

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
July 28, 2022
8:30 a.m.

WebEx Videoconference/Teleconference

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

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

Trust Land Office Staff Present:

Jusdi Warner

Also participating:

Patrick Reinhardt; Lesley Thompson; John Walker; Carrie Predeger; Meredith Griggs; Kathy Craft; Charity Carmody; Betsey Chivers; 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.

PROCEEDINGS

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR BOERNER called the meeting to back into session and began with a roll call. She stated that there was a quorum, and she asked for any announcements.

TRUSTEE STURGEON asked to be excused from about 9:30 to 11:30. He stated he had to attend the signing ceremony for the tribal recognition bill at the Native Heritage Center.

CHAIR BOERNER stated that she would happily excuse him. She asked Mr. Williams for a quick update before moving to the agenda.

MR. WILLIAMS looked forward to continued discussions as the presentation of the last couple of sections of the FY24-25 budget were finished up. He thanked Luke Lind, grants administrator, and Carrie Predeger, grants accountability manager, for pulling information that was asked about by Trustee Sturgeon regarding the quarterly report that was handed out for the grant approvals under \$100,000. The question referred to how many grants were denied. He continued that in the fourth quarter, related specifically to that report, there were six grants denied out of the 53. Also asked about were the LOIs received in FY22 that fell under the CEO's authority. There were 108 grants received; 91 were approved for FY22; and 17 were denied.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked about the reasons for denial.

MR. WILLIAMS replied that they usually fall into a few categories: one would be that it did not connect to the mission of the Trust; another could be that they did not fall within an organizational tax status that allowed receiving Trust funds. He continued that there are organizations that have a concept, but they need additional work before going through a full grant application, review and approval process.

CHAIR BOERNER moved to the FY24-25 Trust budget recommendations presentations and recognized Eric Boyer to begin with workforce development.

MR. BOYER stated that that this was a great opportunity to talk about workforce, which is important because of the need for a skilled workforce. There is a need for collaboration, and all the associations and colleagues that work at other Departments and Divisions meet monthly in the workforce coalition. The objectives around the comp plan having skilled workers that are competent and want to be there is important. He talked about some of the impacts of the Training Cooperative and their outreach. He moved to SHARP which works closely with the Division and the Commissioner's office. API was supported with five three-year SHARP contracts to secure the retention of some of the licensed practitioners on staff, and to recruit licensed psychiatrists to come onboard. He talked about the innovation in the current and expanding efforts.

CHAIR BOERNER stated that her daughter went through one of the pathway introductions in high school to learn about health careers. She has one year to graduate with her bachelor's with health sciences as her focus.

TRUSTEE FISHER asked for clarification on the impact and to explain what unduplicated means.

MR. BOYER replied that the total number trained were about 6,000, and 4,000 were unduplicated. That means that 2,000 people had more than one training. He stated that there were 4,000 unique individuals, and they were spread out across Alaska.

TRUSTEE FISHER asked for the statistics on where they were located. He asked if the training programs are upgrading skills for people in the field, or were they giving people new skills that they did not have.

MR. BOYER replied that the primary training is introductory to get the core competencies needed for any level of professional in the behavioral health system. He explained the levels of trainings provided at the University, which was statewide.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that she had not heard a lot about the complex needs situation that is obvious to anyone dealing with caregiving. She asked if there was any focus on full comprehensive care to a beneficiary with case management; someone going out and keeping track of all the specialists.

MR. BOYER replied that the University works with FDS, and they share the training responsibilities. They work directly with the care coordinators. They are integral for all of that training with organizations that do have case management positions.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that she had heard a lot of grumbling from workforce care coordinators for not being paid for claims timely, which is the biggest strain on the workforce. If the providers are not paid, they will not stick around. That was more of a comment for the Department to look at what is happening in that area. She then requested more information with regard to the BSP pilot project for the certification program. She added that complex behaviors open up a new assessment tool for those beneficiaries with behavioral challenges, substance abuse issues.

MR. BOYER stated that he would get that information on the DSP certification so more of the details can be seen. He also stated appreciation for the feedback.

CHAIR BOERNER invited Trustee Sturgeon to share some of the recommendations for both the staff and trustees to consider.

TRUSTEE STURGEON apologized for being out of order and stated that he had three recommendations regarding the foster care program. Line 33, which is infant and early childhood mental health capacity-building, has a proposal for \$200,000; he would like to increase that to \$400,000. Line 36 is improved social determinants of health for families and young children, parenting and family support, home visiting and related programs, which has a proposal for \$200,000; he recommended increasing that to \$400,000. He stated that it was very important as a group that is trying to tackle this foster care problem. Charity Carmody is the leader of that group, and is doing a fantastic job. There is a need to support her as much as the Trust can. Line 37, foster care and child welfare systems improvement, the recommendation was

\$200,000; he would like that jumped to \$600,000. Those were his recommendations, and he hoped that the Board and staff would agree with him. He thanked all for their consideration.

CHAIR BOERNER stated that the signing of the bill is incredibly meaningful. Thinking about the historical traumas that Alaska Natives have experienced, and to have this bill come to fruition with all the work done to advocate and get it through, is wonderful, and it is a healing point. She stated appreciation for Trustee Sturgeon's willingness to be there and to bring the spirit of some of us along with him at that signing. She also stated appreciation for the input regarding recommendations. She continued that it is important that the trustees have the opportunity to give their input on this.

TRUSTEE STURGEON commented on a call from Julie Kitka asking if he could work with the Governor to get the House Bill 184 signed. It is the Tribal Child Welfare Act, and it just came out of the blue. He continued that he talked to the Governor, and he thinks that he might sign it. It seemed like a coincidence.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated that there is flexibility to adapt and adjust, and she asked for a pause in workforce.

CHAIR BOERNER recognized Jimael Johnson.

MS. JOHNSON moved to the section of the budget entitled Early Childhood Intervention and Prevention. This is a space in the budget to work all of the strategies related to kids, families, and that trauma-engaged work that can span across all age groups for the youth. She continued that the three strategies that Trustee Sturgeon highlighted are critical to this work, and she appreciated him raising the discussion on increasing some of those budget lines to allow for more in-depth and broader work around the state in those areas. She briefly explained those strategies.

TRUSTEE STURGEON again thanked all and hoped that the Board would support the increases. One of the goals he mentioned was to put the Covenant House out of business -- and to not have any customers.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN looked at opportunities and stated that the ECHO programs could potentially deal with at-risk populations that potentially would enter the foster care system. She felt that Alaska missed an opportunity to roll out something more meaningful for the rural communities, and technology could fill those gaps where case managers or care coordinators could not make it to those rural communities on a regular basis. She added that she would like to have all think about ways to engage the University and the ECHO program.

CHAIR BOERNER stated appreciation for the staff being flexible, and continued to workforce.

MR. BOYER followed up that the Center for Human Development is a super hub for ECHO. They are the training center, and they work really well with the ECHO being done at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. He mentioned that the Trust is partnered with the Alaska Eating Disorders Institute and the ECHO clinic. He continued that they will offer a series of ECHO clinics around co-occurrence of eating disorders and mental issues this fall. He added that they are really good at meeting the needs of some of the things that Trustee Halterman

brought up. He stated that the program staff is totally flexible and worked really hard preparing this information and budget, which allows the flexibility. He moved to meeting the skilled part of the workforce and then talked about care coordination and case management, which are critical parts of the workforce. He continued through the budget lines.

MR. WILLIAMS stated that one of the values and important pieces of the Trust's work is not just as a funder, but as a policy advisor, maker, partner and thinking about how to reshape or introduce new conversations with the partner organizations serving Trust beneficiaries into new ways of thinking or incentivizing or creating efficiencies. He appreciated the conversation, and these are concepts that can be introduced or added, if raised, in the settings when talking about workforce specifically for the beneficiaries.

CHAIR BOERNER called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR BOERNER asked Ms. Baldwin-Johnson to start with the nonfocus area allocations, and then to come back to early childhood.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON provided some context because the strategies included within this section are a collection of strategies that assist in the work being done. She gave a few examples demonstrating why these strategies were important.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN thanked staff for being responsive to the feedback the Board had given over the last couple of years. She saw that evidenced in the budget being reviewed.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON moved to the statutory advisory boards. The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the Alaska Mental Health Board joint staffing level of support is consistent with that from FY23. She stated that the level of support for the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the Alaska Commission on Aging is also consistent with FY23. She answered questions and comments as she went through the budget lines. She asked Allison Biastock to continue.

MS. BIASTOCK went through the numbers and stated that the budget proposed is a combination of funding that goes to support the communications program. The Authority Grant funding supports the stigma campaign. She noted a grant awarded to Alaska Public Media for a mental health content initiative for public affairs programming and coverage of mental-health-related topics. It was a successful partnership that was supported through the communications line item.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON continued her presentation on strategies.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN stated that there are some measures for the Opioid Task Force settlement that overlap with some of the comp plan areas. She continued that she would like to see the Trust working in reviewing the measures that are required for that settlement, and to see if there was a way to tailor the measurement of information and surveys to capture information that would be more meaningful for whomever assumes responsibility for the management of those funds.

A discussion ensued with explanations on the line items.

MS. BIASTOCK discussed the rural and community outreach trip budget and Trust conference.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON concluded the non-focus area allocations. She proposed transitioning back to Jimael Johnson and her presentation.

MS. JOHNSON began with a brief introduction of the early childhood intervention focus area, with the focus being on resiliency and prevention of trauma, which is straight out of the comprehensive integrative plan. Goal No. 1 has a primary focus on early childhood -- identifying children early and supporting them with the most appropriate interventions at the earliest time to improve health and education outcomes. She continued going through the line items of the focus area and answered questions.

CHAIR BOERNER stated that Trustee Sturgeon had returned.

MS. JOHNSON continued her presentation and stated that the final section was to improve social determinants of health for families and young children where Trustee Sturgeon proposed an increase to \$400,000. She also talked about lines 34 and 37, and the increase in funds for both.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked for more detail on line 37 and where that money goes.

MS. JOHNSON replied that Alaska Impact Alliance was the identified target. That group is not a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Right now, it is a collective with a leader, a facilitator; but the organization exists because community and statewide partners have come together around this topic. She added that there would be more details in August. She continued through the rest of her presentation.

TRUSTEE BOYLES asked for a white paper of information that says how many kids are in foster care, and if a difference can be made. She stated the need for more information to be able to evaluate expenditures.

TRUSTEE MORAN stated that it would be very beneficial to have the issues defined and how to approach a solution for them.

CHAIR BOERNER asked Mr. Williams and Ms. Baldwin-Johnson to discuss the next steps.

MR. WILLIAMS stated that it was helpful for staff to hear the conversations around not only the budget, but the policies and how a systemic change can be created through the catalytic funding, and also in complimentary fundings to things that already exist. He hoped to be able to describe what is needed from trustees after today.

CHAIR BOERNER stated the recommendation of August 5th getting feedback to herself, Mr. Williams, and Ms. Baldwin-Johnson would be needed. She continued that momentum has picked up. This was a very dynamic meeting, and it is very exciting to think about some of the discussions. She hoped those discussions would continue. Staff has sent her feedback on how much the input from trustees was appreciated. She opened the floor up for discussion.

TRUSTEE MORAN stated that she was unsure about the protocol for the appropriate time for comments. She continued that her strong belief is that housing should be a basic human right, and it should not be tied to any sort of behavioral or lifestyle choice. She fully supports the move in a new direction. She encouraged staff to maintain a focus on safe and stable housing.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that she would like some guidance from staff, who are administrative, on what the trustees' priorities would be. The budget outlined them, and she would like to see that summarized based on systematic changes.

MS. GRIGGS pointed out that she loved this conversation. She explained that she was the new comp plan coordinator, and all of the conversation was good. She stated that she wanted to be involved in the conversations and asked to be invited to them.

CHAIR BOERNER appreciated the comments and mentioned that the comp plan is a tool that helped shape and track the direction. In the past, the paradigm had been to force crisis, and the comprehensive plan took it a step further so that crisis could be prevented.

MR. WILLIAMS described the next steps that staff would take regarding the recommendations of the trustees. He added that if he had missed anything, to please send him an e-mail.

CHAIR BOERNER noted that when the trustees reconvene after the site visit, Trustee Halterman will step in as Chair.

(Lunch break and site visit.)

CHAIR HALTERMAN called the meeting back to order and did a quick roll call. She stated there was a quorum, and Trustee Boerner had been excused. She moved to Trustee Comments.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

TRUSTEE FIMON thanked all, and noted the good exchange. He talked about the unique relationship between such a highly qualified and knowledgeable staff to the trustees. He stated that he was on a quest of gaining knowledge and wanted to know the why and how of the workings of the Trust. He added a thank you for the wonderful tour.

TRUSTEE STURGEON thanked staff for all the work in putting the budget and meeting together. He stated that he feels very strongly about children and things that could be done to prevent problems in their futures. He continued that whatever can be done for foster care is a good place to put Trust money. He appreciated the trustees and the staff considering it. He added that it was a good meeting.

TRUSTEE FISHER stated that he enjoyed the meetings; there was a lot of good, in-depth discuss, questions and answers. He appreciated the expertise of staff and the willingness to provide all the information that makes it possible for us meeting our fiduciary responsibility. He continued that data is gold, and he appreciated the effort everybody put into providing that in a readable and understandable format.

TRUSTEE BOYLES complimented the administration for not only the interesting and exciting

board meeting, but for making the trustees realize that the beneficiaries are different, and we have an obligation to see them into the future. She looked forward to talking about new programs, new approaches to programs, systematic changes, becoming change agents for the rest of the state, which will be a real pivot in her personal thinking. She added that the tour was wonderful, and she was glad that project was funded.

TRUSTEE MORAN thanked staff for the amount of work that went into the budgets and the amount of information that was provided. She hoped to be at the August meeting in person, and that she was very jealous that all saw Covenant House without her.

CHAIR HALTERMAN stated appreciation for the amount of work that goes into preparing these meetings. She thanked the reporter for ensuring that we stay within the rules. The food was great. She stated appreciation to Miri for making sure they were all comfortable, and she also respected and appreciated the words of wisdom from her fellow trustees. She agreed with Trustee Sturgeon and his support for foster care. She talked about the workforce need and seeing meaningful programs like the Covenant House for the youth. She agreed with Trustee Fisher's comments about capitation not necessarily being a good approach for Alaska. Alaska has some unique population needs, and she appreciated the comments on that. She concluded her comments and asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by TRUSTEE MORAN; seconded by TRUSTEE FISHER.

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

(Program & Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.)