

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY**  
**PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**July 27, 2021**  
**8:30 a.m.**  
**Teleconference**

**Originating at:**  
**3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 120**  
**Anchorage, Alaska**

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**Trustees Present:**

Verne' Boerner, Chair  
Chris Cooke  
Brent Fisher  
Anita Halterman  
John Sturgeon

**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  
Travis Welch  
Josephine Stern  
Jerry Jenkins  
Allison Biastock  
Kat Roch

**Also participating:**

Kristin Vandagriff; Lisa Cauble; Charlene Tautfest; Bev Schoonover; Lisa Morely; Stephanie Hopkins; Daniel Delfino; Myranda Walso; Alysa Wooden; Ann Ringstad; Beth Goldstein; Shalin Wooten; Susan Kessler; Maureen Harwood; John Lee; Scott York; Ashley Christopherson; LMThompson; Clinton Lasley; Dr. Becker; Clinton Lasley.

## PROCEEDINGS

### CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR BOERNER (Native language spoken) wished all a good morning. She stated that her Inupiaq name was Qaanaaq, and that she was from Kiana, Alaska. Her mother is Paka; her grandmother is Qaanaaq; and her grandfather is Nuyuqun. She continued that she is trying to practice introducing herself in the way that she was taught by her family, and she thanked all for accommodating that. She called the Program & Planning Committee meeting to order, and began with the roll call. She stated that Rhonda Boyles was excused, and she asked for any announcements.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that she had a request from HRSA to facilitate an event on August 31<sup>st</sup>. It would be on behalf of AKCTT, the Alaska Collaborative for Telemedicine and Telehealth. She added that she will be collecting some information from Mr. Williams about some of the funding of telehealth initiatives.

CHAIR BOERNER looked forward to getting that information and asked for any other 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 objection, the MOTION was APPROVED.*

### ETHICS DISCLOSURES

CHAIR BOERNER asked for any ethics disclosures. There being none, she moved to approval of the minutes of April 21, 2021.

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes of April 21, 2021, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE COOKE.

*There being no objection, the MOTION was APPROVED.*

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes of May 26, 2021, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE COOKE.

*There being no objection, the MOTION was APPROVED.*

### FY2022 BUDGET AMENDMENTS

CHAIR BOERNER recognized Mike Abbott, chief executive officer.

MR. ABBOTT stated that there were a few things that need to be worked on relating to the FY22 budget, and then later we will shift and work on FY23. He continued that it is statutorily required to present the proposed FY23 budget by September 15, 2021. He explained that the reason for that was that it means we are working well into the future and trying to look well into

the future as that is done. He also explained and went into the logistics of how the meeting will continue. He introduced Lisa Morely, the executive director of the Alaska Commission on Aging, as well as Bev Schoonover from ABADA. He moved to two letters from the Governor dated three weeks apart and stated that it is a dramatic illustration of what represents a significant change in the approach the Administration will take to working with the Trust. He continued that the first letter was addressed to Senator Micciche and was the Governor's veto message for the Mental Health Budget Bill. The second letter describes the fact that the Governor vetoed it. He stated that the fact that many of the recommendations did not survive the Legislature or gubernatorial process is not a surprise or upsetting. He was concerned with the language where the Governor went out of his way to suggest that it was inappropriate to ask for and that the Trust should have funded them itself, despite the obligation to make recommendations for General Fund spending. He then addressed the Governor's suggestion.

MR. WILLIAMS talked about the assessment and the decision-making process in looking at the impacts of the vetoes. The GF/MH increment recommendations presented were approved for projects that were already up and running and being implemented. He continued that, from the staff perspective, the Trust funds that were left would still be able to move forward the work that was currently underway. He added that many of the projects have been supported by the Trust for several years and were not brand-new projects.

#### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FY22**

MR. WILLIAMS stated that there are six items that are demonstrating the need for additional funds that were internally identified with the partners.

MS. BARSTAD continued that the first item is for the Alaska Commission on Aging, to assist the organization to be able to engage beneficiaries into proposed programs, specifically the listening sessions that are upcoming for the Commission on Aging. She continued that there is a new Federal/State plan that will be due in Federal fiscal year 2023. There is a lot of work in organizing the listening sessions for the Commission on Aging to ensure that the voices will be heard for the State of Alaska Senior Plan. The voices need to be heard on how the Older American Act funds should be distributed, and to ensure that their needs are focused on and incorporated into the State agencies that serve them. She added that in order to assist this process, the request is that the Alaska Commission on Aging receives an increase for FY22 so that the necessary staff can be engaged to do the additional work. She stated that it was incredibly important that this support is received so that the beneficiaries can be well-represented in the plans and in the voices of seniors across Alaska; and to efficiently get this work done.

MS. BIASTOCK moved to Item No. 2, which is a Trust-sponsored mental health conference. She explained that this was a new proposed item for this year's budget, coming in at \$50,000. Recently, Chair Cooke had suggested the sponsorship of a mental health conference. Staff agreed that it was a great idea. She stated that this is tentatively looking at such a conference in the fall of 2022. The \$50,000 proposed for the budget would allow bringing on contractor support to help with the organization of that conference. She noted that there was \$130,00 in the budget for that event.

TRUSTEE STURGEON asked for some examples of who would attend this conference.

MS. BIASTOCK replied that it was anticipated that beneficiary-serving partners would attend, with the hope that policymakers would also attend. She anticipated working closely with partners in developing a meaningful agenda. She added that beneficiaries would also attend.

CHAIR BOERNER recognized Ms. Barstad to continue with Proposed Amendment 3.

MS. BARSTAD stated that this item was to support rapid rehousing projects in the state. She continued that there were agencies that are ready and willing to do this work. This additional funding would allow for rapid rehousing projects to continue in the Fairbanks area. It would potentially also allow for other projects to be considered for rapid rehousing. She explained that rapid rehousing is one of the evidence-based practices that have been supported over the years for Trust beneficiaries to obtain stable housing. She added that this intervention combines time-limited financial support and roughly six months to a year of case management to help alleviate the circumstances that led to that individual or family becoming homeless. She stated that rapid rehousing is one of the evidence-based practices that has supported Trust beneficiaries to obtain stable housing over the years. She continued that this investment would give the opportunity to continue a successful project.

CHAIR BOERNER moved to Item 4.

MS. BARSTAD continued that, for Item 4, there are additional providers interested in creating more permanent supportive housing beds. She continued that it is an excellent opportunity to be able to support the programs that are effective. They have been evaluated in Alaska and have made an incredible impact on the beneficiaries.

MR. ABBOTT stated that there is a project under consideration that is being developed by Providence Alaska and Cook Inlet Housing, two preeminent providers in the housing and services field, a cooperative project. The hope is that staff will be able to bring forward a funding request that would draw from these funds at the fall meetings.

MR. WILLIAMS gave a quick introduction on Items 5 and 6. He highlighted that these are increases above amounts that have previously been approved.

MS. JOHNSON explained that No. 5 and No. 6 are both in the existing budget and are in the early childhood intervention and prevention category. She continued that No. 5 is listed as Trauma-Informed Practice Promotion with the proposed change, adding \$75,000 to the existing \$100,000, which has been approved. Over the past several years, this work focused on education-based services for young and school-aged children who had experienced trauma. The past two or three years have built on a very systems-based approach which involved the pilot in the Juneau School District. This later developed into a framework, which is now being applied statewide for trauma-engaged schools. This work has also been broadly supported by the State and community partners.

CHAIR BOERNER talked about her own experience in the importance of this particular area and that she personally values. She stated that studies are coming out and showing that the front-line workers are experiencing children with trauma and isolation and mental health issues that lead to higher attempts and rates of suicide.

TRUSTEE COOKE understood that this was not an action item for today. It briefed the trustees on the proposed amendments. It will be taken up at the Full Board meeting next month.

CHAIR BOERNER moved on to Item 6.

MS. JOHNSON continued that Item 6 requests an increase of \$20,000 to the existing \$50,000 budget line. The \$20,000 would be used primarily to help advance the broader goals and look at systems-related work, convene partners, and function as an administrative line that would help promote the broader goals of the budget category in general related to children's mental health and early intervention and prevention.

MR. ABBOTT pointed out that staff will continue to work on these and likely bring something in the form of an action item to consider at the August meeting. He mentioned that at the end of the legislative session, the Legislature passed, at the Administration's request, a change to the PERS system, the State's retirement system. It affected the employer contribution rate. He explained that the payroll expense for the Trust is an additional 6 percent contribution. The money for that will come out of the same pot of money that all of the grant-making comes out of, meaning it is out of Trust income. He stated that he and Ms. Howarth were working to figure out how much of that could be absorbed in the existing budget, and how much additional funding would be needed.

CHAIR BOERNER called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR BOERNER noted that all the trustees were back, and recognized Autumn Vea.

MS. VEA stated that her presentation was part of the regular quarterly Program & Planning update regarding the COMP Plan and the scorecard. She continued that the Comprehensive Integrative Mental Health Program Plan is a response to a statutory requirement, Alaska Statute 47.30.660, which requires the Department of Health and Social Services, in conjunction with the Trust, to develop and revise a plan for Alaska's Comprehensive Integrative Mental Health Program. She explained that, under the statute, the preparation of this plan is to be coordinated with Federal, State, regional, tribal, local and private entities involved in mental-health services. She noted that the Trust uses the COMP Plan to inform its recommendations for expenditures of State General Funds included in the Mental Health Budget Bill. She added that the COMP Plan bridges the Departments and the Divisions while serving as the glue to connect reform efforts that encompass all beneficiary groups. One of the primary benefits of the COMP Plan includes establishing program-level visions and priorities that evolve with the program, while ensuring that the programs endure changes in administrations and legislatures. She talked about the updates with the scorecard to reflect the desired outcomes of the COMP Plan. Those revisions began in March of 2020. The hope is to have a digital scorecard format in FY23, which would eliminate the need for the 80-page PDF that is currently used. Also, in FY23, planning efforts to review the COMP Plan will be made. She then went through the update plan and explored the newest COMP Plan goal related to early childhood. She continued through her presentation, explaining as she went through it.

CHAIR BOERNER stated that it was an excellent presentation that was presented with great detail, and she moved to the next agenda item.

### **FY23 TRUST BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

MR. ABBOTT stated that this budget will start in 11 months, and we are obligated to send the recommendations for General Fund spending and for the Trust's own programmatic spending to the Administration by September 15<sup>th</sup>. He explained that the trustees adopted an FY23 budget, which was simply just a planning document. The position now is to take final action on what is sent to the Governor for the FY23 budget.

MR. WILLIAMS went through a high-level overview of the budget process for the FY23 budget. He stated that it was important to understand that the Trust develops its budget recommendations, not only for Trust spending, but also State General Fund spending and in the advocacy work. This is all done in collaboration with the State partners, the tribal partners, the community nonprofits, and with the beneficiaries. He added that State partners include the advisory boards. He continued his presentation, explaining and answering questions as he went along. He then transitioned into how to read the budget document and explained some budget terminology. He then went through the budget, answering questions as they came up. He added that the FY23 budget document development can be found on the Trust website.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked Mr. Williams and welcomed the joint advisory board partners to the table.

MS. MORELY stated that she is the executive director of the Alaska Commission on Aging. She continued that Bev Schoonover is the executive director of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the Alaska Mental Health Board. She introduced Kristin Vandagriff, the executive director of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. She explained that they would do a joint presentation in going over some of the recommendations.

MS. SCHOONOVER thanked the Trust for the investments made in this fiscal year in projects and programs that promoted the mission of the Trust. She began with a broad recommendation and supported the staff recommendations for fiscal year '23.

MS. VANDAGRIFF stated that the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education noted that for FY23, \$50,000 of that total would essentially be in GF, as opposed to MHTAAR. The \$50,000 is for the planner III position to support that planner III bringing the developmental-disability perspective to the Comprehensive Integrative Mental Health Program planning. She looked at the continuity between how other board planners receive some MHTAAR and wanted to make sure that the stakeholder concern and feedback is brought to the trustees.

MS. SCHOONOVER moved to the Zero Suicide initiative, which is for a long-term nonpermanent position at the Division of Behavioral Health to help implement the Zero Suicide framework. It is part of the Crisis Now model. She stated that if everything works as it is supposed to, it will be integrating suicide prevention screenings in primary care. She continued that this would be amazing for Alaska, and asked the trustees to support this program. She

moved to the Alaska Training Cooperative and stated that it is a desperately needed program. There are a lot of workforce needs in Alaska, and these folks are the key experts in training the behavioral health and continuing mental health care workforce.

MS. MORELY stated that the medical appliance and assistive technology was recommended in FY23 as a GF/MH. This program is 100 percent supported by the partners. She continued that the next project, the essential program equipment recommendation, is \$300,000 MHTAAR/\$300,000 GF/MH. The equipment capital grant has long supported nonprofit programs that support Trust beneficiaries to upkeep their programs, to replace equipment. They want to continue that recommendation. Another program that supports Trust beneficiaries is the home modifications and upgrades to retain housing. She continued her presentation, commenting and answering questions as she went along. She added that it is critical to maintain the services to beneficiaries. She stressed that the Commission on Aging wants to improve Alaska's system of supporting people with ADRD and their families. She continued that dementia training is something that should be provided across the beneficiary spectrum.

MS. VANDAGRIFF moved on to some of the recommendations from the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. She thanked the Trust for their very important investments in the developmental disability service system, and highlighted a few that came up as mission-critical.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked the board partners for the fantastic presentation and called a lunch break.

(Lunch break.)

CHAIR BOERNER welcomed everyone back, and stated that the FY23 Trust budget recommendation presentations are next.

MR. ABBOTT stated that the individual focus areas will be worked on this afternoon and tomorrow. He began with the mental health and addiction intervention. This is where the funding for Crisis Now exists. He asked Ms. Baldwin-Johnson to continue.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated that this focus area was originally referred to as the substance abuse prevention and treatment focus area back in 2013. The main focus at the time was looking at expanding access to care. She added that substance abuse and addiction is one of the largest preventable and costly health problems in Alaska. It is imperative to continue recommending to trustees that this is an area that needs continued investment. She stated that this led to a partnership with the Department to explore some models that worked in other states. That led to the Crisis Now initiative. She highlighted the change in FY23 and the proposed amendment and went into more detail about what adjustments were made. She recognized the critical partners in this work: the advisory boards; partners in tribal health; and the State partners, Divisions and Departments. She added the community behavioral health operators across the state; the community health centers; and the beneficiaries and families that guide and advise on how to do this work going forward.

MR. ABBOTT stated that staff is working on scheduling site visits, likely to Maricopa County in

the Phoenix area, this fall. He continued that they will be working with trustees with the hope that folks would be able to participate. The Trust is dedicating a lot of money to this, and it would be great for trustees to have exposure to what the services look and feel like.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON continued that in addition to site visits and technical assistance/expertise, there is the idea of technology and innovation needs to be kept in the forefront of planning those opportunities and being responsive to them. She noted that each presentation highlighted a slide that connects the COMP Plan goals to the work of the focus area. She added that the partnerships are key because that engagement emphasizes the diversity of the partnerships and their connections to folks and communities across the state. She talked about the partnership with Recover Alaska, which is basically a coalition of funders and partners. She continued her presentation, answering questions as she went along.

CHAIR BOERNER moved to Ms. Barstad and her presentation on housing and home- and community-based services.

MS. BARSTAD stated that the housing focus area is a long-standing focus area and was established in 2006. It works to support Trust beneficiaries to attain and maintain housing stability. She explained that to achieve this goal, the State of Alaska needs adequate affordable housing, supportive services for Trust beneficiaries who are housed or seeking housing, recovery housing, homeless services and housing interventions for people that are homeless. She stated that the goal of the home- and community-based services focus area is to increase independence, inclusion, well-being, and a person's participation in the community to improve their overall life. She continued through some of the key strategies for the housing and home- and community-based services focus area, including a policy coordination and capacity development. She stated that these projects identified all fall under the strategies so that the goals can be implemented. First, rural housing coordinator positions were identified; second, beneficiaries need safe and stable housing with tenancy supports, which is important to the homeless assistance program and the special needs housing grant. She explained this in greater detail and answered questions as she continued the presentation.

CHAIR BOERNER called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR BOERNER shared a couple of inspiring news items and reconvened the meeting. She recognized Jimael Johnson.

MS. JOHNSON stated that the FY23 discussion is the priority area of Early Childhood Intervention & Prevention, which is the name given in the budget. She added that this budget category encompasses more than just early childhood. There are many factors that cause and drive disability, and it is one of the reasons that the Trust and partners decided that this is an important area to concentrate on and to try to get ahead of the curve whenever possible on Trust beneficiary status, and to mitigate the impacts of trauma that can later lead to both substance use and mental illness. She continued that the primary goal of the early childhood area is to enhance programs that serve infants and young children that promote resiliency and mitigate trauma as mentioned before. Also, to provide access to early-intervention services that improve Trust



beneficiary lives. She briefly highlighted the Comprehensive Integrative Mental Health Program Plan goals that this area touches on and went through the proposed changes to the budget.

CHAIR BOERNER recognized Ms. Harwood on the telephone.

MS. HARWOOD stated that she works for Senior and Disability Services. She supports the infant-learning program. She continued that the infant-learning program core mandate is to service infants and toddlers that have special needs. There are some referrals where the hope is that the early intervention will help the family and the child with their development, and to hopefully not need long-term services and supports. She added that the proposal is a pilot to see if these children from OCS can be touched and reached. Then, with long-term supports, to get them in the infant-early-learning program, cover them through Medicaid and then through the 1115 process.

MS. JOHNSON continued that the second area of priority strategy is to ensure accurate identification of social/emotional needs for children and caregivers. She continued that the final section is reducing impacts and instances of adverse childhood experience. One of the emerging successful projects is Kinship, a caregiver-support project with Volunteers of America. Kinship care is when a family member effectively takes over care of a child who is involved with child welfare and talked about the planning to measure progress and success through these strategies. She highlighted some of the scorecard indicators that were related to the early childhood work.

CHAIR BOERNER welcomed Eric Boyer.

MR. BOYER talked about the one change he recommended, which is the Alaska Training Cooperative. He also addressed the question about diversification of the training cooperative. He then briefly highlighted some of the items, and continued his presentation, explaining as he went along.

CHAIR BOERNER recessed the meeting.

(Meeting recessed at 4:13 p.m.)