

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
May 26, 2021
2:45 p.m.
WebEx Videoconference/Teleconference

Originating at:
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 210
Anchorage, Alaska

Trustees Present:

Verne' Boerner, Chair
Chris Cooke
Brent Fisher
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
Valette Keller
Eric Boyer
Autumn Vea
Travis Welch
Josephine Stern
Michael Miller
Jerry Jenkins
Jimael Johnson

Also participating:

Kristin Vandagriff; Laura Russell; Lisa Cauble; Loren Jones; Sheila Harris; Ryan Wallace; April Kyle; Renee Rafferty; Aaron Allensworth; Charlene Tautfest; Michelle Baker; Melissa Merrick; Terri Tibbett; Stephanie Hopkins.

PROCEEDINGS

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR BOERNER called the Program & Planning Committee meeting to order and called the roll. She stated that John Sturgeon was excused. She asked for any announcements. There being none, she moved to the approval of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: A motion to approve the agenda was made by TRUSTEE COOKE; seconded by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN.

There being no objections, the agenda was approved.

ETHICS DISCLOSURE

CHAIR BOERNER asked for any ethics disclosures. There being none, she moved into the main body of the approvals. She stated that when she introduced herself, she did not state her current position outside of being a trustee. She continued that she is the president and CEO for the Alaska Native Health Board, a statewide advocacy organization for the Alaska Tribal Health Systems. In that role, we have heard and seen a number of issues from the membership that identified some of the top priorities across the state. Consistently, across the members for the Alaska Tribal Health System are mental health and behavioral health issues. She continued that one of those specific areas identified was the lack of crisis stabilization services across the state. That gap links to forcing higher levels of care and forces individuals to move to higher levels of acuity for needs for services. It results in burdening the system, overutilization of emergency room programs. It also increases the risk and completion of suicide across the communities, resulting in poorer outcomes. She added that in looking for ways to address those issues, she was very proud to say that the Trust has been a leader in convening processes across the state. The Crisis Now program is one of those mechanisms that addresses some of the step-up, step-down services, alleviating some of the pressures on the communities and the system as a whole. She invited Mike Abbott to offer some opening words, as well.

MR. ABBOTT framed the conversation about two specific grant requests that are important parts of the Trust's long-term commitments to bringing a significant improvement to crisis psychiatric care for the beneficiaries in Alaska. That commitment was especially expressed in the FY21 budget which allocated \$2.6 million for funds to plan for and begin the implementation of crisis stabilization services. He stated that the grants approved at the April Program & Planning Committee were the bulk of the \$1.1 million allocated. If the trustees endorse the grants available for support, then another approximately \$900,000 will have been allocated from the current year budget, as well. The thought was that funding might be necessary to encourage the development of mobile crisis team work in Anchorage; but the City has funded that. He continued going through the background of these crisis services, noting that they met with everyone that could conceivably provide this type of service for Anchorage. What will be presented are the agencies that are most likely to be successful in this work for the beneficiaries. The comments were sort of generic and address both the grant proposal for Providence Alaska and for Southcentral Foundation.

MOTION: A motion that the Program & Planning Committee of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority approve a \$400,000 FY21 Authority Grant to Providence Health

& Services Alaska for the Crisis Stabilization Planning & Development project. These funds will come from the FY21 Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment – Crisis Continuum of Care budget line was made by TRUSTEE COOKE; seconded by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN.

CHAIR BOERNER welcomed Dr. Aaron Wallace, a psychiatrist with Providence, and April Kyle, the acting CEO for Southcentral Foundation. She asked Dr. Aaron Wallace to provide an overview of the proposal put before the trustees.

DR. WALLACE stated that there was just a typo in communications. He stated that Renee Rafferty will be joining and may be able to provide a bigger picture.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated that the two projects are from Providence Alaska, which is focused on the Phase 1 planning period for development of crisis stabilization services. She stated that the second project was with Southcentral Foundation. On the phone was Renee Rafferty, the regional behavioral health director for Providence; and Aaron Allensworth, the business manager of behavioral health for Providence. For Southcentral Foundation is Michelle Baker, acting vice president over the behavioral services division for Southcentral Foundation; and Melissa Merrick, the clinical director of behavioral health services. They are here supporting the discussion.

A discussion ensued with explanations and questions on both projects.

MR. WILLIAMS stated that the continuum of care is a core component of the Crisis Now framework and is a no-wrong-door access. This means that no matter what the legal status is no-wrong-door means that anyone is accepted, at any time.

The discussion continued with detailed information shared on the topic.

TRUSTEE COOKE called the question.

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

CHAIR BOERNER moved to the second motion.

MOTION: A motion to approve a \$485,000 FY21 Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Focus Area allocation to Southcentral Foundation for the Crisis Continuum – Crisis Stabilization project was made by TRUSTEE BOYLES; seconded by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN.

CHAIR BOERNER recognized April Kyle.

MS. KYLE affirmed what Mr. Williams said around the important role that the Trust played in pulling together the various partners and stakeholders who need to be part of the solution in launching the crisis services. All the work made for a solution that is a system approach rather than various islands. This is essential in this work, and in much of the work that the Trust does.

TRUSTEE COOKE stated appreciation for the proposal from Southcentral and moving forward in this effort. He added that the primary goal of serving beneficiaries and serving the community with combined resources so that two entities doing similar things will make the sum greater than the number of its parts.

MS. RAFFERTY said that one of the most important pieces for Providence is the collaboration, and we would not be doing this without the Trust or without SCF.

TRUSTEE COOKE called the question.

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

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

TRUSTEE COOKE thanked the staff for the in-person meeting and was appreciative of the WebEx to be able to conduct business and continue the operations. He stated that there was a lot more positive energy, and we were able to have a better dialog. He thought it would be a good idea for the Trust to develop and sponsor an annual mental health conference which could bring together providers, policymakers, beneficiaries, the community and perhaps visitors and spokespeople from various organizations throughout Alaska and across the country to highlight the needs of the beneficiary community and the work of the Trust. He shared the idea with trustees to gauge everyone else's reaction.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN thanked staff for making this a reality to be in person. She thanked all of the presenters for giving some more foundation on the Crisis Now model, and she looked forward to seeing that model in action. It is critical to revisit the Crisis Now model to help build the foundation. She stated that she truly supported Crisis Now and looked forward to seeing some solutions.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that she was glad they were here and was very happy about the work being done on Crisis Now. She continued that she was proud to be a trustee to make decisions that are going to have long-term impacts. She added that Chair Boerner did a phenomenal amount of work on this committee and she thanked her. She stated that she was going to enjoy working with Trustee Fisher.

TRUSTEE FISHER thanked Providence, SCF and the State for really collaborating with the Trust on helping the beneficiaries. Really, the long-term and most beneficial solutions for the beneficiaries of the Trust have to be community solutions. He appreciated all the time taken in looking at this, figuring out what would be a good solution for Alaska and coming up with additional details that he requested. That was very appreciated. He also thanked staff because he came on the board in a virtual environment and staff made the transition great and very smooth. He also thanked the staff for the orientation he received during that time.

CHAIR BOERNER also extended her appreciation to the staff and knew the amount of work it takes to pull these meetings together. She individually thanked Miri, Valette, Steve, Katie, Eric and everyone that helped work on the coordination to get these meetings going. She thanked the guests and added that the mission moments go to the heart of the work the Trust does. She talked about the suggestion on an annual mental health conference and that there were some

great partners that participated in today's meeting, including the advisory boards. She also added that the Alaska Native Health Board would be interested. They have a great group of tribal behavioral health directors that can also be invited to participate. She shared that her youngest son graduated and talked about the mental health aspect of it. There were some stories about traditional regalia in the graduation process that would express and honor their heritage in that momentous moment. Her son wanted to wear a cap that honored his people, and she decorated his cap using the kuspuka; the trim from her grandfather's parka -- the design that her grandmother had made for him. His principal worked to ensure her son could wear his cap for graduation and he did. She also shared and talked about the environmental epidemiology PhD program at Johns Hopkins University that she was accepted into. She stated that one of her goals for the application and her participation in that was to raise the profile of epidemiology and policy. To have the data-driven approaches that are community-based and community-informed, and therefore culturally informed. She added that it was with great gratitude to sit here, and expressed her thankfulness to the Trust for supporting that process, as well. Trustee comments was the last item on the agenda, and she asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: A motion to adjourn was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE COOKE.

There being no objections, the MOTION WAS APPROVED.

(The Program & Planning Committee Meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.)