

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY  
PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
HYBRID/ZOOM  
October 15, 2025  
8:30 a.m.**

**Originating at:  
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority  
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508**

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**Trustees Present:**

Agnes Moran, Chair  
Kevin Fimon  
Corri Feige

**Other Trustees Present:**

Anita Halterman  
Josie Hickel

**Trust Staff Present:**

Mary Wilson  
Allison Biastock  
Katie Baldwin-Johnson  
Shannon Cochran  
Valette Keller  
Julee Farley  
Luke Lind  
Carrie Predeger  
Eric Boyer  
Kelda Barstad  
Tina Voelker-Ross  
Michael Baldwin  
Samantha Ponts  
Heather Phelps

**Trust Land Office Staff Present:**

Jusdi Warner  
Maria Sanchez

**Also participating:**

Marty Lange; Randy Miller; James Kelleher; Patrick Reinhart; Michelle Larson; Melissa Toffolon; Naomi Studevan; Amy Young; Linda Soriano; Terese Kaptur; Cheri Smith; Cassie Stuart; Julie Cleaton; Katie McKay Bryson; Ruth Schoenleben; Melissa Toffolon; Jackie Yates; Nick Kraska; Josh Engle; Brenda McFarlane; Dani Kebschull; Nicole Lackner; Jen Harrington; Lauren Havens; Lori Grassgreen; Sarah Dewane; Amanda Metivier.

## PROCEEDINGS

### CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MORAN called the meeting to order and began with a roll call. She asked for any announcements. There being none, she moved to the approval of the agenda.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

TRUSTEE FIMON noted that the agenda at 12:15 p.m. says, "Consent Agenda," and asked if it that should say "requests" or "grants."

CHAIR MORAN stated that was a correction, and it should be "grants" instead of "consent" there.

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the agenda with the words "consent agenda" taken out of the title at 12:15 and substituted with the word "grants." The motion was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE FEIGE.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)*

CHAIR MORAN stated the need to approve the agenda, as amended.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)*

### ETHICS DISCLOSURES

CHAIR MORAN asked for any ethics disclosures. Hearing none, she moved to the minutes from July 31, 2025.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION:** A motion to approve the minutes from July 31, 2025, was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)*

### CEO UPDATE

CHAIR MORAN moved to the CEO update.

CEO WILSON began with a reminder of some strategic planning for the final two hours today upstairs in the large conference room. She thanked Trustee Hickel for inviting her to speak at the Rotary Club, stating that it was really fun. She thanked Mr. Boyer for the help. It was a great chance to familiarize attendees with the great work that the Trust does. She stated that she would be representing the Trust on a panel discussion at the Aging and Disability Summit. She also made some brief comments that the AHFC and Trust co-sponsored the Year of Unity program yesterday, which is about housing and working with our partners. She continued that the trip to Kotzebue was cancelled due to the weather, but will be rescheduled. She added that Commissioner Hedberg has kept them updated on the rural health transformation, and has been asking for feedback from various groups, including the Trust. She stated that she met the new

interim CEO at Providence, John Hall, who provided a tour of the new space at Providence. She reported that the construction is back on for both the 23-hour center, as well as short-stay inpatient beds and recliners. She continued that Mat-Su completed, as part of the continuum of care, a partial hospitalization for discharging mental health patients, which is up and running. It is a great space. She moved to the idea of putting committee meeting days on the same week as board meeting days. There haven't been any conclusions, but staff would like feedback on that from everyone. The current idea is to have committee meetings and then a month later board meetings. Also mentioned was the need for committee meetings, and just doing it of the whole board. Another possibility is doing more things virtually.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any questions. There being none, she moved to the Trust grant-making process.

### **TRUST GRANT-MAKING PROCESS**

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated appreciation for working with trustees on the suggestion for staff to put together an overview of the Trust grant-making process. This overview is trying to provide information to help trustees understand: How does a project get before trustees, and what are all the steps that happen leading up to that. She gave an overview of explaining the touch points, the timelines and all the steps of due diligence that staff puts into review and consideration of anything that comes before the Trust. She continued that this is informative and an opportunity to move forward with strategic planning.

MR. LIND stated that the primary change has been since May 15<sup>th</sup>, which is when they went to a new quarterly application process and rolled out a new grant application for both the grants and the mini grants. He gave an overview of how staff reviews them, the due diligence, turning it to technical assistance, and other aspects of the process. He stated that every application gets assigned to a program staff member, typically program officers with approximately 15 days to look at it before moving into a collective.

MR. BOYER stated that he thought the process was working well through the website and the portal with a lot of interfaces with the team. The customer service side comes through and eases the concern of how to navigate that.

MR. LIND continued with an overview which has only been going for two cycles, so it is hard to see trends. He stated that they received 32 applications in May that were forwarded to the trustees at the July Program & Planning Committee meeting for review. Three were referred to Allison Biastock as part of the new conference review sponsorship, and 19 were declined for various reasons. In August they were up to 37, with 22 that will go forward to the trustees later today for consideration. Three more were referred to Allison Biastock; there are two for technical assistance; five were held to look at some more; and five were just declined.

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON clarified that the shift to the full application, paired with the updated portal, is moving away from the prior process. The new process is the full application.

CCO BIASTOCK stated that this was Chair Fisher's recommendation to make sure that Communications is in the annual reporting. It is a requirement, and also a communications tool. Staff was looking at how to make sure that technical assistance is incorporated into how partners are supported.

MR. LIND added that it is not uncommon for a grant that is declined to come back once the reasons for the decline are addressed. He continued to an overview of the framework used to make some decisions.

MR. BOYER stated that the role the Trust plays is to strengthen that system.

MR. LIND stated that another important part of the due diligence is previous compliance by the grantees. One important thing that is looked at is how the grantee complied budgetarily and performance-wise with any previous grants they had. He added that the 22 grants the trustees would be seeing are all grantees in great standing, who have complied with their grant agreements and executed their performance measures as agreed. If any grant comes before the trustees that involves a previous suspension or termination, that information is shared at that time. He continued that program officers do check with the Trust's other partners to see if there is a history of compliance. The other area is with the State single auditor to make sure none of the grantees are running into any issues, because that is a big red flag. He added that in the event that a grant is declined, each declination letter or email includes a link to the regulation and how it can be appealed.

## **DATA UPDATE**

CHAIR MORAN moved into the data update with Michael Baldwin.

MR. BALDWIN began with a data update on the trustee conversations. He reminded all that he recently engaged in a series of conversations with all of the trustees, with the exception of one, on their basic assumption of what they define as data. There were a lot of different expectations about data and what people thought data was. There was some very detailed kind of data, and some of it was very broad and just general.

CHAIR MORAN stated that they have a lot of data and collect a lot of data. What she did not see in the grant review process was the point where the data was injected into that review process. If there is data showing great results in an area, is that being taken into account when reviewing grants, or is that being used to drive decisions. Or, is data being collecting just for compliance-type activities without a good mechanism to put it into play.

MR. BALDWIN replied that the answer is a yes to both. Compliance is definitely a part of what is needed to be done, and the grants information and the data collected there meets that purpose.

TRUSTEE FEIGE asked about what data is telling them in real time, and then wanting longer-term trends at other times. She asked if there is enough information in the way data is currently collected to look at some of those real-time drivers, as well as the longer-term.

MR. BALDWIN replied that real-time data is hard to get, and we do not have a lot of it.

CHAIR MORAN asked if there is a way to judge the return on investment for some of the smaller grants through data, or is it just anecdotal and narrative. There are a lot of disjointed smaller grants that we grant.

MR. BALDWIN replied that it is possible, but not easy to set up. He continued through the presentation, explaining as he went through the process.

CHAIR MORAN stated that every other year there is a captive audience when the big symposium is put on. She continued that there was no reason when an entire session on data could be held.

MR. BALDWIN replied that it was definitely something staff has talked about for the Improving Lives Conference.

TRUSTEE FEIGE, building upon the Improving Lives Conference, a panel or a session pulled together when all of the stakeholders were together to talk about how the data is gathered. Every company has or had a different format, which has to be rectified to make it useable across the board. She suggested getting with everyone to talk about how data is being acquired, the parameters and metrics around that, and the sharing format to let people know that this data is available. It can be aggregated and exchanged to see the exponential growth factor in the amount of data that everyone has for utilizing, analysis, et cetera. That gets fed back into much better grant proposals and much better informed outcomes. This would lead to understanding if it is impactful and making a difference or not.

CHAIR MORAN stated that she would like to see an overall plan which kind of puts all the pieces together of where to be and the funding steps needed to get there. It is the need of a strategic plan for data, just like the strategic plan for the organizations.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked if, when the information is pulled together, to look at the obstacles to the data collection. For instance, State data is often delayed. She added that it is important to identify the obstacles faced with the data, and to point out those types of issues.

CHAIR MORAN moved to the OMB report.

### **OMB REPORT**

MR. BALDWIN stated that annually every department within the state and their divisions have to provide information to OMB about their management, narrative, and performance summary. The Trust information is reported to the Department of Revenue, which then inputs it into the Office of Management and Budget. He continued that information is then accessed by the Legislature, the OMB, and is accessible to anyone else as it is presented and posted online.

TRUSTEE FEIGE asked if that data, as it goes in and OMB reports it out, is in the Data Sources Handbook each year. It can be found in printed form and then online.

MR. BALDWIN added that it is accessible through the OMB website and the Division. He stated that he did not have the current links to it.

CHAIR MORAN asked if they dictate what data they want the Trust to submit.

MR. BALDWIN replied that their intent is for the data to be something that the Division or organization uses to monitor and evaluate their operation. He added that they are consistent yearly, that the narrative is online, and the headlines are the same. The information that changes from year to year are the accomplishments. The narrative letter has the contributions made to the Department of Revenue, which addresses the beneficiaries and the core services. The second part involves the data and data conversation, which is the performance summary. He talked

about improving beneficiary lives through funding and partnerships, the core services, and the annual report on the total number of grants being funded.

CHAIR MORAN noted that Trustee Fimon was leaving. The grant reviews are at 10:45, and if he is not back by then, they would hold off a few minutes to accommodate him.

MR. BALDWIN noted that one of the areas the core services is around is activity and systems work.

TRUSTEE FEIGE clarified that when talking about systems in this context, it is about the mechanics at work behind the system of care for the beneficiaries.

MR. BALDWIN continued to the core function asset development.

CFO FARLEY stated that this reflects the basic calculation of taking the budget reserves available divided by the current year payouts. Those proceeds have gone directly into budget reserves that helped. The continued market performance has been pretty strong and helped the budget reserve balance, as well.

MR. BALDWIN stated that as part of making sure there is money available for the COMP plan and beneficiaries is how the money is getting out of the door. Once a grant is approved, the target is, once it is approved by the trustees, to get the grant out the door in under 30 days. He continued that is the core OMB data pulled together annually. He added that the plan forward is to definitely present this as part of the ongoing performance review. One thing he did not mention was the need to wait for OMB to pass their deadline to the departments, and then the departments pass them to the Trust.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any other questions. There being none, she called a recess.

(Break.)

#### **GRANT REVIEW: CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL, \$250,000 OR LESS**

CHAIR MORAN moved to the grant review and stated that if a trustee had issues or concerns about a grant on the list, she would pull it. She asked for any issues.

TRUSTEE FEIGE stated that she had none.

CHAIR MORAN stated that she did not have concerns but did have a couple of questions on two of the grants. The first question was on the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association. Their description of the staff member they wanted to hire was all over the place. She stated that a motion was needed.

**MOTION:** A motion that the Board of Trustees approves the following Authority Grants as outlined below, to include: Family Centered Services of Alaska (FCSA) Residential Treatment Expansion, Phase 2, 4180,000; No. 2. Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association, Inc, Alzheimer's Association, ALZ CARES for Alaska, community alliances for risk reduction, education, and support, \$82,500; No. 3. Petersburg Medical Center, tele-behavioral health expansion of Petersburg long-term care and home health consumers, \$81,960; No. 4. Nine Star Enterprises, Inc., Nine Star's

Center for Workforce Excellence, \$50,000; No 5. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska, Big Futures, economic pathways to youth mental wellness, \$49,984; No. 6. Ciri Foundation, the TFC Resilience Project, \$28,580; No. 7. Alaska Public Health Association, expanding access and visibility behavioral and mental health track at the 2026 Alaska Public Health Summit, \$25,000; No. 8. North Star Community Foundation, Healing Through Music and Dance 2026, Breathe in The World, Breathe Out Music, \$20,000; No. 9. REACH, Inc., deaf/blind immersion experience training for caregivers and disability service professionals in Alaska, \$10,664; No. 10. Valley Charities, Inc., DME Lending Program Handicap Doors, \$9,004; No. 11. Blossom House, trauma-informed, arts-based and wellness programming for incarcerated youth at the Fairbanks Youth Facility, \$7,500; and No. 12. Bridges Community Resource Network, Project Homeless Connect 2026, \$5,000. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE FEIGE.

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON asked Mr. Lind to look at one particular project listed that was incorrect.

MR. LIND stated that Item No. 1, FCSA, is in due diligence, and staff would like to have that one removed to be considered at the January Program & Planning for additional discussion.

**MOTION:** An amendment to the prior motion to remove the No. 1, Family Centered Services of Alaska (FCSA) Residential Treatment Expansion Phase 2 for \$180,000 to be looked at in the future. The motion for an amendment was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE FEIGE.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION for the amendment was APPROVED.  
(Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)*

CHAIR MORAN stated that she had a couple of questions. Her first one was on the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association, looking for more detail on what that position would be doing.

MS. BARSTAD replied that the Alzheimer's Association is interested in having a full-time staff in Alaska. The program manager would be an initial Alaska-based staff member. Right now, they have someone coming up from the Northwest to provide different types of educational presentations. She continued that they have connected with a number of families over the past two years and feel that there is enough interest to have a staff member in Alaska. She explained that the initial staff member is a bit of a jack-of-all-trades, and they are starting out with a mixed model to initiate those services in Alaska for Alzheimer's Association, and then will gather some more information about what is needed where. She added that they do work with Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska which has been a core resource for this information in Alaska, but they are not able to keep up with the demand. Having Alzheimer's Association come in and determine how they can help with this work in Alaska will be a huge asset to the state.

CHAIR MORAN thanked Ms. Barstad and stated that her next question was on the Nine Star Center for Workforce Excellence. She continued that their portion of this program is fairly small, but they have quite a bit of their budget as "grant requests pending." She asked what would take place if those did not come through.

MS. PONTS stated that Nine Star is online.

MS. SCHOENLEBEN stated that she is the president of Nine Star. She hopes to have a really expanded program which is why some of those are still pending. They are trying to reach out to other communities that they are not in at the moment. They have several connections to those communities. In terms of having a small or longer program will depend upon all that is pending. She added that they have programs in place and are well-staffed in Mat-Su and Anchorage. This would support additional resources for job development, resilience building, job readiness, and also training.

CHAIR MORAN stated that it sounds like this is independent of those other grant requests. She moved to her third question for No. 8, the North Star Community Foundation for \$20,000, and added that she was on the fence for this.

MS. PONTS stated that Terese Kaptur, the program director, was online. She continued that, in communities behavioral access to behavioral access supports can be really limited. These kinds of culturally adaptable, low-cost activities can provide really meaningful ways to promote wellness and belonging. The person doing this, Mark Stephens, has a wealth of experience, with over 40 years of traveling around Canada. He is a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, the State Music Humanitarian Award, and was appointed Officer to the Order of Canada, one of Canada's highest honors, in April of 2025. She added that this is an opportunity to show creative expressions through music. It builds resilience, supports emotional regulation, reduces isolation, and is an importantly particular point for folks living in rural areas.

CHAIR MORAN asked how it would be culturally appropriate.

MS. PONTS replied that the team actually invites local participation and brings in Alaska Native traditions, including local dancers and drummers.

TRUSTEE FISHER stated that he is in favor of music therapy which has been around for a little while and is not as extensive as it could be. He continued that he thought this was an appropriate kind of grant for the Trust to see what can be done in Alaska with music and dance therapy.

TRUSTEE FEIGE asked if the \$20,000 would be spent predominantly on travel or funding supplies that may be needed or securing locations.

MS. PONTS replied that there were some costs allocated to travel and some to supplies; 1,100 harmonicas.

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON added that it looked like there are other supplemental funds to support the travel.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any other questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

CHAIR MORAN called a break.



(Break.)

CHAIR MORAN called the meeting back to order and began with Southcentral Foundation.

**CONSENT AGENDA OVER \$250,000 AND/OR REQUESTS OF MORE THAN 12-MONTH TERM**

**SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION – YESHIESH T’UH LAUNCH PROJECT**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$2,955,983 Authority Grant to Southcentral Foundation for the Yeshjesh T’uh launch project grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the Fiscal Year ’26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE FEIGE.

MS. PONTS introduced Michelle Baker, executive vice president, and Samantha Gunes, the operations administrator, at Southcentral Foundation. Online is Lori Weiss, grants administrator. She stated that this proposal is for three years of startup operations funding to support the peer support program within Southcentral Foundation’s new crisis stabilization center in Anchorage called Yeshjesh T’uh. This means “I am a safe place” in Dena’ina Athabascan. Funding includes positions and training to help launch and sustain that team. In the first year, funding will support 12 peer support specialists, along with training and consultation during the launch phase. In the second and third years, funding reduces to support five and then three positions as the program builds sustainability. The facility will provide 23-hour crisis stabilization, crisis residential detox, medications for addiction treatment and behavioral health outpatient services for adults. SCF serves 70,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people in Anchorage, the Mat-Su Borough, and surrounding villages. The crisis, residential, and Southcentral Foundation detox programs will receive statewide referrals for those services. This is the first of its kind in Anchorage, and they are about seven months from launch. She continued that this project evolved over the past seven or eight years from an initial concept of a small crisis stabilization near the emergency department to what is now a significant system-level investment. She added that the demand for crisis service remains unmet in Alaska.

MS. BAKER shared a little about the Yeshjesh T’uh project and how it came about. This was named “I am a safe place” because in rural Alaska when individuals experience a crisis, they go to a church, a trusted relative, a natural helper, and this will be that for this community. She shared a photo of what the building will look like and stated that it is located at the corner of Tudor and Elmore. It is almost 100 percent fully completed on the exterior. She continued describing the building and then stated that the goal is that all of the staff will be hired by March of 2026.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

**TRUE NORTH RECOVERY, INC. – MOBILE CRISIS TEAM YEARS 4 AND 5**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$1,193,275 Authority Grant to True North Recovery, Inc., for the mobile crisis team Years 4 and 5 grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy

implementation line of the Fiscal Year '26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE FEIGE.

MS. PHELPS stated that Josh Engel and Nick Kraska were online. True North Recovery is requesting funding for years 4 and 5 to cover operational costs for the mobile crisis team that works in the Mat-Su area in a 30-mile radius around Wasilla. In Year 4, the project is set to achieve a decrease in payroll costs by reallocating the second mobile crisis team support to other programs. This adjustment is to ensure continued, efficient, and effective crisis care for the community. For Year 5, further sustainability. They are looking at other funding sources to determine long-term funding opportunities. They are hoping that the State with their Guidehouse with rate rebase may have some opportunities in the future. She highlighted that in Year 3, they outlined meeting certain goals, which they met. The relationship with key partners, including the Alaska State Troopers, the Palmer Police Department, and Alaska State Park Rangers was strengthened. They successfully formalized their relationship with MATCOM Dispatch, which is the primary dispatch entity for the Valley. They also moved their model to support 24/7 coverage of the mobile crisis team.

TRUSTEE FEIGE asked how far out the reach goes with the 30-mile radius.

MR. ENGEL replied that their southern border goes to the Old Glenn cut-off, which is the northern cut-off for Anchorage. It is hard to show it on a Google map.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any other questions or discussion. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

CHAIR MORAN called a break for lunch.

(Lunch break.)

CHAIR MORAN called the trustees back and moved to the next motion.

#### **ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INC. – FAIRBANKS MOBILE CRISIS TEAM**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$950,000 Authority Grant to Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, Inc., doing business as Alaska Mental Health, for the Fairbanks mobile crisis team grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the Fiscal Year '26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. PONTS noted that Josh Arvidson, COO from Alaska Behavioral Health, was in the room. This grant proposal requests one year of operational funding to sustain the Fairbanks mobile crisis team. This team in Fairbanks provides 24-hours, 7-days-a-week, community-based response to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. In 2024, the Fairbanks mobile crisis team responded to 800 crisis calls, averaging 67 calls per month. In August, the team responded to 147 calls and 111 unique individuals. An important highlight, as of April, the team is fully integrated with the Alaska State Troopers and is considered for every behavioral health-

related call in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. She added that this request represents continued Trust investment while reimbursement pathways are finalized. Leveraged funding through Medicaid reimbursement is anticipated to gradually offset Trust support as the State moves toward a CCBHC program, in particular, and more stable funding streams for crisis response, including mobile crisis teams.

TRUSTEE FEIGE looked at the budget line items for operating expenses for the last two years of grants and there is a consistent marching upward in operating costs. She asked if they could speak to that.

MR. ARVIDSON replied that the vast majority of the costs in the mobile crisis team are personnel, and they have seen an increase in personnel costs across the board, particularly in Fairbanks.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked about retention and turnover.

MR. ARVIDSON replied that there had been some turnover, and they were able to staff the program adequately. It is a 24-hours-every-day-of-the-year program.

TRUSTEE MORAN stated that a 50 percent jump in call volume is significant, and asked how that was accommodated.

MR. ARVIDSON replied that they had worked for many years to iron out how to partner with the State Troopers, which has been a successful partnership.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any further comments. Hearing none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

#### **ASSOCIATION FOR ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS – PROJECT THRIVE**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$300,000 Authority Grant to the Association of Alaska School Boards for the Project Thrive, Strengthening Families, Students, and Schools grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

DR. VOELKER-ROSS stated that the Alaska Association of School Boards is requesting funding for Year 4 and 5 of this project, which was anticipated for five years. The project has a large footprint and impact as it will serve 18 school districts in more than 70 communities or schools. There are three components to this project: The first is to train schools in trauma-informed responses to students; second is working with families and students during crucial transitions, more specifically, entrance to kindergarten and middle school transition; the third is to engage families with schools in a partnership to better connect families to the education of their children and to resources to address issues that are impacting them. Trust funding will leverage more than \$5 million in additional federal and other funds.

CHAIR MORAN stated that she was a proponent for this grant. She asked for any questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

## **CHRISTIAN HEALTH ASSOCIATES – MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING PROGRAM**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$300,000 Authority Grant to Christian Health Associates for the Anchorage Project Access Mental Health Counseling Program grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. BARSTAD stated that this grant would normally fall under the consent agenda, but they are eager to utilize the multi-year function that has recently been added to the grant-making process. She continued that the Anchorage Project Access is a project where Christian Health Associates is the fiscal home for this project. She added that Melinda Freeman, the executive director of Anchorage Project Access, was here. She began with a short overview of what Anchorage Project Access does. She continued that it is an organization that matches up low-income individuals who are uninsured with healthcare providers, dental care providers, and now behavioral health providers to make sure that they have a connection to care, regardless of insurance status. A key component of this work is making sure that the patients are screened for insurance and enrolled whenever they are eligible. Whenever possible, Anchorage Project Access will help to enroll people into insurance and are successful in doing so when there are individuals who are eligible.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any further comments or questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

## **ANCHORAGE NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER – HEALTH RELATED SOCIAL NEEDS**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees the approval of a 4,267,388 Authority Grant to the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center for the health-related social needs navigation pilot program grant. These funds will come from the partnership designated grants line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. BARSTAD stated that this is a pilot project with the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, which is a federally qualified health center for the Anchorage area. They provide a sliding-fee scale for services, as well as process a variety of different types of insurance. She continued that there is one area that does not have as consistent an investment in Alaska which is case management or care navigation. These services have been identified as a great need for Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center and particularly for Trust beneficiaries. Trust beneficiaries have additional barriers into obtaining and maintaining healthcare, as well as health-related social needs that impact care and well-being for them. The pilot project is anticipating serving roughly 450 Trust beneficiaries over two years. This will be through their unit which will help with patient navigation, but is quite overwhelmed. She added that this

project has the potential to have a larger systems impact because it is a service needed in many places. She stated that Sarah Dewan, chief health integration officer from Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center, is here, and online is Jennifer Harrington, director of grants and development.

TRUSTEE FEIGE talked about the deep dive into the data that helped frame the need for the program. Based upon the earlier discussion about data, this is a good opportunity for the Trust to dive in on this data, capture some of it, and to be able to fold that into the greater need and desire to see more data. She applauded them taking the time to record it, to really look at it, and letting it indicate where the needs were.

TRUSTEE FIMON stated that Neighborhood Health is a great asset for the community. The pilot program numbers show 35 percent total may be Trust beneficiaries. Seeing the word “solely” means that the grant is going to be for those deemed Trust beneficiaries, or is the grant overall. He added that he is behind it.

MS. DEWANE stated that they envisioned that this particular patient navigation position would focus on Trust beneficiaries due to the anticipation of the numbers and how much one full-time person can do.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked how they would ensure that the grants would actually serve Alaskans and the beneficiaries.

MS. DEWANE explained how they did it now and hoped it would be better, especially with the grant. She stated that people basically become a patient of the clinic and are assigned a PCP, and then all the services wrap around that person. Envisioned is that PCP and patient actually work out a care plan and then we all support it. Within the clinic they have medical care, behavioral health care, clinical pharmacy. There is an on-site pharmacy, a lab and dental. All of the services under the roof are available to a patient that establishes with our clinic and have a PCP. She continued that the hope is that this grant will expand on that.

CHAIR MORAN stated that she was excited to see this come forward and to see where this goes. She asked for any further questions or comments. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

## **FACING FOSTER CARE IN ALASKA – PEER NAVIGATION AND SUPPORT FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$250,000 Authority Grant to Facing Foster Care in Alaska for the peer navigation and support for foster youth grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

DR. VOELKER-ROSS stated that Facing Foster Care in Alaska is a non-profit organization led by current and former foster youth. It is focused on direct services, training, education, advocacy, and peer support. They are requesting Trust funding that will span a two-year period of time and will focus on expanding their peer support network, expanding their programming

and peer navigation services, and developing and executing a formal model of peer navigation services based on best practices for youth in foster care or with a history of foster care. She continued that research consistently shows that youth who experience foster care are far more likely to face mental health challenges than their peers in the general population. FFCA will not only provide social/emotional support for these youth, but peer navigators will offer navigation around housing, employment, financial literacy, food security, healthcare, mental health services, parenting, and education. All are critical elements of young adulthood and independence. She added that Amanda Metivier, executive director, was there to answer any questions about this program.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked how the peer-to-peer developed.

MS. METIVIER replied that she is the director of Facing Foster Care in Alaska, a former foster youth, and helped start FFCA when she was 19. She turned 41 this year, and the youth remind her that she is not a youth. She stated that this request came directly from the statewide youth leadership board. There are young people that represent each of the five regions of the Office of Children's Services, who she considers her bosses. They set the tone and direction of the organization. They have made it very clear to her and the board of directors that with high rates of turnover among case workers and just system staff and caregivers in general, that there is a need for something more. She reiterated that this request was directly from young people throughout the state who found benefit in being able to sit in this space with others who have lived experience who want to formalize this.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked about the numbers currently in the system.

MS. METIVIER replied that historically they serve about 300 young people annually, ages 15 to 24, who are either currently in or have experienced foster care. She continued that, as part of this grant, they are asking to serve an additional 30 young people in the first year, and then 45 additional in the following year, for a total of 75 over 24 months, but, with a more formal model that would be adopted specific to peer navigation.

TRUSTEE FEIGE asked how these changes might impact the program.

MS. METIVIER replied that they have been really thoughtful as an organization and board in ensuring diversity in the opportunities for funding sources. They work closely with the Foraker Group to create a fund development plan. She added that one of the long-term goals is to look at sustainability of funding whether through building out the infrastructure to bill Medicaid, or drawdown Title IV-E Federal child welfare funding as part of a pass-through.

CHAIR MORAN stated appreciation for the pure nature of this because a lot of these kids have gone through the system and are just so burned out by government employees and whatever.

TRUSTEE FIMON thanked Ms. Metivier for her 23 years.

CHAIR MORAN called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

## **CHALLENGE ALASKA – KEIL CENTER FOR ADAPTIVE SPORTS EXPANSION & RENOVATION**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$250,000 Authority Grant to Challenge Alaska for the Keil Center for Adaptive Sports Expansion and Renovation Phase 2 Grant. These funds will come from the partnership designated grants line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. PONTS introduced Nate Boltz, executive director of Challenge Alaska. This project is to use Trust funds to renovate and expand the Keil Center in Girdwood, which serves as Alaska's only adaptive recreational facility. She continued that this project will modernize approximately 4400 square feet of space to meet full ADA-compliance standards and expand the facility to include an adaptive gear shop, new volunteer space, accessible offices, and dormitories, as well as the installation of a fire sprinkler system, which will allow the return of overnight accommodation for rural school programs. Trust funds will also be used to upgrade heating, plumbing, and electrical systems to the building. Challenge Alaska is a non-profit organization that has been operating the Keil Center since 1993. The Trust supported Phase 1 of the project, and this one-time funding request today will complete Phase 2. She added that it would also expand reach to more Trust beneficiaries, including Veterans with disabilities, youth with developmental disabilities, individuals in recovery, and people living with mental illness. She noted that Challenge Alaska has already secured \$2,675 million towards the project. The design phase is currently underway, and the timeline is that construction is expected to begin in May 2026, with completion targeted for September 2027.

TRUSTEE FEIGE asked how to look at the long-term implication or effectiveness of the program. Girdwood is a bit off the beaten path. What is the process to bring, for example, rural schools utilizing the overnight facilities in.

MR. BOLTZ replied that, historically, they have had a statewide outreach for the majority of the time they have owned this facility. School groups used to come from as far as Utqiagvik, Dutch Harbor and Bethel. Unfortunately, that is no longer allowed due to the occupancy code of the building. He firmly believes that if they build it, they will come. They will also double down on the outreach efforts, making sure that happens and, in addition, they are regularly frequented by school groups from Mat-Su School District, Anchorage School District, Kenai Peninsula Borough. The word will spread, as well.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked about the ongoing marketing to reach for folks that may not know.

MR. BOLTZ replied that Challenge Alaska has been operating for the last 46 years and has a very stable financial footing. They carry no debt. As far as sustainability, they are poised very well for the future. There is a growing team, from both the programmatic standpoint as well as the development standpoint, to make sure they can engage the outreach efforts necessary. He stated that he plans on engaging with the local school districts in Rural Alaska to make sure that this outreach happens. They are also very tied in with the adaptive physical education departments, the physical education departments, and the physical and occupational therapy industries in most locales in Alaska. Outreach can also be done on those avenues, as well.

CHAIR MORAN stated that they do not just focus on youth, and also do adults with disabilities. She asked what their blend is.

MR. BOLTZ replied that they provide services to all ages and all disability types, which differentiates this from several organizations. The demographic breaks down on the age ranges of about 70 percent youth, 18 and under, and then 30 percent adults. That follows the same curve as active recreation, and they still have people out there skiing with us in their 80s.

CHAIR MORAN thanked Mr. Boltz, and asked for any further questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

#### **KETCHIKAN WELLNESS COALITION – KETCHIKAN REENTRY HOUSE**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$150,000 Authority Grant to the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition for the Ketchikan Reentry House Grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. PHELPS stated that the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition is requesting two-year funding to pay for the rent for Trust beneficiaries at the Ketchikan Reentry Housing Program. They are leasing the reentry housing and do not own the property. The rent will assist approximately 24 Trust beneficiaries reentering the community from Corrections. They may be on probation, parole, or pretrial status. This is a nine-month structured program that aims to improve housing stability and enhance recovery outcomes, including reducing recidivism and connecting to behavioral health services and to work. This program is unique in that it structures in accountability. At the end of the nine months, it is expected that rent will be paid by the individuals or that they would be achieving long-term housing. There is strong data from the FY24 project. 21 Trust beneficiaries were served. All 21 Trust beneficiaries were engaged in behavioral health or medical treatment. At that point, 11 had successfully transitioned into long-term housing with an employment. There were six still in the program which were not counted, and four did recidivate.

CHAIR MORAN asked how this program reentry compared to other programs.

MS. PHELPS replied that it is difficult to compare the programs because each program is based on the unique community needs.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked about the statewide recidivism rate.

MS. PHELPS replied that it is 54 percent. She continued that this program is very structured and because of that there are more opportunities for behavioral health support. They really look at increasing accountability and responsibility, which is very unique.

CHAIR MORAN asked if they had any plans to try weaning off Trust funding for these programs.

MS. PHELPS replied that this is about all reentry housing programs, and she hoped that strategic planning would be addressing that question. She pointed out that this is the third year the Trust



funded it, and she thinks the Fairbanks program is funding more consistently for longer periods of time.

MS. YATES stated that the organization does receive other funding sources through the State of Alaska, through the Department of Corrections. Those funding sources have previously helped in funding the house. She added that they try to turn to the Alaska Mental Health Trust when there are gaps in funding. At this particular time, as they transition between grants, they are looking at that. They have also built up the case management components and are utilizing some of the outside funding to hire on additional case managers to do both outpatient and residential case management. The program itself is structured to where clients have increasing responsibilities of support. That helps to aid the program, as well, although it is far below the cost of actual rent. She continued that there would always be a possibility or need to request, and they are currently in the process of diversifying the funding.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any further discussion or questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

#### **NIKISKI SENIOR CITIZENS, INC. – KENAI PENINSULA FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$150,000 Authority Grant to Nikiski Senior Citizens, Inc., for the Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program grant. These funds will come from the Trust focus area strategy implementation line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. BARSTAD stated that the Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program is offered to Nikiski Senior Center. It serves the full Kenai Peninsula. This family caregiver program provides needed services and supports to families who are caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. She continued that there were also a small number of people with brain injuries that are also served, typically as a co-occurring disorder. There is a huge need across the state for services to help keep individuals who have ADRD in their homes as long as they wish to remain there. She added that one strategy is to really ensure that the caregivers have the support they need to keep their loved ones at home, which includes services like respite. There is assistive technology; a medical alert bracelet or necklace is the most common version of that. There are additional developments with things like Map Habit or other specialized TV programs through regular TV or an iPad. It can include a variety of different supplies that may not be provided by the person's primary insurance. This wide variety of different services and supports offered to those caregivers will help ensure that the Trust beneficiaries with ADRD can stay in-home, in the environment they prefer living in, as long as possible. She added that there was an omission in the budget sheet. There is a detailed budget for one year that should be doubled. The \$150,000 is the total for two years for 250 people served.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any questions. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran.)*

## **ALASKA CENTER FOR FASD – COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE TRAINING AND CONSULTATION**

**MOTION:** The Program & Planning Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a \$50,000 Authority Grant to the Alaska Center for FASD for the comprehensive statewide training and consultation for addressing complex behaviors for direct service professionals and frontline staff grant. These funds will come from the partnership designated grants line of the FY26 budget. The motion was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

MS. PONTES stated that Terry Tibbitt, from the Alaska Center for FASD, was unable to attend today as she is presenting at the joint AMHB-ABADA board meeting. She continued that Trust funds for this project will enable the Alaska Center for FASD to provide low-cost, trauma-informed “Think Brain First” trainings with consultation for staff who serve Trust beneficiaries across Alaska. This project has a goal of training 125 participants statewide over a 21-month period, using a three-tiered curriculum that builds for working with individuals showing complex behaviors linked to neurodevelopmental and trauma-related conditions. Trust funds would largely cover trainer and administrative costs. She talked about the curriculum. The training would be provided by Eileen DeVine, the founder, and licensed clinical social worker. Sessions will be delivered through Zoom. She noted that agencies and several nonprofit organizations have submitted letters of support and expressed interest in receiving this type of training within their organizations and for their staff.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any questions or comments. There being none, she called the vote.

*After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Feige, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)*

**MOTION:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by TRUSTEE FEIGE; seconded by TRUSTEE FIMON.

CHAIR MORAN adjourned the meeting.

(Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Program & Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.)