding assisting or correcting the complaints. Chair Ruane mentioned CSLB will no longer hire industry experts for the purpose of assisting a solar contractor to help settle contractor's disputes with their customers, and CSLB staff, along with the Office of the Attorney General, have developed a streamlined legal action process and these cases will be strictly enforced with the help of CSLB's Special Investigators in pursuing charges related to unfair business practices. Chair Ruane added the MOU has identified an industry expert to assist consumers on correcting or completing their solar projects. Chair Ruane added further outreach is needed to confirm consumers understanding contract requirements and how to identify predatory practices.

Motion: To approve and authorize increasing the cap from \$75,000 to \$200,000 for consultants to research unlicensed activity and disaster response resource requirements. Motion was fully formed by the Enforcement Committee and didn't need a first or second motion prior to the vote. Motion carried, 12-0-0.

YEA: Diana Love, Joël Barton, Rodney Cobos, David De La Torre, Miguel Galarza, Amanda Gallo, Susan Granzella, Alan Guy, Steven Panelli, Michael Mark, Jim Ruane.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None



ABSENT: Jacob Lopez

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Motion: To approve the November 29, 2023, Enforcement Committee Meeting Minutes. Moved by Michael Mark; David De La Torre seconded. Motion carried, 12-0-0.

YEA: Diana Love, Joël Barton, Rodney Cobos, David De La Torre, Miguel Galarza, Amanda Gallo, Susan Granzella, Alan Guy, Steven Panelli, Michael Mark, Jim Ruane.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Jacob Lopez

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Enforcement Program Update

Enforcement Chief Steve Grove updated the board on staff vacancies and stated of the 220 positions there are 24 vacancies with candidates being selected to fill 11 of those positions.

Chief Grove discussed the Enforcement Division's investigation highlights and noted the successful investigation and prosecution of licensed contractor, Jeffrey Nguyen, which resulted in criminal charges for fraudulent use of a contractor's license number, obtaining money under false pretenses, and aiding and abetting two unlicensed contractors. Chief Grove added that in November 2022 arrest warrants for Nguyen and the two other contractors were issued along with an accusation to revoke Nguyen's license. Chief Grove noted the hearing took place the day before and the outcome is still pending.

Chief Grove discussed the investigation of Jennifer and Andrew Dickson. Chief Grove stated the Dicksons had entered into a contract as the project managers to construct a new home with a consumer who lost their home in 2017 Tubbs fire worth \$459,686. Chief Grove added the consumers had paid a total of \$447,203 to the Dicksons, with the remaining construction to be performed by Empire Contracting for \$411,203. Chief Grove stated in 2019 Andrew Dickson informed Empire Contracting he would be unable



to finish the project, forcing the consumers to purchase \$300,000 of their own material and hire other contractors to complete the Dicksons' portion of the construction. Chief Grove noted in March 2019 another homeowner had entered into a similar contract with the Dicksons for a value of \$20,000, with Empire Contracting to perform most of the construction, only for the work to have never been performed. Chief Grove added the CSLB investigator referred the cases to the Sonoma and Napa County District Attorney's Offices and in August 2023 both counties filed charges against the Dicksons with Sonoma County including theft of an elder and contracting without a license and Napa County charging contracting without a license and diverting money from a loan that was obtained for the payment of services, labor, materials, or equipment. Chief Grove finished the update and stated there is an active arrest warrant for both Jennifer and Andrew Dickson and after being cooperative in the investigation, Empire Contracting was issued a Letter of Admonishment for associating with an unlicensed contractor.

Chief Grove provided the board with a statistical update and stated between January 1, 2023, and October 31, 2023, 16,317 investigations were opened. Chief Grove added with current staffing levels the optimal maximum enforcement division caseload is 4,740 pending complaints, with the caseload as of October being slightly higher at 5,132. Chief Grove attributed the increase to CSLB receiving excessive solar complaints, averaging around 200 complaints a month.

Chief Grove explained enforcement Consumer Services Representatives (CSRs) and investigators are working hard to keep up with the incoming complaints and CSRs exceeding their closure and settlement goals of 20 complaint dispositions with 65 percent of licenses settled. Chief Grove added the monthly case closing average per Special Investigator is nine closures a month, just shy of their goal of 10.

Chief Grove stated another board goal is to appropriately disposition all but 100 complaints within 270 days of receipt and as of October 31, 2023, only 207 complaints exceeded 270 days.

Chief Grove listed the Enforcement Division's accomplishments between January 1, 2023, and October 31, 2023. Chief Grove stated the efforts by the Intake and Mediation Centers and Investigative Centers resulted in more than \$30.8 million in restitution to financially injured parties, 488 Letters of Admonishment issued, referring 534 of the 1,081 legal action investigations for prosecution, 414 cases referred to arbitration resulting in \$3.2 million in restitution ordered to injured parties, 649 licensee citations, 612 non-licensed citations, \$1.5 million in civil penalties, \$426,196 collected for investigation cost recovery, 164 accusations filed, and 162 licenses revoked.

Chief Grove concluded the update highlighting proactive enforcement conducted by 27 Special Investigators assigned to the Statewide Investigative Fraud Team (SWIFT). Chief Grove added SWIFT conducted 30 undercover sting operations, participated in



318 sweep days, and responded to 834 leads or tips received from industry and the public. Chief Grove stated investigators completed 2,629 investigations with 717 cases resulting in an administrative or legal action, and 961 advisory notices were issued for minor offenses.

The Board took a break from 10:36-10:46 a.m.

G. Licensing

1. Review, Discussion and Possible Action to Grant Construction Management Education Account Awards

Licensing Committee Chair Alan Guy updated the board on the Licensing Division. Chair Guy stated the Board requested and received approval to increase disbursement authority from \$100,000 to \$225,000 in fiscal year 2023-24 for the Construction Management Education Account. Chair Guy added the increase will provide additional funding for institutions that offer construction management education. Chair Guy also stated the increase is made each year based on the amount of funds available and is to be distributed among five public colleges selected by the Construction Management Education Advisory Committee. Member Guy noted the members of the committee can be found on page 125 and revenues in the account are from contributions made by licensees at the time of the license renewal fee payment.

Motion: To direct staff to distribute the 2023 CMEA Grant Award to the identified colleges according to the staff recommendation on page 126 based on the approval of the Department of Finance to expend \$225,000 from the CMEA account. Motion by Jim Ruane; Jacob Lopez seconded. Motion carried, 12-0-0.

YEA: Diana Love, Joël Barton, Rodney Cobos, David De La Torre, Miguel Galarza, Susan Granzella, Alan Guy, Jacob Lopez, Steven Panelli, Michael Mark, Jim Ruane.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Amanda Gallo

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Licensing and Testing Program Statistical Update

Chair Guy explained that the table on page 129 exhibited application statistics regarding applications received for new licenses, additional classifications, replacing qualifiers,



and home improvement salespersons (HIS). Chair Guy noted that CSLB received over 39,000 applications in the first 10 months of the year and that this figure is comparable to the previous year's stats.

Chair Guy stated that on page 130 processing times are at or below two weeks, which is well within the goal of three processing weeks. Chair Guy added that processing times begin once the technician begins processing the application and the entire length of time to completion is dependent on the applicant. Chair Guy referenced exam results and submission of workers' compensation or bonds forms as examples of what can affect the processing times.

Chair Guy explained that the processing goal of three weeks is a benchmark and ensures all types of applicants hear back promptly about the status of their application allowing them to efficiently progress through the licensing process.

Chair Guy directed the board to page 132 and stated the total number of renewals decreased between 2021 and 2022 but are expected to rebound by the end of 2023. Chair Guy added that CSLB received more than 100,000 renewals in the last 10 months and stated that if CSLB continues to receive more than 10,000 renewals monthly, those figures would reach 2021 figures of 120,000 renewals annually as opposed to 117,000 in 2022.

Chair Guy discussed workers' compensation and explained that the percentage of licenses with workers' compensation policies increased by 3 percent. They attributed the increase to Senate Bill 216 requiring workers' compensation for four additional classes in 2023, which were C-20 HVAC, C-22 Asbestos Abatement, C-8 Concrete, and D-49 Tree Service.

Chair Guy mentioned the Experience Verification Unit (EVU) statistics and thanked Board Vice Chair Michael Mark for their interest in the EVU after the September 2023 Board meeting. Chair Guy added on October 31, 2023, Vice Chair Mark met with staff to discuss ideas to improve the review of applications and ensure consumer protection.

Chair Guy stated Registrar Fogt sent an email to the Board explaining that due to COVID and other Licensing Division priorities, the 3 percent review had been transferred to enforcement. Enforcement implemented a different approach to not only perform random experience application review but to prioritize investigation of suspect applications. Chair Guy noted Enforcement was focusing on applicants previously rejected or that had withdrawn their application for lack of experience, were subject to an Enforcement investigation, or were suspected of submitting false documentation, among other identifiers.

Chair Guy explained the 3 percent field investigation review currently being conducted is accurately described as a combination of randomly pulled experience applications along with applicants identified for a closer review by enforcement investigators. Chair



Guy stated he looked forward to the January Licensing Committee meeting to review the 3 percent regulation and possibly moving applicant field investigation updates to the enforcement portion of the board packet.

Chair Guy applauded licensing staff for their comprehensive review of each application submitted for licensure and noted in the last three fiscal years, 14,096 applications were voided due to applicants failing to submit sufficient documentation to meet licensing requirements.

Chair Guy directed the Board to page 139 and stated that in 2022 CSLB helped consumers recover over \$20 million in financial restitution from court judgments. Chair Guy added that continued relationships with Employment Development Department (EDD), Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), and the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), CSLB has helped those agencies collect over \$24 million in outstanding liabilities.

Chair Guy stated the testing update can be found on page 141 and that PSI Exams administered roughly 46,000 exams for CSLB. In August 2023, PSI opened two new testing centers to administer CSLB exams in Las Vegas and Oregon. Chair Guy added there are no backlogs in the testing administration.

Chair Guy mentioned that since July 2023 the Exam Development Unit has released nine updated exams, and each exam constituted an item bank of between 600 and 1,000 items. Chair Guy noted that from those item banks, the Exam Specialists create versions of the exams to distribute to test centers. Chair Guy added that on page 144 is an update on the Spanish-translated exams. Since November 2023, over 500 exams have been administered using the translated versions with a goal of the remaining versions to be in test centers by years' end.

Board Member Comment

Vice Chair Michael Mark stated that the license processing wait times being down is a good thing and attributed those times to the combination of low CSR times, budgeting, and renewal times running smoothly.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

H. Public Affairs

1. Update Regarding November 29, 2023, Public Affairs Committee Meeting and Possible Approval of Summary Report

Public Affairs Committee Chair Galarza provided the board with the November 29, 2023, Public Affairs Committee meeting update and directed the board to view page 149 of the board packet. Chair Galarza stated the Public Affairs Committee meeting discussed CSLB website changes to improve customer service to stakeholders,



including revising the alert box on the homepage with down payment instructions, updating the solar smart page, bringing publications current and up to date, and translating items, including video, into Spanish along with other high demand languages.

Chair Galarza discussed the video outlines for the following year such as solar tips and women in construction. Chair Galarza added staff showed a recent video at the November 29, 2023, Public Affairs Committee meeting to committee members focused on Strategic Plan item 4.2, which highlighted the new board member orientation, and stated the video, with a PDF overview included, will soon be available for all members by the end of the month.

Motion: To approve the November 29, 2023, Public Affairs Committee Meeting Summary Report. Motion by David De La Torre; Steven Panelli seconded. Motion carried, 12-0-0.

YEA: Diana Love, Joël Barton, Rodney Cobos, David De La Torre, Miguel Galarza, Susan Granzella, Alan Guy, Jacob Lopez, Steven Panelli, Michael Mark, Jim Ruane.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Amanda Gallo

Board Member Comment

There was no comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Public Affairs Update

Chair Galarza provided the Board with the Public Affairs Update and stated the responsibilities of the Public Affairs Office (PAO) include media, industry, licensee, and consumer communications as well as outreach. Chair Galarza added, PAO provides proactive public relations, responses to media inquiries, the development and distribution of publications and newsletters, and outreach and education to consumers and contractors.

Chair Galarza stated PAO creates content for CSLB's social media and website, including producing webcasts and videos, conducting workshops and seminars for disaster survivors and contractors, and presenting speeches to service groups and organizations.

Chair Galarza discussed the impact of disaster outreach over the last year and how it has been key to CSLB's efforts. Chair Galarza noted CSLB works to educate property



and business owners to reduce harm by unlicensed or unscrupulous contractors after a disaster. Chair Galarza added that between August 1, 2023, and October 1, 2023, CSLB staffed and participated in only one Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) throughout California following Tropical Storm Hilary that caused damage in Riverside County.

Chair Galarza stated PAO has focused on creating informative videos for consumers, licensees, and applicants, including tips for swimming pool construction, hiring a roofing contractor, and a video promoting Construction Inclusion Week in October. Chair Galarza noted the videos are shared on social media platforms, YouTube and are archived on the CSLB website. Member Galarza also stated PAO has prioritized producing Spanish-translated videos for consumers and directed the board to a list of live videos on page 157 of the board packet.

Chair Galarza directed the Board to page 158 of the board packet and discussed the PAO's efforts to increase CSLB's social media following by engaging with applicants, licensees, news media, and other stakeholders by maintaining a consistent presence on Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), and LinkedIn. Chair Galarza explained PAO staff remains up to date with trends to improve CSLB's reach to their target audience as evidenced by a top post referencing Taylor Swift and a growing interest in sting operation related posts. Chair Galarza stated page 161 discusses the updated subscriber list has reached 192,000 subscribers and included the Licensee information listserv. Chair Galarza explained the subscriber list is also a source for distributing CSLB bulletins and press releases to stakeholders and noted between August and October the release of an industry bulletin related to Spanish exams and the out-of-state test centers, along with five news releases in the same period. Chair Galarza noted news releases included sting operations and arrests.

Chair Galarza explained between August and October PAO has responded to 19 media inquiries related to sting operation results and complaints against contractors.

Chair Galarza directed the board to pages 162 and 163 where they discussed outreach events CSLB attended and highlighted PAO has traveled the state to provide key consumer protection information to seniors and other stakeholders. Chair Galarza noted the "What Seniors Should Know" publication has been frequently distributed during these events.

Chair Galarza explained PAO writes and publishes content for internal communication and highlighted seven employee published intranet articles between August and October that highlighted upcoming meetings, Licensing Division achievements, and the Southern California Enforcement Academy.

Chair Galarza stated CSLB's Public Information Center has improved caller wait times and noted the decrease from three minutes in October to two minutes in November.



Board Member Comment

Board Chair Love thanked all the CSLB committees for meeting and providing the Board, the public and stakeholders with key consumer protection information.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Closed Session

- I. Closed Session: Pursuant to Government Code section 11126(e)(1), the Board will move into closed session to confer with, and receive advice from, its legal counsel regarding the following pending litigation: Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 20STCV45568.

- J. Closed Session: Pursuant to Government Code section 11126(c)(17), the Board will move into closed session to review, discuss, and take possible action on the salary or other compensation of the Registrar.

The Board returned from closed session at approximately 12:58 p.m.

Open Session

- K. Report on Action Taken in Closed Session on the Salary or Other Compensation of the Registrar

L. Adjournment

Chair Love adjourned the Board meeting at approximately 1:00 p.m.