

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY  
FULL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

January 28, 2016  
11:17 a.m.

Taken at:

Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation  
Hugh Malone Board Room  
801 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Third Floor  
Juneau, Alaska

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**

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Trustees present:

Russ Webb, Chair  
Mary Jane Michael  
Carlton Smith  
Laraine Derr  
Paula Easley  
Larry Norene

Trust staff present:

Steve Williams  
Jeff Jessee  
Miri Smith-Coolidge  
Carley Lawrence  
Amanda Lofgren  
Kevin Buckland  
Mike Baldwin  
Katie Baldwin-Johnson

Others participating:

Commissioner Val Davidson; Deputy Commissioner Karen Forrest; Monique Martin; Kate Burkhart; Kathy Craft; Patrick Reinhart.

**PROCEEDINGS**

CHAIR WEBB reconvenes the meeting and recognizes Commissioner Val Davidson.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON begins with a proper introduction. (Yup'ik spoken.) She states her Yup'ik names (Yup'ik spoken) and her English name is Val. She continues that she was born and raised in Bethel and in Aniak and gives a short history of her family background, which makes her who she is. She adds that unless you know people's background and where they are and the most important things in their life, you do not really know who they are and how that context works in your life. She thanks the Trust for the incredible support over this past year and appreciation for all the efforts to help with all the various reform efforts. She adds that Jeff Jessee and his team have been truly helpful, and having people that can be counted on has been invaluable. She moves on and talks about Medicaid expansion, explaining as she goes along. She adds that this will be refreshed every month so that the public has the opportunity to see in an effort to be more transparent. As of January 17, there had been 9,334 Alaskans who had been enrolled in expansion, and nearly \$35 million in new federal revenue associated with those beneficiaries. She asks for any questions.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL asks if people are coming to Alaska for the Medicaid services because it is such a rich program.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON replies that there are residency requirements in Alaska for people to be able to qualify for Medicaid; they have to be an Alaskan resident. She does not think that very much of that has been seen.

CHAIR WEBB asks how the Medicaid program of Alaska compares nationally.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON goes through the optional services and anticipates that it is going to be a hot topic this session. She states that she forgot to introduce her teammates: Karen Forrest, Deputy Commissioner; and Monique Martin, health care policy adviser. She moves on to the five basic recommendations, and talks about each one in great detail.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORREST talks about the shortages in the health practitioner positions and the possibility of being able to bring other health practitioners on at API at a higher step with signing bonuses and those kinds of things. She states that there was a conversation with DOC where their similar recruitment problems were discussed. There is a possibility of looking at dovetailing together with some of the recruitment issues. She adds that the provider community has also stepped up. She talks about the need of having a community solution as opposed to just looking at it alone.

A short discussion ensues.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON moves on to the budget cuts and talks about the value of having great relationships. She states that all kinds of great programs and innovations can be designed, but if the behavioral health system is not fixed and if the gaps in the continuum of care are not filled, then budget challenges will continue and progress will never be made. She continues that the last thing recommended in the report is to continue the current benefit package that is available for the beneficiaries. She states that they are involved in the Governor's new Medicaid reform bill, Senate Bill 78, and also incorporated these recommendations into a new bill that provides the Department with the authority to be able to do those things. She continues that

these will not be done all at once, and we are looking at the ones that have the best opportunity for improving services and savings as quickly as possible. She moves on and talks about working together and helping DOC; and also Title 12, working with the Court System, DOC and API to make sure we're doing a better job of managing and tracking. She also talks about the need for better communication.

A question-and-answer session ensues.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORREST adds that in terms of the Criminal Justice Commission's report, one of the recommendations to the Legislature is that reinvestment be turned towards behavioral health services in the community. She states that there were 27 recommendations and thinks that that is an important recommendation that all should be aware of.

CHAIR WEBB asks for any other comments or questions.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON states that Governor Walker and Lieutenant Governor Mallott have asked that she chair a cabinet work group on suicide prevention and better coordinating the suicide prevention efforts among the departments. With that (Yup'ik spoken), thank you all for the incredible support.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL asks what significant role can the Trust play in carrying the torch for the long term and making it sustainable.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON appreciates that and states that it has been a tremendous partnership because she knows her strengths and is also acutely aware of the limitations. She states appreciation for Mr. Jessee's willingness to step in and do it in such a respectful, kind way, very much behind the scenes, so that the rest of the world does not necessarily have to see her shortcomings.

MR. JESSEE states that she is providing incredible leadership.

CHAIR WEBB states that Commissioner Davidson and her team are an incredible breath of fresh air with the honesty, openness, and willingness to work with the Trust, to open the door and give us an opportunity to provide the help that we can.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FORREST thanks the chair.

TRUSTEE SMITH replies with the only Yup'ik he knows (Yup'ik spoken).

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON (Yup'ik spoken.)

CHAIR WEBB offers his assistance in any way.

COMMISSIONER DAVIDSON thanks him so much.

(Applause.)  
(Lunch break)

CHAIR WEBB moves to the next item.

MR. REINHART states that he is with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and talks about the budget reductions from FY16 and its impact so far this year, and the FY17 Governor's budget and potential impacts on the beneficiary group, the Council's legislative priorities. He continues that they asked for and worked with the Governor's office to get four fewer council members, and now have 24 members. That is a significant savings right there. The DD grants pretty much got the same amount of money that they had in years past, even with the \$506,000 cut. Then the Council absorbed the cuts in frugal practices and travel. He states that the way that SDS dealt with the unallocated Medicaid cut was reducing the draw from the disability registry and the waitlist. He goes through some of the capital stuff that impacts the beneficiary group and thanks the Trust for the support of AMC. He adds that AMC was the group that got the million dollars in there and the big advocacy effort from AMC is to make sure the amounts stay in there. On the operating impacts he talks about the Early Intervention and Infant Learning Programs. He states that this program serves zero to three with developmental disabilities with kids that meet a 50-percent delay or more. He continues that the big news in the budget proposal is the entire transfer of the Infant Learning Program from OCS to Senior and Disability Services and is a clean transfer. This gives alliance with SDS's mission, plus a lot of the grantees that provide Infant Learning Programs are the same ones that provide DD services.

CHAIR WEBB asks what is being done early on to prevent things from happening.

MR. REINHART replies that there is some really good facts and figures about the value of these services in terms of mitigating future life difficulties and expenses related to that. He continues that there is all kind of historical data in that regard to be utilized and would get more information. He moves on to the community developmental disabilities grant, and then talks about legislative priorities, beginning with the waitlist drawback. He finishes up the legislative and moves to the ABLE act; Achieving Better Life Experience Act. This recognizes that people with disabilities and their families have greater expenses and may not be able to save some of the money. He continues that this is a great empowerment tool in terms of employment. People can now start saving money and putting it in these accounts. He adds that they do not have to risk the benefits that they are getting until they get to a certain level. It is a self-help kind of bill, and he explains the eligibility. He shares some Council news, stating that their meeting is next week in Juneau, and they have their Inclusive Practice Award. He states that they are involved in trying to recognize special education programs that are super cool in different parts of the state by indoor special educators. He invites the trustees to participate. The Key Campaign is February 18 and 19 in Juneau; February 17 is the AADD, the Association of Developmental Disabilities; the Full Lives Conference is March 30 and 31 in Anchorage; and the next Council meeting after next week is May 3 and 4, and we will try to do that by video conference. He states that the new five-year safe plan effort will be wrapping up this spring. He continues that they want to expand Project Search, a new site in Anchorage, and are also looking at the banking industry there and also in Juneau.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL asks if there is anything unique on the Key Campaign platform.

MR. REINHART replies that they have the ABLE Act, and the waitlist draw is a big issue.

CHAIR WEBB thanks Mr. Reinhart, and moves on, recognizing Kate Burkhart.

MS. BURKHART states that she is the executive director of the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the Alaska Mental Health Board, and she has some pretty specific things to share. She continues that the Trust is the first external entity to see the debut of the new logo. The boards are executing a new communications strategy headed up by Brian Wilson, research analyst, who brings a host of public information skills with him beyond his superb research and analysis skills. He is going to ensure that the communications are more effective and consistent. She shares the impacts of the FY16 budget on their constituents and Trust beneficiaries. She states that going into FY16 the aggregated budget for behavioral health grants, which were formally the increments for community behavioral health treatment and recovery, psychiatric emergency services, severe emotional disturbances, and serious mental illness grants were all bundled into one thing; but the aggregate amount was the same as FY15. After the budget was signed, that line was further reduced by a million dollars. Going into FY17, the reduction that the Commissioner talked about is actually a further reduction of base funding from FY15 levels. She briefly talks about how across departments that has an impact on Trust beneficiaries. She continues that part of the reductions included the Office of Administrative Hearings. She gives several examples of how, even when the reductions are spread across an entire administration, there is a direct impact on beneficiaries. She states that when talking about creation of the FY17 budget, the boards made the policy decision that all of the recommendations were going to start and end with the basic needs of their constituents. She continues that in doing the constituent outreach in support of the Medicaid redesign, many of the people with serious mental illness, substance abuse disorders were unaware of the Medicaid expansion. The usual outreach, TV, Internet did not get to them. At Project Homeless Connect this week in Juneau, Public Assistance and JAMHI enrolled people. She thinks that in continuing to help people access Medicaid they will need to be found and convinced to enroll. She moves to housing, stating that many are looking forward to the implementation of the TAC supported Housing Plan in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services.

TRUSTEE DERR asks what TAC is.

MS. BURKHART replies Technical Assistance Collaborative, a highly inventive name for a consulting group that provides technical assistance. She states that one of the things that is focused on is ensuring that the constituents have access to programs that provide for mitigation of food insecurity. This is food banks, congregate meals, and delivered meals for older and disabled Alaskans. Food for families and food for children. She states that childhood nutrition is a big problem in Juneau, and the Juneau Community Foundation manages the Hope Endowment, which was created to address some very specific needs. There are lots of kids living with food insecurity, and many community organizations have tried to fill that gap through different programs. She moves on to public assistance and states that all of the formula programs for FY17 are flat-funded, they are entitlement programs and subject to maintenance of effort

requirements. She explains this. She continues that emergency assistance programs through tribes and churches are all reporting higher utilization, and there are more households struggling. She states that in the proposed budget for '17 the funding for the advisory board at API is gone. The Division of Behavioral Health had disbanded that advisory board. She continues that there is language that leads us to believe that it is being eliminated; however, they reconvened in December and had a meeting in January. She continues going through the budget, explaining as she goes along. She talks about education and states the need to be aware of policies and practices that fail to provide an adequate education to people with special education needs.

TRUSTEE EASLEY asks what percent of the education budget goes to special education.

MS. BURKHART replies that she does not know, but will find out. She continues her presentation, explaining as she goes along. She goes through the bills in the Legislature, explaining the boards' position on each and the reasoning behind it. She asks for any questions.

A question-and-answer session ensues.

CHAIR WEBB asks for any other questions or comments.

MS. LOFGREN states that she likes the new logo.

MS. BURKHART states that the Public Information Office at the Department of Health and Social Services designed it.

CHAIR WEBB thanks Ms. Burkhart, and states that is the last item on the agenda.

TRUSTEE SMITH has a brief announcement. He states that NCADD is sponsoring a candlelight vigil tomorrow night at Marine Park. There will be three speakers, and the theme is End Addiction Now.

TRUSTEE DERR asks where the May meeting will be held.

CHAIR WEBB replies Anchorage.

MR. WILLIAMS states, in light of the Governor's request for limiting travel, unless trustees give other direction, staff's recommendation is to have the May meeting in Anchorage.

CHAIR WEBB explains that every bit of travel that anyone in the Trust Land Office must do has to be approved by the Commissioner. The problem with that is that any communication for travel should be put in three months in advance, but should not expect it to be acted on until a few days before the date of travel. Essentially, that means that the Trust Land Office is unable to conduct business under that scenario. The lands cannot be managed. If there is a call about a trespass situation, they cannot travel because it will not be approved.

TRUSTEE NORENE asks if there is a way to assist in the effort.

CHAIR WEBB explains that the Governor's memo asks to comply with the spirit of the effort, and there is a list of agencies that are exempt. The Trust was not addressed in that memo specifically, and was left out.

TRUSTEE DERR asks if a letter could be written.

TRUSTEE NORENE proposes a resolution with the trustees supporting any help that can be given to the Trust Land Office.

CHAIR WEBB states that if he pursues this to the Governor's office, it will be on behalf of the Full Board with understanding and agreement that is the direction of the Full Board.

TRUSTEE DERR asks about the next Planning Committee meeting.

MS. BALDWIN replies that it is scheduled for February 23.

TRUSTEE EASLEY suggests putting the substance abuse budget on the agenda.

TRUSTEE DERR makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL seconds.

*There being no objection, CHAIR WEBB thanks all and adjourns the meeting.*

(Full Board of Trustee meeting concluded at 3:23 p.m.)