

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY

SPECIAL FULL BOARD MEETING

October 21, 2021

2:00 p.m.

WebEx Videoconference/Teleconference

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

Trustees Present:

Chris Cooke, Chair
Verne' Boerner
Brent Fisher
Anita Halterman
John Sturgeon
Rhonda Boyles
Kevin Fimon

Trust Staff Present:

Mike Abbott
Steve Williams
Carol Howarth
Miri Smith-Coolidge
Kelda Barstad
Luke Lind
Michael Baldwin
Katie Baldwin-Johnson
Jimael Johnson
Valette Keller
Allison Biastock
Kat Roch

Trust Land Office staff present:

Jusdi Doucet
Sarah Morrison
David MacDonald
Katie Vachris
Karsten Eden
Hollie Chalup
Jeff Green
Becky Carpenter
Chandler Long
Paul Slenkamp

Also participating: Charlene Tautfest; Josephine Stern; Michele Binkley.

PROCEEDINGS

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR COOKE called the meeting of the Special Full Board of Trustees of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to order and began with the roll call. All trustees were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHAIR COOKE asked for any announcements. There being none, he moved to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

CHAIR COOKE stated that the agenda had been circulated and asked for any changes or additions. There being none, he asked for a motion for approval.

MOTION: A motion that the Board approve the agenda was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.

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

ETHICS DISCLOSURES

CHAIR COOKE asked for any ethics disclosures.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN disclosed that she had worked for one of the applicants for the CEO position and was not sure if this was the appropriate time to make an ethics disclosure.

CHAIR COOKE stated that this would be a matter to come up in Executive Session. It may be difficult to make a disclosure since the names of applicants are not yet being publicized. He added that it should be made at a later time if it becomes relevant. There being no further ethics disclosures, he moved to the CEO report.

CEO REPORT

CEO ABBOTT briefed the trustees on what had been going on with the Legislative Audit which was released to the public on August 27, 2021. He stated that while the audit findings were serious, they were not deemed to be so difficult that immediate action, so far, has not been required. He thanked Ms. Howarth and the TLO team for addressing the endless questions from the auditor, and thanked the trustees for the strategic direction on the response.

CHAIR COOKE agreed that credit went to Mr. Abbott and the staff for being responsive and resolving so many of the issues.

CEO ABBOTT moved to the issue of the struggle of getting permission from the Governor's Office to begin the process of hiring for the Deputy Director at the Trust Land Office. He stated that all employees at the Trust Land Office and at the Trust Authority are essentially at-will employees. He continued that historically that exempt status had not affected the ability to fire and recruit for employees. The Trust and the Trust Land Office have been given significant authority to manage their own personnel. The TLO is designed to work with an executive

director and a deputy director in tandem, which has been the model for the last four years. He added that he is not asking for further trustee engagement, but he wanted to explain why that crucial leadership position at the Trust had not been filled. He stated that he would keep the board informed and that it was a source of frustration and concern. He then reported on the status of the engagement with the Governor's Office and the leadership of the Administration regarding the suggestions that came from the Governor in his letter of August 24th. He continued that there were five specific requests, and he believed that two have been fully addressed and were acknowledged as such by the Administration. The other three are well underway. He was grateful for the work at the program team level and at the TLO for their immediate attention to the suggestions made by the Governor.

CHAIR COOKE asked for an update on the proposed budget for FY23.

CEO ABBOTT replied that the budget, as required, was submitted to the Administration on September 15th.

CHAIR COOKE moved to trustee comments. He stated that was something staff likes to include in the meeting to give trustees a chance to respond to, comment on, contribute something to improve the knowledge of the group. He asked Trustee Boerner for any comments.

TRUSTEE BOERNER reflected on the incredible challenge that Alaska has faced, particularly these last few months. She put out her great appreciation for all of the health-care workers and everyone that makes it possible to respond to the needs of Alaskans during this very difficult time. She recognized and thanked them for all their work and willingness to come and testify about the importance of mask-wearing. She thanked all of the staff for coordinating the meeting, and the trustees for having this meeting via Zoom in recognition of the challenges that Alaska faces. She then took a moment and really thanked the CEO and was honored to have worked with him during her time as trustee and also to the staff that made the running of the meetings go as smoothly as they have, and she also thanked Ms. Mierop.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Boerner and recognized Trustee Boyles.

TRUSTEE BOYLES talked about the day in early October that she flew up to Fairbanks mainly to talk with Alaska Behavioral Health and to look at the Crisis Now Project. She stated that they are doing good work in Fairbanks and that she would like to visit with Eric more on some specifics relative to what is going on up there. They are very appreciative and respectful of the Trust and trustees.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Boyles and recognized Trustee Fimon.

TRUSTEE FIMON stated appreciation for CEO Abbott in helping formulate around his tax deadline schedule, helping to set it up, which lead to a good meeting and made him feel more prepared. He also gave a shout-out to Miri for her help with the technical stuff. He thanked her and all off the staff. He mentioned the great presentations that bring forward very informative and sometimes not very easy issues. He continued that he was just very appreciative for all the help to him as a newbie.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Fimon and recognized Trustee Fisher.

TRUSTEE FISHER thanked staff for all the preparation and stated his appreciation for the information and the preparedness to answer questions. He appreciated the prep time that went into this documentation and to be able to review it. It is orderly and very easy to go through. He added that it made a difference in helping make sure that the meetings are not stressful.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Fisher and recognized Trustee Halterman.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN thanked all the newbies for being here. The repeat information is helpful in reinforcing the knowledge of what the Trust does. The same information never gets old and helps solidify the understanding of what is done at the Trust, the financials and all the various accounts. She stated appreciation for the flexibility of the staff to accommodate her in working remotely and for the flexibility given to all the trustees. She appreciated the work of the Trust and the panelists. She thanked all very much.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Halterman and recognized Trustee Sturgeon.

TRUSTEE STURGEON thanked CEO Abbott and staff for the super impressive package. Putting them together and getting ready for the meetings takes a tremendous amount of work, and everything is always well prepared and well done.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Trustee Sturgeon and all for the great comments. He appreciated everyone's input and echoed the appreciation of the Board for all the hard work done by all the staff members. He was disappointed that COVID was not over and that we had to go back to a virtual meeting. He stated that he thought people are tired and frustrated with all the restrictions which affects the beneficiaries a lot. He hoped, to the extent the Trust can, remind people about the importance of public health, keeping everyone safe, and encouraging the leaders in all segments of society to lead on this issue. He hoped that all could get through this. He appreciated everyone's input, participation, and all the work that went into this meeting. He then moved into the CEO transition and asked for a motion for the Executive Session.

MOTION: A motion that the Board of Trustees move into Executive Session regarding personnel matters in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, AS44.62.310 (c), was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE STURGEON.

CEO ABBOTT recommended that he and Valette Keller join the Board in the Executive Session.

CHAIR COOKE had no objection to that.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN also did not object.

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

(Executive Session from 2:13 p.m. until 3:30 p.m.)

CHAIR COOKE stated that they were back on the record. The Executive Session was complete.

There were no decisions, motions or other action taken during the Executive Session. He continued that, according to the charter or the bylaws, every year the Board is required to do an evaluation of the CEO which usually occurs at this time of year. Given the circumstances in terms of the CEO's pending retirement, he decided not to do a CEO evaluation. Instead, he noted for the record, that whatever is deemed appropriate in terms of an exit interview or evaluation will be done when the time comes.

MOTION: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by TRUSTEE STURGEON; seconded by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN.

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

CHAIR COOKE thanked all.

(Special Full Board Meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.)