

**Michelle Lujan Grisham**

*Governor*

**Dylan K. Lange**

*Director*

**Cynthia Sandoval**

*Deputy Director*



**State Personnel Board**

Carol A. Parker, *Vice Chair*

Kari Fresquez, *Member*

Sandra D. Lopez, *Member*

L. Teresa Padilla, *Member*

Fred Radosevich, *Member*

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**State Personnel Board Meeting**  
**Willie Ortiz Building**  
**2600 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM**  
**Friday, December 12, 2025 – 9:00 AM**  
**MINUTES**

Member Lopez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Director Lange led the Pledge of Allegiance and called roll confirming a quorum with the following present: Members Lopez, Fresquez and Padilla.

Absent: Vice Chair Parker, Member Radosevich

Call for Public Comment – Ms. Forlizzi, SPO Board Administrator, stated that no requests for public comment had been received either via email or in person.

Member Fresquez moved to approve the meeting agenda; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; agenda adopted.

Member Fresquez moved to approve the October 24, 2025 meeting minutes; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; minutes approved as written.

**Annual Compensation Plan**

Melanie Morgan, SPO Classification & Compensation Executive Manager, requested approval for the Annual Compensation Plan and reviewed the data and highlights. Morgan said we now have the tools, structure and software available to assist in moving forward. Job Architecture modernized the system.

Member Fresquez mentioned the elimination of Alternate Pay Bands and asked if there is an opportunity for those actions to sneak back in and what is process should we run into this

going forward.

Morgan answered that APBs may be needed in the future as they are still available in SPO rules, and we need to settle into this new system for now.

Director Lange added we intend to look at the pay bands to support growth within a classification and if we need an adjustment, we can adjust the structure to accommodate.

Member Padilla asked about the annual benchmarking review, how will they be determined?

Morgan replied we have quite an extensive process outlined.

Austin Basham explained the philosophy saying we looked at classifications most frequently advertised and will select benchmarks based on vacancies and retention rates.

Padilla said she appreciates the work that goes into this given the changes and inherent challenges.

Lange added we can have class & comp do audits more frequently with the additional tools.

With the software, we can look at the actual series and be able to benchmark at any point in time. We have not been positioned to do this until now.

Member Lopez said this is a fantastic report and great tool – kudos to the entire team.

Member Padilla moved to approve the Annual Compensation Plan; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; motion carried.

### **Annual Classification Plan**

Melanie Morgan requested approval and adoption of the annual compensation plan. No questions.

Member Fresquez moved to approve; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; motion carried.

Director Lange said the plans just approved will help standardize the classifications and he appreciates the thoroughness of the team and the board.

### **Adult Protective Services Caseworkers, Re-evaluation Study**

Alyssa Ashbacher, SPO Compensation & Classification Analyst requested approval to update the series necessary for the new entry level position and adjustment of pay grades based on updated roles. ALTSD challenges were identified due to role ambiguity and recruitment challenges so this classification framework more accurately reflects the

investigative responsibilities at the intermediate level.

Ashbacher introduced SMEs in attendance and available for questions - Corey Roybal, April Jimenez and Agnes Szuber-Wozniak from ALTSD.

Fresquez commented that this is an example of an appropriate use of a class study and she thanked SPO for being willing to listen and make changes as needed.

Member Padilla moved to approve the reevaluation study; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; motion carried.

### **Supervisor, IT Systems Administration Class Study**

Alyssa Ashbacher requested approval of the addition of Supervisor as requested by DWS as we saw there was not an entry-level management tier, so agencies were limited to placing staff in a senior technical role or a full managerial role. This allows for a clear career track. SMEs in attendance were Pennington Carter and Sueanne Athens from DWS.

Member Fresquez commented that in looking at full series, looks like the new supervisor will be at a pay band 11, which is the same.

Ashbacher agreed and said while they are in the same pay band, agencies have room to move at each level.

Member Fresquez moved to approve; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; motion carries.

### **Claims Adjuster Series Re-evaluation Study and Lead Claims Adjuster Classification Study**

Austin Basham, SPO Compensation & Classification Supervisor requested approval for adjustments. DWS requested the study due to a misalignment through Job Architecture (JA). SME in attendance was Lynne Throop from DWS. No questions.

Member Padilla moved to approve; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; motion carried.

### **Medical Malpractice Adjuster Class Study**

Austin Basham requested approval for the Medical Malpractice Adjuster Class Study. NM is one of 8 states with a Patient Compensation Fund (PCF) and serves as an excess insurer. Previously this was provided by a third-party contractor, but OSI seeks to bring these

adjustment services in-house, and it requires an adequate classification to achieve this. SME in attendance is OSI General Counsel Stephen Thies.

Fresquez said she would like to hear from agency asking what we are changing and how we have arrived at the qualifications.

Stephen Thies replied that previously, OSI did not employ adjusters. Since 2021, a 3<sup>rd</sup> party administrator has been handling; contract expired at the end of this year so bringing these adjusters in-house prevents legal issues and allows more oversight over the claims adjusting services. Medical malpractice claims often are complex.

Fresquez commented that it seems like a technical position with intricate information. How many adjustors will you hire?

Thies said three primary and one supervisory adjustor.

Padilla asked with implementation, do you have a plan for recruitment?

Thies replied they received waivers to hire existing adjustors who were recruited to add continuity and thanked Director Lange and SPO for that.

Member Fresquez moved to approve; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; motion carried.

Lange celebrated the Comp & Class team making sure individuals were brought in quickly to retain these experienced personnel.

### **Manager, Behavioral Health Re-evaluation Study**

Micaela Apodaca, SPO Compensation & Classification Analyst requested approval for a new manager level for CYFD as it is currently missing a manager level between the supervisor and senior manager positions, causing misalignment. SME was Elizabeth Hamilton, Deputy Director for CYFD BHS.

No questions.

Member Padilla moved to approve; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; motion carried.

### **Supervisor, Physical Therapist Re-evaluation Study**

Micaela Apodaca request approval for the Reevaluation Study initiated due to misalignment during JA process. SME present was HC Hawkins, DOH HR Director.

Fresquez asked if the Occupational therapist supervisor and the new PT supervisor are at the

same pay band?

HC Hawkins said this classification had not gotten much attention and lost positions needed to reclass for other positions. We are anticipating the need to be fiscally responsible. Will advance recruitment and pay accordingly as needed.

Member Fresquez moved to approve; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; motion carried.

### **Request for Approval to Initiate Rulemaking**

Leigh Messerer, SPO General Counsel requested approval to initiate the rulemaking process for 1.7.1 NMAC; 1.7.3 NMAC and 1.7.4 NMAC.

Messerer noted there is an error in packet on 1.7.4.9; did not show what is removed, so language is updated.

Cynthia Sandoval, SPO Deputy Director explained the major reasons for changes; some clean up partly due to JA; moved a piece to a different rule; clarified pay section on application.

Member Fresquez asked about 1.7.1 – change to Learning & Development.

Messerer replied we implemented new HR training on discipline and had a request to make them mandatory along with other courses, so this will give flexibility around mandatory piece to be approved by the SPO director.

Director Lange added this gives us flexibility as we move forward and adjust to realities of AI or discipline, we want to be able to make certain trainings mandatory as we move forward to ensure uniform application.

Fresquez noted the annual training plan is already in place, does this provide flexibility to be more nimble outside of that annual process.

Sandoval replied that the annual training plan shows what the team has planned for the year. There are only 2 mandatory training courses now, but this allows flexibility; we won't make trainings mandatory without going through the board.

Fresquez said she supports the ability to see what's going on in real time, observe the trends, and adjust accordingly.

Member Padilla commented on rule 1.7.3 – she noticed most of this is to insert SPO director. 1.7.3.9 still says director; Messerer said we will add SPO director.

Fresquez asked for 1.7.4.9, can you give context to change? Assignment of pay bands.

Deputy Director Sandoval explained that this allows us to clarify benchmarks and present to board for future adoption.

Director Lange followed that this was a big change; moving away from Hay methodology and moving to Market puts the validation group where it belongs. This board can do so much more for state employees. Discussed multi-lingual pay and allows that to give agencies flexibility to compensate those who are performing those duties.

Member Lopez said she is excited about the Market based philosophy, it was very scientific, so she appreciates this shift and it is current for the time across the board.

Member Padilla added she is also on the Hay committee and agrees with member Lopez.

Sandoval said one of the issues with Hay was not compensating based on what Market was doing. We are leaving APB in the rule, hoping there is no need for that.

Member Padilla moved to initiate rulemaking 1.7.1; 1.7.3 and 1.7.4; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; motion carried.

### **2026 Paid Holiday Dates**

Director Lange requested approval for paid holiday leave; noting we borrow the president's day holiday and add it to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Member Fresquez moved to approve; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; motion carried. Dates adopted.

### **2026 State Personnel Board Meeting Dates**

Member Padilla moved to approve the 2026 dates; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; meeting dates adopted.

### **Director Report**

Lange gave the following report:

**Staff update** - Melanie Morgan has moved into a newly created executive manager position which allows consistency in the staff, moving into this position acknowledges her great work and excellence within our team.

**Performance measures** – we are staying laser focused on lowering time to fill by supporting agencies – one way is to repurpose or remove positions that show up as vacancies and are either no longer relevant, helping to lower vacancy rates with good data. We find more people applying to SoNM as an employer of choice. This keeps us honest when looking at the data and developments.

Member Fresquez referring to the report said she appreciates the points on time-to-fill (TTF); what do you think it would take to get TTF down?

Lange said it's a heavy lift; if you talk to an agency, there's different stoppage points for each agency and classification; we have a plan to ensure we support agencies fully. Each agency has different pain points, so we continuously work with them to lower this.

Sandoval added that situations are unique to agencies; and are internally slowed down so we are looking at a small case study to explore and share findings over the course of the year.

Fresquez asked are we able to capture metrics to quantify how long it takes when SPO is involved. What's the turnaround here?

Sandoval said agencies do the actual job posting; SPO is tasked to release the posting and our turnaround time is typically 30 minutes.

Member Padilla said the numbers represent the average and it may be interesting to look at the high and low info.

Sandoval replied that we do have types of positions and agencies driving those numbers up; other factors go into those timelines such as drug tests, background checks, etc. With our data, we look at different job families to see how we can help drive those numbers down.

Member Lopez asked if we were still doing rapid hire events.

Sandoval answered we do have agencies who have authority to do RH where it makes sense. We have a hiring resource program that also offers Speed recruiting; hot jobs listings on SHARE and the SPO website; timelines for agency to close the posting, interview quickly and we've seen success with that. This provides better data and outcomes.

Fresquez asked if we have a way to capture where an applicant's interest initiated?

Sandoval said yes on recruitment if they are going through the application process. The website and Indeed are top ways for hires.

**Adjudication Update**

ALJ Haught presented the Adjudication update referring to the handout noting a 15% increase over last year; appeals continue to be robust. No questions.

**Executive Session:** Administrative Adjudicatory Deliberations

Member Lopez moved to enter Executive Session See NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(3)

Member Padilla seconded; roll call; off the record at 10:28.

Lopez called the board back to open session and on the record at 10:51.

**Motions on Administrative Adjudicatory Deliberations**

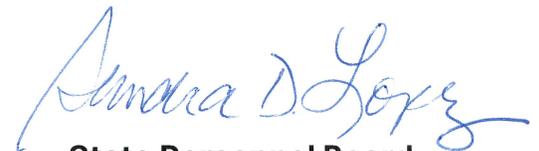
Member Fresquez moved to adopt the recommended decision in *Galvan v. CYFD; Docket No. 24-037*; Member Padilla seconded; roll call; motion carried.

Member Padilla moved to adopt the recommended decision in *Martin v. NMCD; Docket No. 25-010*; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; motion carried.

**Adjournment**

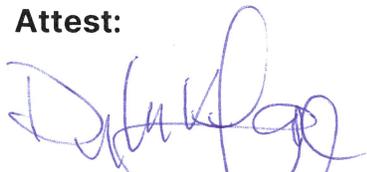
Member Padilla moved to adjourn; Member Fresquez seconded; roll call; meeting adjourned at 10:54.

**Approved:**



**State Personnel Board**

**Attest:**



**Dylan K. Lange, Director  
State Personnel Office**