

**Accountancy Board of Ohio
State of Ohio**

Peer Review Oversight Committee Meeting
Public Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2024
Conference Room 1960, 19th Floor, Vern Riffe Center
77 S. High Street, Columbus, Ohio

PEER REVIEW OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

Mr. Blake called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. The members of the committee present were Megan Durst, Chair, Jillian Brown, and Amr Elaskary.

Mr. Blake introduced the topic of the increase in failed peer reviews. Ms. Jackson stated that finding a peer reviewer – there is a shortage of reviewers – is causing issues in the process as well. While this is outside the scope of the Board, it affects firm licensing.

Ms. Oklok provided a point of conversation: an emerging trend in both unlicensed and formerly licensed (CPA firms which have moved from attest firm to tax/consulting firm status) performing attest work. This issue has grown over the past three years, with consumers calling to report their statements have been rejected by financial institutions as they were not prepared by a CPA firm licensed to perform the engagement. Some consumers have declined to file a complaint or are exploring legal avenues to address the issues. This leaves the Board unable to address these matters timely, if at all. Ms. Oklok stated that while the time and cost of peer review may not be directly related to these matters, it may be creating a scenario in which a firm which completes attest engagements for their tax clients moves to tax/consulting firm status but continues to perform those engagements.

The committee members discussed the need for better communication when firms move from an attest registration to tax/consulting registration, to ensure that the responsible CPA understands their responsibilities as a non-attest firm. They discussed educating licensees regarding those who are permissible to perform peer reviews. The Board members discussed providing specific language to address this topic. Ms. Oklok stated she would work with firm administrator Kelly Kelly to address this issue in an email notification at the time of firm status change, on the request of Mr. Elaskary and Ms. Durst.

The Board members discussed additional reasons for the decline of peer reviewers. Laura Hay, Executive Vice President of the Ohio Society of CPAs (OSCPA) spoke to the outreach and recruiting OSCPAs has undertaken to build the base of peer reviewers in Ohio. At the beginning of the season, peer reviewers can attend a free course and are encouraged to attend with individuals who may perform peer reviews in the future. She stated that reviewers experience time and return on investment issues in compliance, and others use the review process as a merger and acquisitions tool. Ms. Hay also stated that reviewers can accept additional clients in Ohio and other states and set their own rates.

Mr. Blake adjourned the peer review oversight committee meeting at 9:33 a.m.

R. Scott Blake, Public Member, Chair