

## Minutes

Arkansas State Board of Optometry  
Regular Board Meeting  
Freeway Medical Tower Building  
February 19, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Board President, Dr. Beatrice Reed at 1:30 p.m. The following board members were present: Dr. Beatrice Reed, Dr. Susan DeBlack, Dr. Robert Fitzhugh, Dr. James Hertzog, and Dr. Matt Jones. The two consumer representative positions are open and awaiting appointments. Others present: Jessica Kloss, Board Counsel; Suzette Weast, Board Director; Matt Burns, ArOA Executive Director; Dr. Randy Bell; Dr. Stephen Edwards; Matt Gillmore, ADH; and Dr. Sarah Thrower.

Dr. Fitzhugh presented the minutes from the November 20, 2025 meeting. A motion was made by Dr. DeBlack and seconded by Dr. Jones to approve as presented. The motion passed.

The State Board update was presented by Mrs. Weast including reports on financials and license renewals. A motion was made by Dr. Jones and seconded by Dr. Hertzog to approve the financial report as presented. The motion passed.

Dr. Reed introduced the licensure by examination candidate, Dr. Sarah Thrower. Dr. Thrower will be licensed upon return of completed logbook.

Dr. Reed introduced endorsement candidate, Dr. Stephen Edwards. A motion was made by Dr. Hertzog and seconded by Dr. Jones to accept the licentiate by endorsement. The motion passed.

A late license renewal request from Dr. Randall Bell was presented by Mr. Weast. Dr. Bell spoke to the board requesting to renew as retired. A motion was made by Dr. Jones and seconded by Dr. Hertzog to allow late renewal with no penalty. The motion passed.

The Advanced Procedures Surgical Outcomes Report was presented by Mrs. Weast.

Dr. Fitzhugh provided an update of no active complaints from Complaint Committee.

Dr. Reed requested revision of the License Renewal document to include the board secretary's signature as it has been in the past. A motion was made by Dr. Fitzhugh and seconded by Dr. DeBlack to add the board secretary signature to the renewal license. The motion passed.

Dr. Reed led a discussion on options for inactive/retired ODs to reactivate licensure which currently has no provision for lapsed licenses. A motion to table the discussion was made by Dr. DeBlack and seconded by Dr. Hertzog. The motion passed.

Dr. Reed requested approval of the 2026 non-COPE continuing education submitted by Southern Eye Associates. A motion was made by Dr. Jones and second by Dr. DeBlack to approve the continuing education events. The motion passed.

Dr. Reed presented the ArOA Spring Convention continuing education events. A motion made by Dr. DeBlack and second by Dr. Jones to approve the courses as discussed. The motion passed.

Election of Officers: The current officers were reelected as Dr. Reed – President, Dr. DeBlack – Vice-President, and Dr. Fitzhugh – Board Secretary.

Suzette Weast presented the ARBO Inquiry requesting board directors to report if boards will add the LSPE to NBEO Exam requirements. A discussion ensued and LSPE will not be added to Arkansas licensure requirements regarding the NBEO exam

Board Rules Review Part I from Chapter 1, Article I – Chapter 1, Article VI was led by Dr. DeBlack.

Meeting Dates:

Next Meeting - April 23, 2026


2026 ArOA Jurisprudence Course – Friday, May 8, 2026, 4:30 p.m.


ARBO Annual Meeting: June 12-14, 2026, in Phoenix

AOA Convention: June 17-20, 2026, in Phoenix

Dr. DeBlack made a motion for per diem and mileage. Dr. Jones made a second. The motion passed.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Fitzhugh and seconded by Dr. DeBlack. The motion passed.

  
Beatrice Reed, OD, President

  
Robert Fitzhugh, OD, Secretary