

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

February 23, 2015
2:00 p.m.

Taken at:

Alaska Mental Health Authority
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Trustees present:

Paula Easley, Chair
Mike Barton (via Speakerphone)
Russ Webb
Laraine Derr (via Speakerphone)
John McClellan
Mary Jane Michael
Larry Norene

AMHTA staff:

Jeff Jessee
Steve Williams (via Speakerphone)
Nancy Burke
Carrie Predeger
Carley Lawrence
Amanda Lofgren
Katie Baldwin-Johnson
Mike Baldwin
Natasha Pineda
Valette Keller
Luke Lind
Marilyn McMillan

PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR EASLEY calls the Planning Committee meeting to order. She asks for any announcements. There being none, she asks for any changes to the agenda. There being none, she moves on to roll call and asks people on-line to introduce themselves. She commends the

staff for the outstanding job on revising the proposal to the Trustees, making it much easier to comprehend. She recognizes Jeff Jessee, who will introduce the topic.

MR. JESSEE states that the main topic is around the marijuana issue. He continues that staff has put together a policy draft and some strategies. He states that the Board needs to discuss this more fully and come to a policy direction that will be communicated to staff to do what is wanted and needed. He states that there are some big changes coming up in the Board makeup when Carlton and Christopher get confirmed. He continues that as soon as they are confirmed, there will be no chair, no vice-chair, and no chair of the Finance Committee. He adds that the by-laws state when the Board chair leaves, then the vice chair steps in; and they are both leaving. He states that he hopes that coming out of this meeting, there will be pretty clear directions from the Board on where to go on the marijuana issue, and start the discussion on how to deal with the upcoming changes.

CHAIR EASLEY begins with page 1 on the draft of the substance abuse prevention and treatment policy, and asks if anyone has a problem with the first three paragraphs. There being none, she moves on to the specific strategies. The first one looks at what the Trust staff could do to support the substance abuse prevention and treatment policy.

TRUSTEE DERR asks if this will be setting up policy for the focus area.

MR. JESSEE replies yes, and explains that even though the focus area title is Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, alcohol is specifically mentioned because it is a major piece of all of that. He adds that it was the intent to keep the overall policy fairly broad.

CHAIR EASLEY gets into the first alternative proposition strategy, which will be both with the Trust, the staff, and the public, and is the most controversial aspect of it. She reads: "Continue to license medical marijuana production, processing and distribution. Further decriminalize marijuana and repeal the commercial/recreational licensing structure due to the allowance of legal small individual sales."

MR. JESSEE states that this sort of takes off on the resolution the Trustees passed which was that the Board was not opposed to medical marijuana, but was not in favor of creating a commercial/recreational industry. He goes into greater detail.

TRUSTEE DERR states that under this alternative proposition strategy would be a plan to bring forward an alternative proposition that is currently under development. She asks who is developing it.

MR. JESSEE replies that Kristina and Tim Woolston have not formed a new group, but it is the remnants of the "No on 2."

TRUSTEE DERR states that the plan is not necessarily under development.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL adds that they have no money to work with.

TRUSTEE McCLELLAN states having no problems with 1, 2 and 3, but the lead-in sentence where it says "a plan to bring forward an alternative proposition" is bothersome. He continues that the approval of a plan at the last Board meeting was more data generation and support of other people's positions; but not having the Trust lead an initiative or lead a position. He states that without the Legislature directing, being the lead on bringing forward an initiative, giving the funding, and that this position will be taken on as part of the Trust then. Anything else would be tainting the Trust as part of being a reliable support organization.

CHAIR EASLEY thanks Trustee McClellan and looks at the other two strategies: the Legislative amendment strategy, and the regulation development strategy.

TRUSTEE WEBB asks if the Trust has a process in place for taking formal positions on individual pieces of legislation.

A discussion begins.

TRUSTEE WEBB states that staff has mapped out a number of potential strategies that could be taken to try to mitigate the harm that is believed can result from Ballot Measure 2. He continues that it seems to be appropriate for the Trust to put a formal written document, the concerns and suggestions to make changes to amending Ballot Measure 2, or to change the regulator process that would mitigate the potential for harm. He adds that this should be done as quickly as possible to show where the Trust stands and what the concerns are, and then leave the issue of an alternative proposition for someone else to deal with.

The discussion continues, and the Trustees all agree to a written document, which is discussed in greater detail.

TRUSTEE WEBB suggests giving staff consensus direction to get something formally developed to transmit to the Legislature the concerns and issues that the Trust would like to see addressed in the legislation.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL adds that there will also be an opportunity to respond to public comment if the prioritizations are given now.

MR. JESSEE asks if this is something that would be endorsed as a committee or a Board. He continues if this should be brought back for approval, or does staff have the delegation of responsibility and ability to put those forward.

CHAIR EASLEY asks to discuss the third strategy before considering any motions -- the regulation development strategy. She states that maximizing the public health considerations in the regulatory process and ensuring protections for Trust Beneficiaries needs to be the focus of what is done.

The discussion continues.

TRUSTEE BARTON states that, in going forward, it needs to constantly be tied back to the Beneficiaries.

MR. JESSEE states that will be prepared and asks where to bring this back, a committee or the Full Board.

TRUSTEE BARTON states that it is important enough to be brought back to the Full Board.

MR. JESSEE asks for further instruction, and refers to several different scenarios.

TRUSTEE BARTON suggests going forward, as earlier discussed, and be careful not to preclude an alternative proposition.

The discussion continues.

CHAIR EASLEY comments on the financial aspects of an initiative, which is that initiatives cost a huge amount of money. She continues that to oppose any initiative would mean having to raise a lot of money, which would be a difficult challenge.

TRUSTEE WEBB states that the best strategy is to try to amend the legislation that passed in the initiative to get what is wanted out of it. He adds, trying to repeal will cost an arm and a leg.

CHAIR EASLEY states that the Legislature would appreciate the information that the Trust is able to provide, as they are in a difficult position. She adds that many of their constituents voted in favor of the initiative, which places them in an awkward position.

The discussion continues on to decriminalization.

CHAIR EASLEY moves to recommending staggering licensing to ensure the development of revenue streams for the regulatory oversight, and asks Mr. Jessee to talk about that.

MR. JESSEE asks Natasha Pineda to take that.

MS. PINEDA states that in other states the problem is that they did not have the funds to do any of the enforcement, monitoring, or management of the licenses. And it was a good year and a half beyond once they were legalized that actual revenues were coming in. She continues that Washington had problems where shops were opening up, but there was not enough product. This caused market price problems and then an influx into the black market where product was available. She states that to open on a certain day, the laboratories are ready to go way before the retail licenses are ready. There has to be production and the ability to test all the products and be able to meet all the requirements before opening up.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON adds that a primary concern was generating the revenue to be able to hire the staff to manage marijuana between enforcement and administration and licensing. She states that they are looking at hiring two in this year, and maybe adding another four next year.

MS. PINEDA states that does not deal with the fact that the Legislature is going to have to function as the regulatory for the entire unorganized borough.

MR. JESSEE adds that they are not quite aware of that as their responsibility. He talks about the inconsistencies that were sold, versus what is had.

The discussion continues.

MR. JESSEE states that he has direction and asks if the Trustees would like to talk about the larger organizational issues.

TRUSTEE NORENE replies that there are two absent people for future organizational issues.

MR. JESSEE states that there are committee meetings on April 16, 2015. He states that there is a potential interim period to deal with, because both the chair and the vice chair will be lost at the same time.

TRUSTEE McCLELLAN states that the board meeting is the day after the committee meetings, and there will be no committee chair in the Finance Committee.

A discussion ensues on the subject, and then moves to setting a date for a retreat.

MR. JESSEE states that there is no consensus, and a motion is needed.

TRUSTEE BARTON states that he is uncomfortable with having the new appointees present without being confirmed by the Legislature.

MR. JESSEE states that if the Legislature has a problem, he will explain that it is an unusual circumstance for the Trust to lose the chair, the vice chair, and the Finance Committee chair all at the same time.

CHAIR EASLEY agrees to a Full Board meeting on March 11, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. She asks for anything else to come before the Planning Committee. There being none, she asks for a motion to adjourn.

TRUSTEE WEBB makes a motion to adjourn the Planning Committee meeting.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL seconds.

CHAIR EASLEY adjourns the meeting.

(Planning Committee adjourned at 3:40 p.m.)