

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY**

**FULL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**January 27, 2021**

**8:30 a.m.**

**WebEx Videoconference/Teleconference**

**Originating at:**

**3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 120  
Anchorage, Alaska**

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**Trustees Present:**

Chris Cooke, Chair

John Sturgeon

Brent Fisher

Verne' Boerner

Annette Gwalthney-Jones

Anita Halterman

Rhonda Boyles

**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

Travis Welch

**Trust Land Office:**

Wyn Menefee

Sarah Morrison

Becky Carpenter

**Also participating:**

Martha Oss; Linda Setterberg; Bobby Dorton; Ann Ringstad; Lisa Morley; Nona Safra; Ric Nelson; Shannon Donahue; Sheila Harris; Stephanie Hopkins; L. Cordwell; Maria Bahr; Beverly Schoonover; Kristin Vandagriff; Lesley Thompson.

## PROCEEDINGS

### CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR COOKE began by calling the roll. Having a quorum, he called the meeting to order. He announced that Ken McCarty has left the board, and to fill that vacancy the Governor has appointed Brent Fisher, who is here this morning. Trustee Fisher begins his service on the Board as a full voting member immediately, and is subject to legislative confirmation later this spring. He welcomed Trustee Fisher.

TRUSTEE FISHER stated that everyone has been kind and helpful in understanding the ropes of the Board, the organization and everything else. He stated appreciation for everyone's help.

CHAIR COOKE asked for an updated information sheet for the Board of Trustees from staff, and moved to the approval of the agenda.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the agenda was made by TRUSTEE STURGEON; seconded by TRUSTEE GWALTHNEY-JONES.

TRUSTEE COOKE moved to the roll-call vote.

*After a roll-call vote, the MOTION WAS APPROVED. (Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Fisher, yes; Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Cooke, yes.)*

### ETHICS DISCLOSURES

CHAIR COOKE asked for any ethics disclosures. Hearing none, he moved to the approval of the minutes. He stated that there were two sets of minutes from the November 18<sup>th</sup> regular board meeting and a special meeting of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the November 18, 2020 minutes was made by TRUSTEE BOYLES; seconded by TRUSTEE GWALTHNEY-JONES.

CHAIR COOK called the roll-call vote for approval of the minutes.

*After a roll-call vote, the MOTION WAS APPROVED. (Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Gwalthney-Jones, yes; Trustee Halterman, excused; Trustee Fisher, abstained; Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Cooke, yes.)*

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes of December 8, 2020 was made by TRUSTEE GWALTHNEY-JONES; seconded by TRUSTEE STURGEON.

*After a roll-call vote, the MOTION WAS APPROVED. (Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Gwalthney-Jones, yes; Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Fisher, abstained; Trustee Cooke, yes.)*

CHAIR COOKE stated that the current bylaws for trustees' reference are in the packet. He moved to the Mission Moment.

### **MISSION MOMENT**

MR. ABBOTT stated that there were several good ideas for Mission Moments for this meeting and that there will be two Mission Moments; one this morning, and the other tomorrow. He asked Travis Welch to introduce the presentation.

MR. WELCH thanked the trustees for the opportunity to present the Fairbanks Coordinated Re-entry program. He stated that the State of Alaska historically had a high recidivism rate of 67 percent, which is now down to 59 percent. When talking about recidivism, it is about individuals who were released from a correctional facility, going back to jail within three years of that release. He continued that re-entry is a priority for the Trust due to the overrepresentation of Trust beneficiaries in the criminal justice system and the many obstacles faced as returning citizens. The re-entry coalitions that the Trust supports are in Anchorage, the Mat-Su, Fairbanks, and in Juneau. The Fairbanks Re-entry Coalition would be highlighted today. They provide supports that help re-entrants overcome the obstacles faced such as housing, employment and peer support. This presentation would highlight peer support because the Fairbanks Re-entry Coalition actually brought peer support to Alaska a few years ago with help from the Trust through a grant. He introduced the three people on-line: Linda Setterberg, the Re-entry Coalition coordinator; Marsha Oss, the re-entry case manager in Fairbanks; and Bobby Dorton, a recent re-entrant and participant in the Re-entry Coalition. He gave a bit of background on each and stated that Bobby Dorton was released from the Wildwood Correctional Center in July 2018 and now works as a counselor and case manager for the Fairbanks Native Association. Bobby has accomplished many things since his release and will share his experiences and accomplishments. He expressed his appreciation to all three for joining today, and the gratitude he has for being able to work and serve Trust beneficiaries alongside them. He recognized Marsha Oss.

MS. OSS thanked the trustees for having Fairbanks as one of the Mission Moments because that is what they live and breathe in Fairbanks. She stated that there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes with re-entry case management. It starts with in-reach by going into the facilities and meeting the people that are incarcerated; introducing the programs to them, and getting them started while they are still on the inside. She added that she met Bobby at Wildwood when she was doing a re-entry in-reach. She continued that Bobby showed up in her office in August 2018 with a lot of anxiety. He had been out for about 30 days and was really struggling with trying to identify supports. She stated that they helped Bobby with getting his own apartment and getting assessments done to meet his probation conditions. He also needed cold-weather gear for the winter, and we helped to write a mini-grant for him. She continued that he finished his GED while on re-entry case management and then applied for RADAC. He started RADAC 30 days after he graduated case management, which is about six months. She also took him to Linda Setterberg, the coalition coordinator, because Bobby had an important story. It is important that the community embrace the people when they come home, and Bobby took the Coalition members by storm and has been a Coalition member ever since. She stated that she was very proud of Bobby Dorton.

CHAIR COOKE recognized Bobby Dorton.

MR. DORTON stated that it was nice to meet all and that he had met a few people with the Trust going to the recidivism conference, which is great. He continued that it was a great opportunity to see that the sky is the limit. He talked about barriers which are a big thing when getting out of prison. Those barriers do not have to be your fate. He stated that he ran across a lot of barriers but did not let that determine where he was going. Half the battle is showing up to the fight. He continued that the Trust has been one of the biggest supporters, and a big reason why he did not go back to prison. The Trust always welcomed him and did not throw him away like a lot of the rest of the world did. He stated that he was an Alaskan Athabascan Native, originally from the Interior Village of Northway, which is by the Canadian border. He stated that he was incarcerated for nearly five years in the Alaska Correctional System, was released in July of 2018, and is currently on parole. He has actively been working to reintegrate into his community of Fairbanks. He has a job as a counselor and case manager at the Fairbanks Native Association, the Ralph Perdue Center, 3.5 Residential Treatment Center. He also volunteers on both the Fairbanks Diversity Council and the Alaska Peer Support Advisory Board. He is also the community co-chair for the Fairbanks Re-entry Coalition. Most recently, he was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Alaska Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. He stated that it was an honor to serve on that board. He continued that he is a peer-support specialist and his strongest passion is to provide peer support for justice-involved Alaskans. He talked about how the Mental Health Trust helped him. The grant from the Trust helped him get his own apartment. This gave him stability, safety, and he started working on his foundation in recovery. Getting that apartment made him feel like he was becoming part of Fairbanks again. It was very important to be able to say that he had his own apartment. He continued that Linda Setterberg told him that volunteering would get his foot in the door, and it got him far into the community. He attended an advocacy training in Fairbanks that started him on the track of learning to tell his story for policymakers. He called in for public testimony in front of the Alaska State Legislature, which was a big learning experience. He shared that he was locked up with a guy that told him "If you want to stop coming here, start hanging out with people you want to be like. If you want to keep coming back here, keep hanging out with people like me." He stated that he started hanging out with different people and changed the way he did things. He continued that if the Trust asked him to do anything he would because the Trust did so much for him. He is currently serving on the planning team for the 2021 Virtual Reducing Recidivism and Re-entry Conference, sponsored by the Trust. He received his Peer Support Specialist Certificate from Peer Star, and the Trust is one of the main supporters of the peer support certification effort in Alaska. He added that he is almost eight years clean, and made some of the best choices since hanging out with the group of people on this call. He stated to never look at the beneficiaries as if they had a limit to what they can do because they can surprise you. He added that he was sure that he had surprised a few people here.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Dorton for his powerful story. He asked Linda Setterberg if she had something she wanted to contribute about the re-entry program.

MS. SETTERBERG stated that she was here as backup for Bobby Dorton and added that he never took "no" for an answer. She was really proud to work alongside him at the Coalition. She continued that when they did in-person Coalition meetings, he would stand up and share his story and experience. This made everything real. She thanked him for his honesty, openness and for never giving up. He is an inspiration to all of us.

CHAIR COOKE thanked all three for sharing this morning. He noted, for the record, that Anita Halterman has joined the meeting. He asked the trustees for any questions for the presenters.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that Mr. Dorton's presentation was emotional. She is from Fairbanks and will be up in mid-March. She would like to have some time to know more about this program.

CHAIR COOKE recognized Trustee Boerner.

TRUSTEE BOERNER thanked Marsha, Bobby, and Linda for their presentations; and especially thanked Bobby for sharing his story. Some of the trustees here had the opportunity to go through a re-entry simulation in one of the meetings in Juneau and got to experience the frustration and how many times people say no. She thanked him for not accepting "no," moving forward, breaking those barriers and going against the stigmas. It is an inspiration.

MS. OSS asked Bobby to talk about the variance process and what that entails, because he did that all on his own, and it is a very complicated procedure.

MR. DORTON stated that he was introduced to Craig Baxter at the background checking. He filled out the variance form and got denied. Most of the time when people get denied they walk away; but he did not. He looked at the very fine print on the bottom and it said that you had 30 days to appeal. He appealed it three days after he got the denial letter. He got the news in the middle of a peer-support meeting that he got the variance. The variance is a waiver from the Department of Health and Social Services that he can work with a vulnerable population. He added that his crime was a drug crime and was not violent, but there is actually a lot of violence involved with drugs. He clarified that he took total responsibility and got the maximum sentence. The entire time he was incarcerated, he did programs and was mentoring while in prison. He was a trustee while incarcerated, which meant that he was able to catch a cab and go to a worksite off the prison grounds and turn himself back in every night. Department of Corrections people treated him well, and he was blessed with all these things. When you do the right thing, you show integrity, and people start believing in you.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Dorton, and recognized Trustee Sturgeon.

TRUSTEE STURGEON thanked Mr. Dorton for sharing his experience. There are a lot of programs that the Trust is involved in, and these Mission Moments are extremely helpful for the trustees to really understand what is being done and where the money goes. He thanked him for sharing his story.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any other comments or questions. There being none, he recognized Travis Welch and asked if there was anything more he wanted to present about the re-entry program.

MR. WELCH thanked Linda, Marsha, and Bobby for being here and for sharing. He stated that the first time he heard Bobby's story was at a Coalition meeting in Fairbanks, and he was taken

aback by how strong and amazing he is and all the obstacles he overcame to be in the position that he is now. He continued that it is important to remember that 42 percent of the incarcerations in Alaska are Trust beneficiaries. When they are released, they face all of the same obstacles that a re-entrant who is not a Trust beneficiary faces, but with the added difficulty of additional disorders which makes the obstacles even greater to overcome. He added that the Trust provides quite a bit of funding for re-entry services because it is such a priority for the Trust and the beneficiaries. He thanked Bobby again, and closed this Mission Moment by sharing with Bobby the respect he has for him. Bobby is one of his superheroes.

CHAIR COOKE thanked them all again for the presentation and shared his thoughts on the impact of the Mission Moments in providing real-life examples of the things that the Trust does. He stated that the next item on the agenda is the staff report.

### **STAFF REPORT**

MR. ABBOTT expressed his appreciation for the presentation and stated that it is impactful on the trustees and the staff, as well. He began with the strong investment returns that the Trust continues to receive as a result of the Permanent Fund and the Department of Revenue management of the investments. The complete second-quarter results have been received, and the earnings on the investment continue to improve. He moved to the progress being made on preparation for the refinancing of the commercial real estate assets. He stated that the services of a financial adviser to help build recommendations for refinancing options has been secured. He called attention to the coverage of a proposed mineral lease on land off of Chena Hot Springs Road in Fairbanks. The potential lessee withdrew their application, and that lease will not be moving forward. He stated that there were a number of concerns expressed by neighbors of the Trust parcel. That issue should be moot for the time being. He noted that the RFP issued to identify someone to harvest Trust timber and construct a road to access that timber near Shelter Cove closed with two bids. The evaluation process has begun with a hope to make an award within a couple of weeks. He explained that it is a complicated bid to evaluate because it is not just a simple timber harvest. It involves road construction work that is part of the same contract. He stated that the US Forest Service land exchange has been delayed. As a result of US Forest Service problems, the appraisals have not been available for review, which would ultimately determine the amount of acreage that is exchanged. He added that the trustees will be kept updated on that. He moved to the Annual Report, which is at the printer and hard copies should be seen shortly. They will be distributed primarily electronically with printed copies available to the trustees and the Alaska Legislature. Also being produced is a comprehensive list of the grants that were issued last year. He then commented on the beginnings of the work with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Alaska Legislature and then talked about working with different legislators. He called attention to the letter sent to Senate Finance that described the concerns with the proposed use of Trust assets in the Governor's budget. That letter reflected the guidance received from the Department of Law and other concerns discussed with the trustees in the past. He continued to be confident that the arguments presented will help the Legislature understand why the proposed use of Trust funds is not a great idea, and that there are better options available to the State, both in terms of how they work with the Trust going forward and how to fund programs that we are all interested in seeing succeed.

CHAIR COOKE stated that the next item is a requested motion regarding reallocation of funds from the FY21 budget.

**MOTION: A motion that the Board approve reallocating \$300,000 in FY21 Authority Grant Funds to the FY21 Partnership budget line -- the Authority Grant Funds being re-allocated are outlined in the memorandum -- was made by TRUSTEE BOERNER; seconded by TRUSTEE GWALTHNEY-JONES.**

MR. ABBOTT stated that this is about FY21, the current fiscal year that we are a little more than six months into. That budget was approved 18 months ago, and there were a couple of elements in the budget that were not expected to be needed for the purposes budgeted. He explained that there were two options: First would be to let those funds simply lapse, not spend them this year and let them roll back into the budget in a future year; or take the course recommended where an alternate can be identified and put the money to work more quickly. He asked Steve Williams to explain where the money is coming from and where it would go.

MR. WILLIAMS welcomed Trustee Fisher and explained that the budget is broken into a couple of different major sections. He talked about the nonfocus area allocation section and explained that outlined in the budget is the reallocation of funds related to a planned rural outreach trip approved by trustees, as well as some funds that staff has identified in the Early Childhood and Prevention section of the budget that will not be fully deployed for the reasons outlined in the memo. He stated that the reallocated funds could be deployed in the current fiscal year to meet beneficiary needs. He gave some background on the rural outreach trip, and then went through the budget.

CHAIR COOKE clarified that the plan is not to do the rural outreach trip this year because COVID restrictions basically make that impossible to do all that travel in Rural Alaska. Then, similarly, the \$100,000 from Beneficiary Engagement Employment will be left over unless deployed elsewhere.

A short discussion clarifying lapsing funds ensued.

TRUSTEE STURGEON called the question.

CHAIR COOKE called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION WAS APPROVED. (Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Gwalthney-Jones, yes; Trustee Halterman, yes; Trustee Fisher, yes; Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Cooke, yes.)*

MR. ABBOTT requested that we hear from the advisory boards at 11:00 o'clock.

CHAIR COOKE called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE called the roll and resumed the session. He moved to the Statutory Advisor Update and recognized Kristin Vandagriff.

## **STATUTORY ADVISOR UPDATE**

MS. VANDAGRIFF stated that she is with the Alaska Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education; Lisa Morley is the executive director for the Alaska Commission on Aging; and Bev Schoonover is the executive director for the Alaska Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. She added that Director Duane Mayes from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation was unable to attend. She began the presentation and introduced the Alaska Work Matters Employment Task Force efforts. She stated that after the Alaska Work Matters Employment Task Force PowerPoint slides, each beneficiary board will talk about legislative priorities moving into the session, and then each beneficiary board will talk about some general board updates. She delved into the Alaska Work Matters Task Force efforts, gave some of the employment policy context, the idea and background for this task force. She talked about the purpose of this task force, looking at review and analysis, thinking about existing policies, practices, procedures, the barriers, and the workforce utilization data, with the goal of pulling all of these together with a report within 12 months to denote the recommendations for these policies, practices and procedures. She continued through her presentation, explaining as she went along. A lot of information was provided in the conversations about telework and its importance for keeping people employed that have disabilities. She talked about cross-agency collaboration and stated that the Business Employment Services Team is the collaborative employer engagement. It has folks from Health and Social Services, as well as Labor, working together with the private sector to help know the sorts of resources available through the State of Alaska to help recruit, hire and maintain Alaskans with disabilities in the workforce. She shared the link to the Empowerment for Employment Guide that is the one-stop-shop guide for beneficiaries, especially, to answer the unique circumstances due to COVID.

TRUSTEE BOERNER stated that they have a Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation representative and five private citizens. She found with groups that it is important to have a tribal representative or even a technical person. There is a slight difference between the technical representative and the community representative. There is the Alaska Tribal Health System overall, and they have representatives that have the understanding of the system because of the way that it operates within Alaska, if that it is a true system of continuum of care. Having that perspective being shared would be beneficial so that you get the community representative experience and also experience from the technical side, as well as the Tribal Health System side.

MS. VANDAGRIFF thanked Trustee Boerner and appreciated the information. She noted that they are still in the process of exploring and bringing all the pieces together.

CHAIR COOKE asked if this task force was funded.

MS. VANDAGRIFF replied that the Council received funding to provide technical assistance through the Beneficiary Employment and Engagement Initiative.

CHAIR COOKE recognized Bev Schoonover.

MS. SCHOONOVER stated that the boards have put employment supports for Alaskans with Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders as one of the top priorities. The Empowerment Through Employment Conference was a catalyst for this to happen. She continued that this was



the first time that mental health providers, who do employment supports, were brought together with DVR and other employment providers. She thanked the trustees for the support on that.

MS. MORLEY stated that she is the new executive director for the Alaska Commission on Aging and wanted to let everyone know that there is a Senior Employment Initiative called the MASST program that is funded through the Older Americans Act. It is a fairly small program that is managed through the Department of Labor in the State of Alaska. This Senior Employment Initiative is trying to provide more support and information for seniors who want to go back to work. She continued that the Commission on Aging will be presenting, to provide some education ahead of time to both the new and some of the returning legislators in conjunction with AARP, AgeNet, the Commission on Aging, the Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska and the Alzheimer's Association, which is a national association. She talked about maintaining the funding for the senior grant programs which are the foundation for all of the senior meals and the transportation program. These are proven to really help delay illness and entry into a nursing home, and the need for additional and more expensive long-term care. In addition, the value of family caregiver services will also be promoted. She added that they want to provide some education about those benefits and also talked about the Joint Workforce Initiative.

MS. VANDAGRIFF talked about the four Governor's Council legislative priorities that were voted on and isolated, and are available online. First was the Special Education Services Agency reauthorization which would sunset this year in June if not reauthorized. She summarized that SESA provides special education support and services to staff of all 54 Alaskan school districts, really focusing on students with low-incidence disabilities. The other three focus on preserving services, which she explained.

MS. SCHOONOVER stated that they have a new executive committee, and they do elections every year. The new chairs are Sharon Clark with the Alaska Mental Health Board and Renee Schofield with the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. She thanked Phillip Licht and Charlene Tautfest for their services as board chairs last year. She continued that there are two new board members, Bobby Dorton and Tonie Protzman, who is the program administrator at Cornerstone Recovery in Anchorage. She added that there is one slot open for an attorney seat on the Mental Health Board; one practicing law with special interest or experience in mental health issues.

MS. MORLEY stated that they have been working very hard on vaccine distribution and advocated to add individuals 65 and over for the next round of vaccine distributions. They held a vaccine informational town hall and have been trying to do their best to work with the Department of Health and Social Services. She thanked Gordon and the rest of the commissioners for pitching in and helping on this effort. She also gave a shout-out to the Trust for funding the Call for Action, which is a huge benefit to Alaska.

MS. VANDAGRIFF stated that the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education is fully staffed, and they are finishing up the State Plan efforts. The plan is at the stage where there is a draft plan with goals and objectives. It has been out for the 45-day public comment. She continued that it is especially important to do something in either goal or objective form regarding self-advocacy. Advocacy is for people with developmental disabilities, and this

elevates this to the highest level of a goal. It is critically important in moving forward with this vision and getting it to the implementation phase. She thanked the Trust for supporting funding for the research analyst who has been able to be very involved as far as the COVID response and bringing the Trust beneficiary perspective to a lot of the meetings. She thanked all for the opportunity to update everyone on the board's progress.

CHAIR COOKE thanked them all for their presentations and asked the trustees for any questions.

TRUSTEE BOERNER thanked the advisory boards for their updates which are always informative and professionally done. She welcomed Lisa Morley and looked forward to working with her. She commented on a few of the points that were brought forward.

TRUSTEE BOYLES enjoyed the presentation and thanked God for all of the volunteers that work on the advisory boards. She commented on some parts of the presentations and welcomed Lisa Morley. She thanked all for their time.

TRUSTEE GWALTHNEY-JONES stated that the presentation was amazing and very enlightening. She appreciated the outline of legislative priorities and talked about her concerns about COVID and the impact to all ages. She thanked all for the great presentation.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that it would be helpful to get some insight on how to connect with these boards, commissions, and the meetings they are having. She requested a summary of when they meet and where to go to find the information about the meetings. She stated appreciation for the advisory updates, which are critical to the work the Trust does. She thanked all the presenters.

CHAIR COOKE noted that there was some information about Statutory Advisor meetings in the packets that are upcoming. He recognized Trustee Fisher.

TRUSTEE FISHER stated that as a new trustee it was very enlightening to understand about each of the specific areas. Each one of them are so important for their particular beneficiaries and he looked forward to the opportunity to seeing how the Trust can work in a collaborative way to support each of the programs and initiatives.

TRUSTEE STURGEON also thanked the Advisory Boards for their presentations which are especially important to him. He spent his career in resource development, and being on the Trust Board is a steep learning curve. He stated that every time there are presentations he is reminded of how much work he has to do to really understand all these issues. He thanked them very much.

CHAIR COOKE added his thanks for the presentations and stated that there are many issues that concern the beneficiaries. He stated his delight in their presence at the meetings which help focus on the specific beneficiary populations or communities. The input is extremely valuable. He asked for a response to Trustee Halterman's concern about getting notice of the schedules for Statutory Advisory meetings, and her request about the links through the website for this information.

MR. ABBOTT replied that their recent practice was to put the next meeting of each of the boards in the packets. He stated that they will include that to the extent that future meetings are scheduled.

MR. GLASER, the chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging, stated that he would be delighted to provide links or minutes to anyone who requests them. He also asked the trustees to attend. He stated that the relationship with the Trust is valued, and we want it to be as open as possible.

MR. WILLIAMS stated that Trustee Gwalthney-Jones expressed an interest in the topic area. He continued that they are actively involved in partnering with the Suicide Prevention Council. He added that Eric Boyer is the program officer that works closely with the Suicide Prevention Council.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any other questions. There being none, he moved to the lunch break.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE resumed the meeting and called the roll. With all trustees were present, he reminded them that in the packet on Page 4 was a schedule of all of the future board meetings and committee meetings for the Trust. He asked for those dates to be put on their calendars. He stated that every year or so there is an ethics training with the help of the Department of Law. This is particularly important because of the turnover in trustee membership. All trustees need to be kept updated regarding duties and responsibilities as board members of a public entity, and particularly to rules that apply to open meetings. He introduced Maria Bahr from the Department of Law, who will go through the trustee ethics training.

### **TRUSTEE ETHICS TRAINING**

MS. BAHR introduced herself as an Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Law and added that she was also ethics counsel not only for the Department of Law, but also for the entire executive branch of State Government. She stated that, in that capacity, she did a lot of trainings for various departments, boards, and commissions dealing with the Ethics Act. She began with a general overview and stated that the Ethics Act was enacted in 1986 and was the Legislature's way of telling those in the executive branch what they could and could not do. She summarized the parts of the Ethics Acts that are most important to the trustees and also for any staff members that may be listening. She added that a lot of this program is geared towards the trustees, people who are not State employees but are serving on boards and commissions. She pointed out that the Open Meetings Act concerns would not be covered in this presentation and that Stuart Goering was the expert on Open Meetings. She continued that the Act applies to all public officers -- anyone who works for the State in the executive branch and every member of a board or commission as Trustees. She added that even though they are not public employees that they are public officers. The Act talks about a financial interest which is held by you or an immediate family member, which includes an ownership in a business or any source of income from which financial benefit is expected to be received. Then, it talks about a "personal interest." That is an interest held by you or an immediate family member. She continued through her presentation, explaining and identifying pertinent provisions of the Act. She stated that the scope of the Ethics Act is to prohibit, basically, substantial and material conflicts of interest. It is not written in

legalese and is pretty much common sense. It states that a public officer and their immediate family members cannot improperly benefit either personally or financially from the position as a public officer. She moved on through her presentation, clarifying as she continued; with a focus on the no-can-dos and then the financial penalties for violating the Ethics Act.

A brief question-and-answer period ensued.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Bahr and asked if there was anything to add from the staff standpoint.

MR. ABBOTT thanked Ms. Bahr and stated that it is helpful to make sure everyone is aware of this. He added that another area for trustee training at some point in the future are fiduciary duties.

CHAIR COOKE asked if anyone signed up for public comment.

MS. SMITH-COOLIDGE replied that no one signed up at this time.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

CHAIR COOKE stated that there are two public comment written communications in the packet and assumed everyone had seen them. He continued that time needs to be available for public comments if someone chooses to appear at 2:15. He added that would be the last order of business. He called a break until 2:15.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE reconvened the Board meeting and called roll. He stated that he was unsure if Trustee Fisher was present, but there was a quorum. He continued that the two written items of public comment that were submitted will become part of the record. He asked if anyone signed up for public comment. There being no one, he asked two more times. He stated that this was the time set aside for public comment before the Board of Trustees of the Mental Health Trust Authority. He also asked for anyone online wishing to make public comment, which is the only opportunity that will exist at this meeting. He again asked for anyone wishing to offer public comment to the Board. Hearing none, he closed the public comment portion of the agenda and recessed the meeting until tomorrow at 8:30 a.m.

(Mental Health Trust Authority Full Board meeting recessed at 2:18 p.m.)