

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY**

**FULL BOARD MEETING**

**August 26, 2020**

**8:30 a.m.**

**WebEx Videoconference/Teleconference**

**Volume 1 of 2**

**Originating at:**

3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 120

Anchorage, Alaska

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**Trustees Present:**

Chris Cooke, Chair

Rhonda Boyles

John Sturgeon

Laraine Derr

Ken McCarty

Verne' Boerner

Anita Halterman

**Trust Staff Present:**

Mike Abbott

Steve Williams

Carol Howarth

Miri Smith-Coolidge

Kelda Barstad

Luke Lind

Michael Baldwin

Carrie Predeger

Katie Baldwin-Johnson

Jimael Johnson

Valette Keller

Eric Boyer

Autumn Vea

Allison Biastock

Kat Roch

**Trust Land Office:**

Wyn Menefee

Jusdi Doucet

Sarah Morrison

Paul Slenkamp

Holly Chalup

**Also participating:**

Jason Lessard; Natalie Frazier; Zoe Kaplan; Beverly Schoonover; Kristin Boyer; Lesley Thompson; Lisa Cauble; Stephanie Hopkins; Jillian Gellings; Michael Bailey; Jenny Weissaupt; Anne Applegate; Brenda Moore; Lisa Cauble; Kim Champney; Becky Carpenter; Stuart Goering; Charlene Tautest; Gordon Glazer; Rita Gray; Lizette Stiehr; Brandi Burchett.

**PROCEEDINGS**

**CALL TO ORDER**

CHAIR COOKE called the meeting to order and began with a roll call. With all the trustees but Rhonda Boyles present, he asked for any announcements. There being none, he moved to the agenda. He asked for any changes or amendments to the agenda. There being none, he asked for an approval.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the agenda was made by TRUSTEE DERR; seconded by TRUSTEE BOERNER.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED unanimously. (Trustees Boerner, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke).*

CHAIR COOKE moved to the review of the Guiding Principles that were in the meeting materials. There being no discussion, he moved to any ethics disclosures for the meeting. There being none, he moved to the minutes from April and May.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes of April 23, 2020, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE STURGEON.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED unanimously. (Trustees Boerner, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke).*

CHAIR COOKE moved to the minutes from the May 20 and 21, 2020.

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes of May 20-21, 2020 was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE STURGEON.

TRUSTEE McCARTY asked for a correction in the spelling of Ski Kowalewski, a member of Chugiak Senior Center that celebrated his 100th birthday.

CHAIR COOKE asked that the change be made and called the vote on the motion. He also noted that Trustee Boyles was present.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED unanimously. (Trustees Boerner,*

*Boyles, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke).*

CHAIR COOKE stated that the current bylaws are in the packet and moved to the Mission Moment.

## **MISSION MOMENT**

MR. WILLIAMS introduced Jason Lessard, the executive director of NAMI in Anchorage. He continued that Mr. Lessard brought two young individuals, Natalie Frasier and Zoe Kaplan, who will share their stories. He added that Mr. Lessard has been with NAMI for a number of years and has been engaged in working with students; in particular, the MHATS, Mental Health Advocacy Training Through Storytelling, program.

MR. LESSARD thanked the trustees for all the work they do and for the continual support given to NAMI Alaska. He stated that the work done in the community has primarily focused on the following three pillars: Support, education, and advocacy. There are support groups for folks that experience mental health conditions as well as for their friends and family members. He continued that there are education programs that target both of those groups, as well as the stakeholders in the community for professionals that do a fair amount of advocacy work. He stated that a lot of work was done with the MHATS group on HB 181, which would put mental health into the Alaska standards for the health curriculum. He introduced Zoe Kaplan.

MS. KAPLAN stated that on her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, January 24, 2017, she was diagnosed with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, POTS, which shows up differently in everyone. For her it means that her heart does not pump her blood from her feet, back through her legs, back to her heart. So oxygen does not circulate through her body and does not get to her brain. She explained that eventually she would pass out and faint if she stood for long enough. She added that she has chronic fatigue, lots of fainting, nausea, chronic headaches and cold and flu symptoms. Prediagnosis her health deteriorated quickly, and she took off the end of her ninth-grade semester to gain strength and stamina before starting tenth grade. She continued that, in the fall she felt completely prepared and started off doing an entire six-class schedule, which went really well for the first two weeks, and then she got hit with the fall flu, which left her bedridden for weeks. She had been told that recovery for POTS was nonlinear. This was the first down she experienced, and she lost most of her motivation to do things. She continued that she did not know when this depressive episode started, but she could trace the roots of her mental health back to seventh grade. Before her POTS diagnosis, she had been getting diagnosed with everything from pneumonia to asthma to viral meningitis. She had been tested and seeing doctors for almost a year and no doctor had any idea what was wrong with her. She added that her parents became convinced that her symptoms were mental health, manifesting as physical symptoms, and they started her in therapy. She stated that therapy really helped, and she was able to articulate what was going on and what she was feeling. However, the constant cycle of getting ill and staying ill continued. She continued that by the time she received her official diagnosis she was exhausted and was lucky that her parents were not. They told her that taking care of herself was a necessary step towards feeling better. She has had a lot more downs but has even had more ups. The younger her needed the current her, and she is proud of that. She fainted a few days ago and did not get upset, sad or disappointed in herself. She now knows that she is stronger than anything her body can hand her, and much stronger than anything her mind tells her. She thanked the trustees.

MR. LESSARD stated that he met both of these individuals as students at West. Ms. Kaplan is still a student, and Natalie Frasier is a recent graduate on her way to university.

MS. FRASIER stated that she and Zoe Kaplan founded MHATS about two years ago. It is structured as a ten-week program with the first five weeks as storyteller development. Typically, they convince six storytellers, high school students 14 to 18, to sign up to be MHATS storytellers. They spend the first five meetings learning different skills. She continued that there is an intro to storytelling, an intro to mental health, and an intro to advocacy; the three areas that MHATS really focuses on. The next five weeks are spent actually developing stories, sharing feedback, and preparing for the final event, a live storytelling show. There were three storytelling shows, two in-person and then one was a drive-up to allow for social distancing because of COVID. She stated that the first thing focused on is the destigmatization. They sign up to gain the skill and to practice this advocacy. They learn how to shape their own narrative to see their lives from the position of positive strength. Then they take that skill and tell a room full of their peers what they have been through which normalizes the conversation about mental health. She continued that she and Zoe told their stories at the first MHATS show to about 180 fellow teachers, students, parents, peers, and mentors. More storytellers have joined, all students. She then talked about NAMI's role. When they started they wanted an organization that had more experience with mental health, and NAMI has added the advocacy teeth. She added that in this session they started focusing on HB 181, which is a bill by Representative Matt Claman that would introduce mental health education into the current Alaska state health education curriculum. She stated that she worked as a NAMI summer intern and did a lot of policy research. It allowed a connection with other teens across the country doing mental health policy work. This enabled the taking of the personal stories of dealing with mental health in high school, dealing with hardship, and using those to talk to legislators about why mental health education is so essential to high-schoolers.

CHAIR COOKE thanked all three for the very uplifting, inspiring, and thought-provoking presentation.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that it was impressive to see these young ladies rising to the occasion to address a serious issue in our state and country. She continued that both should try to stay strong, and she thanked them for their presentations.

TRUSTEE BOERNER stated that it was so powerful and both ladies did an amazing job with their presentations. She was extremely moved and appreciated the storytelling aspect of it.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that the presentation was very impressive and touching, and she thanked them.

TRUSTEE DERR agreed with the prior trustees' comments and was impressed by both of these young women's presentations.

TRUSTEE McCARTY stated that he was very impressed. The power of narrative therapy as described is changing their narrative. He added that he was very impressed by the potential bill.

TRUSTEE STURGEON thanked both young ladies. He stated that Ms. Kaplan has some

incredible parents, and they should always get a pat on the back for all the support given over the years. It was a very impressive story.

CHAIR COOKE shared the sentiments expressed by everyone else. He stated that he was not aware of POTS until the presentation, and he admired her courage and strength in dealing with this and pursuing the identification of the malady and still maintaining that positive attitude and the willingness to share her story. He added that the presentations were terrific, and he loves hearing from young people reminding the older folks that the future is in good hands.

MS. FRASIER stated more information would be found at mhatsak.org. She continued that part of the goal was to create this space that was helpful, and for more people to have access to it.

MR. LESSARD thanked all for the opportunity to present to the Full Board. We are honored to be able to show off the program.

## **BOARD ELECTIONS**

CHAIR COOKE stated that the next item on the agenda was the board elections. The bylaws are in the packet and Article V dealing with officers and their duties is on page 53. He continued that there are three offices to select: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. He asked for nominations for Chair.

TRUSTEE BOERNER nominated TRUSTEE COOKE as chair. TRUSTEE STURGEON seconded.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any other nominations three times. There being no other nominations, the nominations for Chair were closed.

**MOTION: A motion to move for unanimous ballot was made by TRUSTEE DERR; seconded by TRUSTEE McCARTY.**

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED unanimously. (Trustees Boerner, Boyles, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke.)*

CHAIR COOKE thanked all for entrusting him with the position. He asked for any nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

TRUSTEE BOERNER nominated TRUSTEE HALTERMAN for Vice Chair; seconded by TRUSTEE DERR.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any other nominations three times. There being no other nominations, the nominations for Vice Chair were closed.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED unanimously. (Trustees Boerner, Boyles, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke.)*

CHAIR COOKE stated that Trustee Anita Halterman will continue as Vice Chair. He continued that the third officer to be elected is for the position of Secretary. He asked for any nominations.

TRUSTEE DERR nominated TRUSTEE BOYLES as Secretary; seconded by TRUSTEE McCARTY.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any other nominations three times. There being no other nominations, the nominations for Secretary were closed.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED unanimously. (Trustees Boerner, Boyles, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke.)*

CHAIR COOKE stated that the three officers have been elected. He continued that one of the things the Chair does is appoint committee chairs. There are active committees, although all board members are members of those committees. He continued to his appointments and hoped that Laraine Derr would continue as Finance Chair; Trustee Halterman as Audit & Risk Chair; Trustee Sturgeon as Resource Management Chair; and Trustee Boerner as Program & Planning Committee Chair. He added that he spoke to each one about continuing in those capacities, and they agreed. Those appointments will continue, and he thanked them all for their service. He stated that an exercise that the board participates in is to recommend to the Governor names of people who expressed an interest and are shown to be qualified to become trustees. He continued that the board usually had a representative on that committee, as well as representatives of the partner boards. He asked Anita Halterman if she would be willing to be the board's representative on the nominating panel, although there is still a need for some clarification with Boards and Commissions as to how the Governor's Office will employ that.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that she would gladly take that on.

CHAIR COOKE stated that the thing to do would be to coordinate with Mr. Abbott about getting public notice out on possible vacancies on the board and coordinating with the Governor's Office about the sequence of the timing for getting the nominations, screening and making recommendations done. He concluded the selection of officers and the appointing of committee chairs, and he recognized Mike Abbott for the staff report.

## **CEO REPORT**

MR. ABBOTT first recognized Trustee Sturgeon for his generous contribution of a little more than 2,000 N95 masks to the Trust to share with the beneficiary-servicing partners. He explained that these masks are suitable for clinical settings and can be expensive and hard to find at different times and places. As a result, masks were distributed to about a dozen organizations including Fairbanks Native Association, Polaris House, Crossroads, the Glory Hall, Brother Francis in Kodiak, the Door Shelter, RurAL CAP, Shiloh Housing, Covenant House, AWAIC, as well as Partners for Progress and Alaska Behavioral Health. He thanked Trustee Sturgeon for thinking of the Trust partners and beneficiaries they serve and making that generous contribution. He stated that Trustee McCarty was doing well in the balloting for the Republican nomination in House District 13 and wished him all the best. He then provided an update on what was going on related to the Trust's response to COVID in Alaska as a result of the trustees' decisions to allocate a little bit more than \$1.5 million and have issued grants totaling right at that amount. There is a little less than \$20,000 remaining in that allocation. He continued that the flow of applications has slowed considerably as a result of a number of factors as the partner

agencies adapt to new systems that allow them to serve Trust beneficiaries and gain revenue for those services. He added that the near-term and medium-term future need for continuing funding will be evaluated, and will be discussed at the Program & Planning Committee meeting in October. He also highlighted that another indirect impact on the beneficiaries related to the pandemic is the condition of the Alaska economy. Recent reports from State and other sources indicate that there have been significant job losses in every sector of the Alaska economy, with the exception of the Federal Government. Although this hits Alaskans across the board, it hits the beneficiaries particularly hard because of the value of employment to beneficiaries as they address mental health, behavioral health, developmental disability challenges. This is a critical factor and may be a more lasting concern than the pandemic. He highlighted a recent Supreme Court decision was issued on a case that addressed the status of a land transfer from the State to the Trust for No Name Bay, with substantial timber values. The transfer was challenged by the Southeast Alaska Conservation Commission who are declaring victory based on the outcome of this case. He stated that there is not much of a final status report on what this means for the Trust Land Office at this time. He gave an update on some recent developments at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute. A new CEO, Scott York, was hired; new to Alaska, but not to managing institutions like API. He explained that the Department of Health & Social Services created a governance board to help make decisions related to API. That board included representatives from a variety of stakeholders, including the Mental Health Board and others. Some of those board members stated concern as to whether or not the Trust should be a voting or nonvoting member of that board. A nonvoting role was decided on to preserve the independence related as a potential funder and a potential critic of activity at API. Ms. Baldwin-Johnson continues to represent the Trust and actively participates on the board. He gave a brief update on the status of the financial audit and stated that the interim audit was completed. The full audit will occur in about a month. He asked for any questions.

TRUSTEE STURGEON commented on the difficulty of resource development in Alaska. Every resource development project is challenged and not necessarily on the merits of the case. It is important that people are educated on the connection between the benefits of the Trust, the money sent out, and the State of Alaska's economy linked to resource development.

TRUSTEE BOERNER stated missing the on-site visits to some of the beneficiaries and the partners.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that Trustee Sturgeon made some statements that are important to note: The fact that the Trust cannot do what is done without resource development. She asked how to message that to the public to gain more cooperation over some of these resource development projects, because there is resistance from the environmental groups.

MR. ABBOTT replied that he would forward to all the trustees the media work that staff has been doing primarily in Southeast Alaska. That is where quite a bit of the most impactful resource development activity is either occurring or anticipated, making sure that people understand that the resource development activities support the beneficiaries in those communities.

CHAIR COOKE moved on to the Alaska Commission on Aging and recognized Lesley Thompson.

## ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

MS. THOMPSON stated that online is the chairperson, Gordon Glaser; and Rita Gray, director of the MASST program, will speak about employment with seniors. She continued that she is the interim executive director, and the executive committee is looking for a new executive director. They have also been working with the State on needing to revise anything and potentially looking at having that position be on the road system. The position should be posted on Workplace Alaska next Monday.

MR. GLASER stated appreciation for the work of the Trust and added that he was available to answer any questions.

MS. THOMPSON continued that she worked with the Commission on Aging for 14 years and loved working with both youths and seniors. She continued that the mission is “To ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education and interagency cooperation.” She added that the Commission consists of 11 commissioners that are appointed by the Governor, with the exception of two Commission positions, with the Department of Health & Social Services, and Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The Commissioner appoints those folks to sit in with the Commission. The chair from the Pioneer Homes is also part of the Commission. The Alaskans represented are 60 and older, which gives a constituency of about 140,000. They all have different needs, wants, desires, incomes, ethnicities, making a huge constituency. Within that there is also a beneficiary population and the people being serviced is expanding. The Commission is primarily responsible for a comprehensive state plan that has to be done every four years, and we are already in year 2 of the new comp plan. She talked about the challenge with more people with Alzheimer’s and related dementias because it is a very expensive disease, both medical-wise and caregiving-wise. She moved to the workforce and stated that seniors were very hard hit with this issue. The Department of Labor has been working on this and Rita Gray, from Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training, will talk about what is going on with the State and how they are working with seniors 55 and older that are mainly beneficiaries.

MS. GRAY stated that her purpose here is to ask for Trust assistance in looking for host sites. With COVID, all state agencies, senior centers, nonprofits, are closed. There is nowhere for seniors to go for assistance for computer training, setting up electronic resumes, trying to get in for job interviews. She continued that there are about 70 openings in the program because so many seniors have stepped back and are not ready. There are another 60 trying to find host sites. She added that there will be a lot of letters going out to state agencies and nonprofits, asking for any public volunteer positions to put in a senior for training. She asked for the Trust’s help in finding public nonprofits, governmental agencies willing to train seniors to come back into the workforce. She stated that they are beneficiaries with 86 percent of them living in desperate poverty and 60 percent are on the verge of homelessness.

MS. THOMPSON stated that the Commission has been a participant of the MASST program for many years and feels it is important to support folks because it is what is supposed to be done and it is a great program. She continued that next month will be Employ Older Alaskans Month, and we will be sending out letters to people who support older workers. She then talked about what is going on with COVID and what is happening with long-term COVID impacts. She



moved to the planning with the legislative session, and continuing to give the most updated information about seniors, their needs, which will include beneficiaries.

TRUSTEE BOERNER thanked both and stated that there are so many benefits to working, both health-wise and mental health-wise. She continued that the working environment is one of those that supports that continued development and protection of mental capacity in aging.

TRUSTEE McCARTY asked about any COVID statistic for Alaskans regarding deaths and the older adults.

MS. THOMPSON replied that there is all kinds of amazing data that the State has, and we can get that information.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that it was a blessing that in Alaska there is such a robust home- and community-based infrastructure. This kept the deaths lower than if there was a more institutional environment. She continued that that is a message that needs to be sent to the legislators to not go in the direction of institutionalization because of the increased risks. She shared a couple of entities that could help with bridging some educational gaps for technology and offered additional contacts and help.

MR. GLASER stated appreciation for the support of the Mental Health Trust. The work with the Alzheimer's Resource Center in terms of providing IT material for them and their families has made the transition significant. In his update he talked about replacing dining at the Griffin senior programs with home-delivery meals. There was a lot of work done and everyone that asked for a meal received one. He continued that the issues of transportation, housing, and nutrition are complicated, and he talked about the local senior programs that have done their best in correcting them. He again thanked the Trust for the help.

CHAIR COOKE thanked all and called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE called the meeting back to order.

MR. ABBOTT explained that Trustee Boyles will be in and out as she deals with a couple of nonTrust issues throughout the day.

CHAIR COOKE stated that there was a quorum and recognized Kristin Vandagriff.

## **GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES & SPECIAL EDUCATION**

MS. VANDAGRIFF began by pointing out that the 26 council members are all fully appointed by the Governor, and we are excited about what the future holds for the council and a lot of the people doing work. She talked about the DD Shared Vision and the component of a meaningful life being the goal, the outcome, the fundamental concept. She talked about the mandatory masks especially on planes with no exception for those with disabilities. This is a major concern in getting the stakeholders' modifications and accommodations. There is an overall feeling of many people with disabilities when going to the community and if they cannot wear a mask due

to that disability they feel harassed with a need to self-isolate. This is a very heartfelt issue on many different sides. Social isolation continues to be a huge issue as group homes and assisted living homes are closed for safety, keeping folks more isolated. Visitors are not allowed. She moved on to special education with parental concern on skill regression. She gave a little update on guardians and visiting with no new guidance on the new mandates for assisted living homes and hospitals since June. The State has essentially moved to a free-choice-versus-mandate format with the Phase I reopening. She moved to the COVID resource tool kit which is Alaska-specific, geared towards the developmental disability population. To work with Senior and Disability Services a webinar format was created as part of their federal grant, with two held so far. It is very important information to work through because a tool kit can feel overwhelming. The plan is to continue the webinars due to demand. She talked about the Empowerment Through Employment Guide and thanked Trustee McCarty for starting them on this process and all the trustees for supporting the effort around employment and realizing that during this pandemic, it is ramped in its importance level. She added that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and we will be working outreach on messaging on social media, e-mail listservs, working with partner networks to highlight this as a great tool. She then transitioned to beneficiary employment and engagement technical assistance, and stated that the COVID-19 employment task force led by DVR Director Duane Mayes continues to be helpful. She stated that she was able to present nationally before the Council on State Governments West for their ADA 30-year Celebrations with Bobby Silverstein, one of the architects of the ADA. She continued that it was an honor to take part and share the work being done in the beneficiary employment and engagement focus area and the good things Alaska is doing on the employment front. She passed along some feedback from the executive committee in regard to the budget in regard to the Alaska Training Cooperative. She shared the huge impact that early intervention can play in a beneficiary's life, and she told her family's story. She stated that Trust funding in this area and its strong focus in the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program plan is truly appreciated.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any information or statistics about how COVID may be affecting the DD segment of the population and what would be considered preexisting conditions that may make them more vulnerable than the average person to the disease.

MS. VANDAGRIFF replied that Lanny Mommsen, who sits on the weekly COVID meetings, has put forward some different data points that would be great to collect. She stated that she did not believe there are current state-specific ones to break out data for disability.

CHAIR COOKE thanked her, and recognized Bev Schoonover.

#### **ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH BOARD/ADVISORY BOARD ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE**

MS. SCHOONOVER talked about how COVID was impacting the folks they serve and then shared information about youth behavioral health concerns. She stated that Alaskan teens and youth were struggling before COVID and talked about the Youth Risk Behavioral Health Survey, which happens every two years. This data is in the Trust Scorecard, in the Comp Plan, and is certainly used statewide on understanding the needs of youth. She explained that this data is broken out for traditional high school students and nontraditional high school students. She went through some of the data and what was found using it. She explained that Project Hope has

passed out Narcan kits statewide to prevent overdoses and OSMAP is including Fentanyl test strips in those tests also, and that is a great thing. She stated that she is very concerned about food and housing security for Alaskan youth. Youth homelessness in Alaska is a super big and very difficult issue. She moved to the kids feeling hopeless and depressed which are all prediagnosis stages. She continued that the Trust is working on getting mental health supports in schools. There are 13 school districts in Alaska starting out in fiscal year '20 with absolutely no counselors or counseling support for the entire district. She added that it is a big issue. She moved to fulfilling their statutory duties of advising trustees on the use of Trust funding. She thanked all the trustees for all of the work, time and thoughtfulness in crafting the two-year budget. She thanked staff for meeting with her board members and staff on the key budget issues and allowing us to provide comment. She stated that the budget is reflective of the needs of the Trust beneficiaries. She continued that they recommend prevention, early childhood interventions and behavioral health supports for youth. She added that two letters were sent about the Alaska Training Cooperative, one from her board directly, and one in cooperation with the Commission on Aging and the Governor's Council. She encouraged reading the reasons why those letters were sent. She talked about the difficulty and pressure the Trust will have over the next two years and added to please ask if more information is needed. She stated that the Trust program staff are subject-matter experts in their fields and were hired because of their professional and personal experiences; what they bring forward is well researched, and they are the greatest asset in the decision-making. She invited the trustees to join their board meetings. The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council Meeting is October 21<sup>st</sup>, and that agenda will also be shared when created. September is Suicide Prevention Month, National Recovery Month, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Month, a busy month.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Schoonover and asked for any questions or comments.

TRUSTEE DERR asked if, on the behavioral impact study, it was just a sample of the numbers of students that took the test, or did only 1800 out of 30-some thousand take this test.

MS. SCHOONOVER replied she did not know the answer to that. She explained that they have a really rigorous study framework and will get back with the answers.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that, as a parent being presented with the option for her children to be surveyed when they were in public school, there was an option to opt out which she would unless she was aware of what the survey was asking. She appreciated the presentation and is concerned about the suicides for the children.

TRUSTEE STURGEON appreciated the presentation and that going in front of this Legislature is going to be like nothing the Trust has ever done before.

MR. BOYER stated that statistically the 1800-plus out of 30,000 would be considered a statistically significant sampling. He added that for Alaska youth 15 to 19 is the highest rate of suicide in the country, which is almost four to five times the national rate.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that in 2013 in Juneau she listened to all of the surveys from all of the surgeons from all over the country talk about the suicides and what could be done. One of the things she remembered was the studies of vitamin D on mental health. The state is deficient in vitamin D and it is just a thought of looking after mental health as well as the

physical health with the proper diet and proper supplements.

CHAIR COOKE agreed that he had heard the pitch on Vitamin D and there is a lot of messaging to be done to try to encourage people to not get overwhelmed by the situation. He called a lunch break.

(Lunch break.)

CHAIR COOKE called the meeting back to order and took attendance, stating that everyone was present. He continued that there is an executive session scheduled to talk about beneficiary priorities with the legal adviser. He asked for a motion.

**MOTION: A motion that the board go into executive session for consultation with legal counsel on beneficiary priorities in connection with the Open Meetings Act, AS 44.62.310 (c) was made by TRUSTEE DERR; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.**

MR. ABBOTT asked for a determination on who would join the trustees in the executive session.

CHAIR COOKE stated Stuart Goering of the Department of Law and Mike Abbott would be needed in the executive session. He called the roll-call vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustees Boerner, Boyles, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke.)*

(Executive session from 1:06 p.m. until 2:25 p.m.)

TRUSTEE DERR noted that the trustees are back in session, and there was no action taken in the executive session.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Derr and called for a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE called the roll and stated that Trustee Boyle is not available for the rest of the afternoon, and all the other trustees are present. He stated that this is the time to consider proposed regulation changes on the allocation of Trust land revenues. He recognized Mr. Abbott.

**MOTION: A motion to adopt the proposed changes to 20 AAC 40.610, as put forth for public comment on July 1, 2020, was made by TRUSTEE DERR; seconded by TRUSTEE McCARTY.**

MR. ABBOTT stated that the action item before the board would adopt the proposed regulation. This is essentially the final substantive step for these regs. He continued that, if approved today, they would then be submitted to the Governor's Office and the Department of Law for what is a relatively mechanical review. Then they would be submitted to the Lieutenant Governor for ultimate inclusion in the Alaska Administrative Code. If these regs are adopted this afternoon,

they should be in effect well before the end of the year. He gave a short background on the development of the regs, and getting them through the promulgation process. That is where we are today. He added that in working with the Department of Law and then with the TLO and the Trust Authority teams there is a set of regs that will usefully help move forward to further develop Trust lands. This would allow the Trust to recover spendable income to be decided to spend on revenue-generating activities on Trust land. It would allow for the allocation of net proceeds to principal rather than the gross proceeds that is the case right now. He continued that this would allow the use of spendable income to enhance the value of the lands without reducing the amount of settlement income that could be used for any purpose at a later date. It will still grow the principal and essentially the invested assets. It will also allow to distinguish between the funds that are invested from settlement income and the principal that is then recovered when an interest in Trust lands are ultimately disposed of. He continued that a standard state regulatory adoption process was followed, and he added that the Trust has the authority to issue regs. They are not done very often, and that was the opportunity that was available here. He added that these are the regs that resulted. There was also the active support of the Department of Law. He then proactively addressed some of the potential questions and concerns. He talked about the impact on beneficiaries and expected that the spendable income would actually increase. He added that these regs, as proposed, will improve the capability of the Trust to impact near- and long-term Trust beneficiaries. He stated that there is a risk associated with this, but that the downside risk is more than outweighed by the potential upside of being able to get more value from Trust lands in the manner described.

CHAIR COOKE asked the trustees for any questions or comments.

A short answer and question-and-answer discussion ensued.

CHAIR COOKE asked if all were ready for the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustees Boerner, Derr, Halterman, McCarty, Sturgeon, and Cooke.)*

MR. ABBOTT stated that staff would keep the trustees apprised of the progress through the final steps in the process.

CHAIR COOKE stated that the final item on the agenda is Public Comment.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIR COOKE read the public comment guidelines and stated that protocol was to speak for up to three minutes. He continued that anyone providing comment should do so in a manner that is respectful of the Board of Trustees and all meeting attendees. The Chair maintains the right to stop public comments that contain inappropriate or inflammatory language or behaviors. He recognized Roger Branson.

MR. BRANSON thanked the trustees for all their hard work and stated that he was a consumer of mental health services. He gave a short history of his experiences and then spoke in support of the Alaska Training Cooperative for workforce development. He stated the need to keep a focus on that, and he supported the funding of that, and also the focus on the transitional-age

youth. He continued that he is on the advisory board for the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness. The transitional-age youth is up to 24 years old, and there is an opportunity to get ahead of and turn the corner before becoming habitualized or going into long-term homelessness. He encouraged more public discussion.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Branson, and recognized Brandi Burchett from Akeela, Inc.

MS. BURCHETT stated that she was the chief clinical officer at Akeela, Inc. She explained that Akeela is a provider of substance-use disorder and mental health services for children and adults in residential and outpatient services, ranging from programs in Ketchikan, Juneau, Kenai, Anchorage, and the Valley. She continued that Akeela wished to express its concern over the potential fiscal impact of reductions to the Alaska Training Cooperative. She added that the Training Cooperative has aided and assisted in the development of staff and provided training to allow the highest quality of care to Alaskans seeking behavioral health services at a time when behavioral health services are needed the most. Any cuts to the Alaska Training Cooperative would result in a financial burden on providers such as Akeela, which would result in reductions elsewhere. She asked that the Trust re-evaluate the plan for potential cuts to the Alaska Training Cooperative and, instead, look to continue its equal funding as it has in the past. She thanked the trustees.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Burchett, and recognized Michael Bailey.

MR. BAILEY stated that he serves as the president of the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities and wanted to register the deep appreciation for the partnership in association with the Mental Health Trust Authority that has strengthened over the past years and especially in its positive benefit to beneficiaries in the advancement of the shared vision that was placed into statute a couple of years ago. He continued with words of gratitude and reiterated the value of the Alaska Training Cooperative, especially in the rural workforce where some of the access to low-cost training is not as available. He emphasized that in emerging from this pandemic the rural areas often suffer the most economic repercussions. He added they were aware that mental health first aid classes are particularly valuable and reiterated support for that. He thanked the trustees.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Bailey, and recognized Lizette Stiehr.

MS. STIEHR stated that she is the executive director for AADD and thanked the trustees and the Mental Health Trust staff. She continued that there were 68 members of the association last year, and we operated kind of as the voice of providers that serve the beneficiaries that experience developmental disabilities. She gave a short update on opportunities and stated that the Trust awarded AADD its first grant to address workforce issues, leadership development, and awareness on a national level. Those funds offered many exciting opportunities from a national consortium leadership to collaboration with Foraker around emerging leadership. She added that the technology needle in Alaska moved, and the Trust funding made that possible. She thanked the trustees.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Stiehr, and recognized Kim Champney.

MS. CHAMPNEY stated she was from Juneau and worked in the field of long-term services and supports for 24 years. Twenty years of that was working for a service provider, and the past four years she's had a consulting practice. She continued that she called in to share her concern about a proposed reduction in funding to the Alaska Training Cooperative. She looked at the Board of Trustees' charter and learned your role is to be a champion of Trust beneficiaries and thanked them for that. She talked about the critical impact a qualified workforce has on the lives of Trust beneficiaries. The Trust investment in the Training Cooperative has strengthened the system of care for all beneficiaries at a fundamental and widespread impact. She urged the trustees to reconsider. There will be much loss, and the workforce that provides services to beneficiaries needs a champion. She thanked the trustees.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Champney, and recognized Lisa Cauble.

MS. CAUBLE stated that she is the director of the UAA Center for Human Development, Alaska Training Cooperative. She shared the impact of the proposed fiscal year '22 and '23 budget cuts. She continued that the Trust Training Cooperative would have to consider losing one training coordinator in the first year, '22, and an additional training coordinator in fiscal year '23. With this level of budget reduction it would be very difficult to be able to strategize a way to replace that amount of cut and reduction. She added that this is not the time for a cut. There is a need to problem-solve and think of ways of supporting the stakeholders. She stated that the Trust's investment in the direct-service providers and behavioral health and other professionals is profound in the work done by the Training Cooperative. It is this investment that will keep the workforce going in a very dire time. She thanked the trustees.

CHAIR COOKE asked how the Training Cooperative dealt with the COVID situation.

MS. CAUBLE replied that the Training Cooperative had been moving toward a distance-delivery platform over the last few years to increase the outreach and ability to reach rural Alaska. That left us well prepared. The users learned how to use Zoom and distance-delivery formats over this last year, and it was a fast track.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Cauble and asked for anyone else wishing to add public comment. He thanked all for the comments. There being no other individuals wishing to provide public comment, he closed the public comment session. He stated that the Board of Trustees will stand in recess until tomorrow morning.

(Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Full Board of Trustees meeting recessed at 3:40 p.m.)