

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY  
PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**July 27, 2022  
8:30 a.m.**

**WebEx Videoconference/Teleconference**

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

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**Trustees Present:**

Verne' Boerner, Chair  
Brent Fisher  
Anita Halterman  
Rhonda Boyles  
Kevin Fimon  
Agnes Moran  
John Sturgeon

**Trust Staff Present:**

Steve Williams  
Katie Baldwin-Johnson  
Carol Howarth  
Miri Smith-Coolidge  
Kelda Barstad  
Michael Baldwin  
Eric Boyer  
Valette Keller  
Autumn Vea  
Allison Biastock  
Luke Lind  
Kat Roch  
Debbie DeLong  
Travis Welch  
Jimael Johnson  
Carrie Predeger

**Trust Land Office Staff Present:**

Jusdi Warner

**Also participating:**

Patrick Reinhardt; Lesley Thompson; John Walker; Meredith Griggs; Kathy Craft; Charity Carmody; Betsy Chivers; Alison Kear; Emily Urlacher; Gloria Bennett; Beverly Schoonover; Josephine Stern; Lisa Guzman; Adam Rutherford; Michelle Bartley; Sharon Tetlow; Kim Champney; Beth Goldstein; Jonathan Pistouk; Janice Weiss; Jennifer Smerud; Anthony Newing; Timothy Ledna; Terry Kadel; Lezelda Fiebig.

## PROCEEDINGS

### CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR BOERNER called the meeting to order and began with a roll call. She stated that there was a quorum and asked for any announcements. There being none, she moved to the agenda.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

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

CHAIR BOERNER asked for any ethics disclosures. There being none, she moved to the minutes of April 21, 2022.

### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes of April 21, 2022, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE STURGEON.

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

### CEO UPDATE

MR. WILLIAMS explained that we would have some approvals, and then dive into the FY24-25 budget recommendations. He then recognized Autumn Vea for 15 years of State service. He stated that she received a certificate from the Governor. She started her State career at the Department of Health and Social Services, then moved to the Department of Corrections where she worked for the Division of Health and Rehabilitation. She came to the Trust in 2018. She has been the point person in working with the departments related to the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan.

(Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS recognized Kelda Barstad's birthday with a "Happy Birthday." He moved to an issue in Anchorage that was related to the beneficiaries who are houseless or homeless. Clearly, the city was working on developing a plan, as it gets closer to the colder months and winter, on housing the beneficiaries and the houseless. He stated that the Trust had actively engaged in this conversation, and he represented the Trust on the Anchorage Homeless Leadership Council. That includes the City, Mayor, several other public partners, AHFC, the Trust, private partners, Wells Fargo, ConocoPhillips, GCI, First Presbyterian Church, the Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Native corporations. They meet on a monthly basis to get updates on what is going on in Anchorage. He continued that updates are received from the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness on the issues and needs related to the houseless population in Anchorage. He moved to the update on the upcoming conference for the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the Dena'ina Center with the plan for up to 400 people. He stated that there was a call-out for

presentations to participate in the conference, and they received 61 applications for about 16 to 18 slots. He continued that two keynote speakers were secured, both from the National Association on Mental Illness: the CEO of NAMI, Daniel Gillison; and, also from NAMI, Kevin Duckworth, the chief medical officer, who is board-certified in children's mental health and adult mental health. He added that registration for the conference is open. He moved to the grant summary report and stated that 47 grants were approved for this quarter, with a total of 91 for FY22, totaling roughly \$3.7 million. The list of grantees was included in the packet.

CHAIR BOERNER congratulated Autumn Veal and thanked her for all her work over 15 years; and she wished Kelda Barstad a happy birthday. She stated that it was great news on the conference, and that she was glad to hear about all the interest for the presentations.

TRUSTEE STURGEON asked how many grants were rejected. He thought that the board may be interested in the rejections, and then get an idea of the kind of demand there is.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked if the Improving Lives Conference would be happening at the event.

MR. WILLIAMS asked Ms. Biastock to share some of the details.

MS. BIASTOCK replied that there are some pre-conference workshops planned for the 26<sup>th</sup>, and we hope to have that information on the website shortly. She stated that trustees are all welcome to attend any and all portions of the Trust conference. She encouraged folks to take advantage of them.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked Mr. Williams to present something on the securitization of the Opioid Task Force funds.

MR. WILLIAMS replied that the Governor's Advisory Council on Opioid Remediation, GACOR, was set up by the Governor via executive order. Trustee Halterman is the Trust representative on the advisory council, and Ms. Baldwin-Johnson and Mr. Boyer sit in. He explained that the litigation against pharmaceutical companies that manufactured the opioids that led to the opioid epidemic was settled. The State of Alaska is expected to receive approximately \$40 million from that settlement, and will have a variety of opportunities for how those funds could be used. He continued that the funds have to be deployed in specific areas, specified in the settlement. He stated that one of the topics of conversation at the council was the role of the Trust in awarding the grants. He continued that Trustee Halterman asked that he look into the viability of the Trust playing that role and communicate back to the council on whether the Trust could or could not participate. The first step was to determine whether this was legally a possibility, and we reached out to the Department of Law. The lawyer's opinion was that, because of the legal framework in the statutes, the Trust would not be able to take on nonTrust funds and then grant them out. He added that it was strongly suggested that the Trust be involved in the process for where those funds should be prioritized and identified.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN added that there had been a subcommittee meeting put together by Senator Begich, and the recommendation of the subcommittee was that the Trust be a stakeholder in making decisions with regard to where these funds will be disbursed. She continued that there would be a statute change before the ownership of those funds.

CHAIR BOERNER was glad that the Trust would be a stakeholder, and she looked forward to learning more. She moved to the approvals process.

## **APPROVALS**

### **COVENANT HOUSE, THE COVEY ACADEMY**

**MOTION:** A motion that the Program & Planning Committee recommends to approve \$250,000 of fiscal year '23 partnership grant to Covenant House Alaska for Covey Academy project was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE MORAN.

CHAIR BOERNER clarified that this is a request for an approval and not a recommendation to the Full Board. She recognized Kelda Barstad to continue.

MS. BARSTAD stated that this project was fantastic and would impact the lives of the Trust beneficiaries that are youth and impacted by homelessness. She explained that the Covey Academy was a result of Covenant House of Alaska taking a look at how to better impact the lives of youth who were homeless. Their process led to a brand-new youth shelter, a resource center where youth can obtain medical care, psychological care, and a variety of different activities to help inspire and get them to the next place in their lives. She stated that Covenant House Alaska built Covey Love on the same campus in a response to a need for housing and to create a different style of housing that was not so expensive. These are micro units available to youth associated with the program. She continued that Covey Academy offers employment training and will include an opportunity to finish a high school diploma, get a GED, or a variety of different technical skills, including culinary. There are also dorm rooms available while students are getting an education. She added that supportive services will be offered. She gave a brief history of how this project came about. She stated that this project is also recommended for '24 and '25 funding because it offers employment opportunities. It offers prevention and is a phenomenal program that provides opportunities for the youth and homeless Trust beneficiaries to really change their lives. She highly recommended the program.

MS. KEAR stated that what they try to do at Covenant House is to learn from areas where the best success is not being created. There is data that showed where young people were being lost, the barriers, and the combination of education, mental health and housing opportunities presented. She continued that this is one of her favorite projects because it took a lot of different partners coming to the table. She added that the Trust was one of the first investors in the micro units, and will be one of the first investors in the operations. She appreciated the opportunity to come and talk and looked forward to showing it tomorrow.

CHAIR BOERNER pointed out that there was a listing of partners and resources that Covenant House has already gathered on page 23. She asked for any trustee comments.

TRUSTEE MORAN stated that she was very supportive of the program and the work they do.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that we had spent a lot of time at Covenant House, and she could not think of an organization that was more deserving of support from the Trust. She firmly supported this particular motion.

TRUSTEE FISHER asked for some clarification on whether the youth have to live in the Covey Academy housing facility to participate, or if there was another way to participate.

MS. KEAR replied that the youth can participate in the learning part without actually living on the second floor. If the youth are living in the residence area at the Academy, then they are participating in the education program. There are now about 200 beds and housing options. There was a capacity of about 123.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that this project was timely and visionary, and she complimented it. She asked if a model was followed.

MS. KEAR replied that a young person stated that this wasn't a shelter; it was an education and employment center that offered housing. She stated that about 20 young people helped with the design of the program and helped to figure out the employment opportunities.

CHAIR BOERNER called a roll-call vote on the motion.

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

#### **COPPER RIVER MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH TEAM**

CHAIR BOERNER moved to the next approval, Copper River Mobile Integrated Health Team, and asked for a motion.

**MOTION: A motion for the Program & Planning Committee to approve a \$391,089 FY23 mental health & intervention focus area allocation to the Copper River Native Association for the mobile integrated village health project funds coming from the crisis continuum of care budget line in the FY23 budget, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.**

CHAIR BOERNER recognized Eric Boyer for information on the motion.

MR. BOYER introduced Lezelda Fiebig, the director for medical services for the Copper River Native Association, their clinic in Copper Center. He also introduced Terry Kadel, an EMS officer with the Division of Public Health, Office of Emergency Services. He stated that Crisis Now and the work around crisis stabilization was a multi-year project with the question brought up about how this model could be adapted to Rural Alaska. He stated that the conversation continued with tribal behavioral health directors. He added that he and Travis Welch worked with Terry Kadel in the Division of Public Health for a number of years looking at how to use some of the funding that had been awarded to the State through the COVID funds, and also some funding from the Centers for Disease Control. Out of that work, they were introduced to Lezelda, and the work being done at Copper River Native Association. They serve the tribal members and the nonindigenous people with a fully integrated health clinic. Integrated care is behavioral health and physical health and treats the whole person. That is what is wanted to be done through Crisis Now: serving the beneficiaries and people that have some level of crisis in behavioral health. He explained the funding in greater detail.

MS. FIEBIG stated that she was the director of medical services at CRNA. She continued that there was a definite need for blazing a new trail in Rural Alaska and that it was frustrating to not have a workable solution. She talked about the success of building their own provider base, and invited the trustees to come and visit.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked them for the overall presentation and for providing perspective and some of the background. She recognized Trustee Halterman.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated her excitement for the project, and asked about the workforce.

MS. FIEBIG replied that they began with a COVID team and grew from that. A career path was created, and 12 professionals were secured that have a certification level. The framework was built, and all of those people are staying. Her goal is encouraging the youth in the community.

TRUSTEE FISHER commended Ms. Fiebig on developing local sources and asked if the funding was one time or an annual thing.

MR. BOYER replied that the funding would support the operation, and the plan is to sustain this through the current local sources.

MR. KADEL stated that he is a program specialist and works with the Office of EMS. He continued that his specific job was to bring EMS to the front to be able to work with health-care system stakeholders to realize that EMS is part of that health-care system.

A brief discussion continued.

CHAIR BOERNER moved to the roll-call vote.

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

CHAIR BOERNER called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR BOERNER thanked the trustees for their flexibility and moved to the introduction of the recommendations.

MR. WILLIAMS stated that it was the season for staff to bring forward to the trustees recommendations for FY24 and FY25. He continued that there would be no formal action; just the opportunity for good, rich dialogue. The budget being presented includes Trust funding and recommendations that the trustees will forward to the Executive Branch and to the Legislature for State funding of programs and services that improve the lives of the beneficiaries.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON provided a frame for some of the work that went into the budget recommendations that were included in the spreadsheet. She continued that the primary thing that staff wanted to convey were some of the steps to the development of the recommendations

that were brought forward. She added that the evaluation of the impacts was key to helping to inform the recommendations that were brought forward. She went through the timeline.

MS. VEA shared that her State service began by completing her EMT certification and working for Central Mat-Su Ambulance as a first responder. She thanked all for sharing her 15-year service award moment. She stated that the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan responds to statutory requirements which required the Department of Health and Social Services, in conjunction with the Trust, to develop and revise a plan for Alaska's Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program. Under that statute, the preparation of the plan was to be coordinated with Federal, State, regional, tribal, local, and private entities all involved in behavioral health services. The Trust uses this Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan to inform its recommendations for the expenditure of State General Funds included in the mental health budget bill. She gave an overview of how the plan was formed. She explained that the Alaska scorecard was a tool used by policymakers, advocates, and grant writers to measure the desired outcomes of the comp plan. She announced that the comp plan coordinator position was filled by Meredith Griggs at the end of June.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON highlighted some of the stakeholder engagement common themes. She began with the complex care needs which is relevant to the Crisis Now initiative and talked about the challenges. She then went briefly through some of the terminology that would be seen in the budget. She recognized Mr. Boyer.

MR. BOYER talked about the mental health and addiction intervention focus area. He moved to the call center and focused on complex care, the really tough issues and how they are supported. He talked about the success of the mobile crisis team in Fairbanks and some of the other programs that were approved.

A question-and-answer discussion ensued.

CHAIR BOERNER recognized Travis Welch for his presentation.

MR. WELCH thanked the trustees for the opportunity to discuss the disability justice focus area. He stated that this focus area was set up in 2005 and identifies Trust beneficiaries coming into contact in large numbers with the criminal justice system. This was an opportunity to dedicate significant amounts of staff time, as well as resources, to addressing this issue. He continued that there were a lot of people who come to the table on behalf of Trust beneficiaries within this focus area with three goals in mind: developing criminal justice and behavioral health partnerships; diverting Trust beneficiaries from the criminal justice system; and maintaining public safety by improving the health of beneficiaries in Alaska communities.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked staff for the presentations and stated that providing this information and the level of detail is not just informational for the trustees, but also provides it to the partners and the public. She proposed to break for lunch.

(Lunch break.)

CHAIR BOERNER brought the meeting back to order.

TRUSTEE FIMON told Mr. Welch it was a great presentation and that it was good to see a little recap of what has already been done. He asked if there was some confidence that people were out there and available to fill those spots.

MR. WELCH replied that that was a question that every organization is currently facing. He stated that different strategies are being employed to try and fill the positions.

A discussion continued.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked Mr. Welch for his flexibility in breaking up time and moved to the next portion of the FY24-25 Trust budget recommendations. She moved to beneficiary employment and engagement, and recognized Ms. Johnson.

MS. JOHNSON began with a brief introduction to the beneficiary employment and engagement focus area. The primary goal of this focus area was to improve outcomes and promote recovery for beneficiaries through integrated competitive employment and meaningful engagement opportunities. She talked about the data and explained that the rate of employment was lower for some of the specific beneficiary populations. She continued that work was viewed as an essential part of recovery for people with serious mental illness, and it has a positive impact on self-esteem.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked Ms. Johnson and recognized Kelda Barstad to present the housing and home- and community-based services.

### **HOUSING AND HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES**

MS. BARSTAD stated that this was a longstanding focus area ensuring that beneficiaries have access to housing and a continuum of services and supports so they can maintain their independence in their homes and communities. She added that stable housing is a critical component to get to those goals. She stated that there have been a number of positive impacts and successes, and she highlighted the work of this focus area and its four budget strategies: first, is a focus on policy coordination and capacity development; second area focuses primarily on stable housing; third is access to home- and community-based services; and the final area was to optimize information technology and data analysis.

MR. WILLIAMS reminded the trustees that this is one of the items brought forward by the Administration last year, and the request incorporated it into the FY23 budget recommendations. It received funding in the final FY23 budget.

CHAIR BOERNER thanked Ms. Barstad for a fantastic presentation. She asked for any questions.

TRUSTEE FISHER asked for more information about the investments specifically with regard to those in Alaska.

MS. BARSTAD replied that there was a lot of information, and we do have project-specific evaluations as well as overall general information. She stated that she would be happy to gather and share that with the trustees.



CHAIR BOERNER asked for any further questions. There being none, she recessed the meeting.

(Program & Planning Committee meeting recessed at 2:36 p.m.)