

## **Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission**

### **Minutes**

**August 12, 2021**

The inaugural meeting of the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission was held in S-201 in the Alabama State Capitol on August 12, 2021.

The meeting was convened by Mr. Dwight Gamble at 1:10pm.

After welcoming remarks by Mr. Gamble, Commission members introduced themselves and thanked State officials for their appointments to the Commission. Members present for the meeting were Dr. William Saliski Jr., Mr. Sam Blakemore, Mr. Dwight Gamble, Dr. Angela Martin, Dr. Eric Jensen, Ms. Loree Skelton, Mr. Rex Vaughn, Judge Charles Price, Dr. Steven Stokes, Ms. Taylor Hatchett, Mr. James Harwell, Dr. Jerzy P. Szaflarski, Ms. Katherine Robertson, and Special Agent Dion Robinson.

Following introductions, Mr. Gamble introduced Governor Ivey. The Governor first thanked Senator Tim Melson of Florence for his diligent efforts in passing the Medical Cannabis legislation. Governor Ivey also thanked the Commission members for their participation, emphasizing the importance of the task at hand, the overarching goal of establishing criteria for the legal use of Medical Cannabis. Governor Ivey highlighted the importance of getting it right and that transparency and ethics must be included in every aspect of the Commission's work.

After the Governor spoke, the Commission moved on to organizational matters. Mr. Gamble nominated Dr. Steve Stokes to serve as Chair of the Commission. Mr. Rex Vaughn seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously for Dr. Stokes to serve as Chair of the commission. Upon confirmation of the Chair, Dr. Stokes nominated Mr. Rex Vaughn to serve as Vice Chair of the Commission. Ms. Loree Skelton seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Rex Vaughn as Vice Chair. As a reminder, Chairman Stokes noted that the Commission will abide by "Robert's Rules" in its meetings. He also went on to stress the crucial timeline and the upcoming deadlines.

After the nominations of the Chair and Vice Chair, Chairman Stokes outlined the objectives of the commission, which included five critical subcommittees. Chairman Stokes nominated Mr. Gamble to Chair the first subcommittee to search for an Executive Director for the Commission. Chairman Stokes also appointed Mr. Vaughn, Ms. Skelton, and Judge Price to serve on the search committee.

For the subcommittee on Physician Certifications, Chairman Stokes appointed Dr. Saliski as Chair, along with Dr. Martin and Dr. Szaflarski, to create the Education and Certification Curriculum for Physicians. Chairman Stokes appointed Mr. Mark Jackson from the Medical Association of the State of Alabama to assist the committee. Chairman Stokes also stressed the need for physicians willing to complete the instruction, tests, fees, and hours necessary to receive that certification.

For the subcommittee on Producers, Chairman Stokes appointed Mr. Vaughn as Chair of the committee, along with Ms. Hatchett, Mr. Harwell, and Judge Price. Dr. Stokes noted that at least twenty percent of the cultivators must be minority-based, and all farmers must have resided in Alabama for at least fifteen years.

For the subcommittee on Processing Permits, Chairman Stokes appointed Dr. Jensen as Chair of the committee, along with Mr. Blakemore, Ms. Skelton, and Special Agent Robinson. Chairman Stokes emphasized arbitration to avoid litigation. For the subcommittee on Dispensaries, Chairman Stokes appointed Mr. Blakemore to Chair the subcommittee, along with Special Agent Robinson and Ms. Robertson. In reference to all of the subcommittees, Chairman Stokes stressed the importance of dividing the workload.

During the regular business portion of the meeting, it was decided that the Commission will meet every second Thursday of each month until the first of the year.

In closing comments, there were additional questions about video conferencing and access to online meetings. Chairman Stokes noted the Commission will provide the necessary links and access to members unable to attend in person. Dr. Martin had a question relative to the historical development of medical cannabis and stressed the need for a subcommittee to study the timeline of cannabis in Alabama. Chairman Stokes spoke favorably of the idea and there were ensuing discussions about funding and grants that may be available to help aid in that research. Chairman Stokes also mentioned institutional grants that could be used for the project as well as soft data studies that need to take place. Dr. Saliski had a question relative to the indications and the future of postoperative pain. Chairman Stokes then ended the meeting and spoke on the benefits of what Medical Cannabis can do for Alabamians in the future. He also stressed the need for more research into Medical Cannabis.

The next meeting of the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission will take place in Room 200 of the Alabama State House on August 25th, at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.