

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

April 3, 2014
11:00 a.m.

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

Trustees Present:
Paula Easley, Chair
Mary Jane Michael
Russ Webb

Trust staff present:
Jeff Jesse
Bill Herman
Katie Baldwin-Johnson
Michael Baldwin
Nancy Burke
Marilyn McMillan

Others Participating:
Melissa Stone; Kate Burkhart (via telephone).

PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR EASLEY calls the meeting of the Planning Committee to order at 11:00 o'clock and asks for a roll call. She asks for any changes to the agenda; there being none, she moves to the discussion of the merger of three peer organizations. She asks Ms. Baldwin-Johnson to bring all up to date.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON states that they would like to talk about the configuration of CHOICES and The Web moving forward, the status of the initiative as a whole, and the plans for moving forward into FY15. She continues with the hope to have a discussion about the time aspect and time commitment working these projects as a relief effort. She recognizes Nancy Burke.

MS. BURKE states that the initiative started in 2006 and was modeled off the federal SAMHSA grants that had seeded a number of peer support and more Beneficiary-directed services across the nation. She continues that the SAMHSA grants did start a number of nonprofits nationally

and highlighted a number of areas where this type of service delivery becomes challenging in a behavioral health system of care. She adds that SAMHSA stopped the funding, and many of the organizations went away except the organizations that found a way to be more permanently embedded in the service delivery system. She states that seeds were planted and some of them have rooted and really taken hold and are now moving off the Trust funding. She continues that with the help of Melissa Stone, there are peer support services that are Medicaid billable services, which was one of the aspirational goals. She adds that significant systems changes have been achieved but are increasingly at risk of collapsing because they are becoming increasingly impaired in the ability to achieve their mission because of the economic climate and the way that Medicaid gets billed in a number of provider organizations. She states that this led to conversations with the grantees, and some have not achieved what was hoped for, and are being moved off in FY15. She continues that there is need of more conversation about the structural configuration of those grantees to see if there is a way to move forward and make them stronger. She moves on to CHOICES, The Consumer Web and Soteria and states that CHOICES and Soteria have merged; so there are now two organizations. She continues that there are executive leadership vacancies and they are struggling to maintain stable board leadership and people that are able to really provide expertise to move the organizations forward. She states that the question from the Trust is whether there is a way to do business that gets to a place of sustainability where there are not two separate infrastructure organizations being supported. She continues that the groups were already sharing capacity in terms of executive leadership. She adds that the conversation is being facilitated and becoming more formalized through funding that has been provided for Melissa Stone to help figure this out in the early days of her retirement. She states that The Web has done an outreach model that was not in the state before, and CHOICES has become the most responsive outreach-focused mental health provider able to be flexible and innovative. She adds that Soteria, with their prevention-focused service of keeping people out of the system, are helping people not become life-long social service system recipients.

CHAIR EASLEY asks if there have been efforts for The Web to do some serious fundraising.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON replies that much progress has not been made on fundraising because the board has not had the capacity to do it. She states that they had some transition in leadership and have been working through that and addressing the things that have been identified.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL states that one of the struggles is the facility. She continues that it is a program that needs indoor and outdoor space because the people who are too drunk to get in sit on the sidewalk outside. She adds that they are not in the right location.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON states that the facility limits their ability to move on other funding streams. She continues that DVR has been another plan, but they cannot become a DVR provider because the facility does not meet the specifications.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL asks Staff to talk about the operations.

MS. STONE states that in the seven weeks that she has been meeting with the boards of CHOICES, Soteria and The Web, a lot of changes have taken place. She adds that it is a difficult change because people are so committed to their individual missions. She continues that there is interest in moving relatively quickly which is hard when there is a need for a baseline of trust because in this process none of these organizations want to lose their commitment to their origins, which is important. She states that she learned that the corporate documents and bylaws for CHOICES and Soteria are exactly the same, except for the name. She continues that the only reason they were developed separately was because there was a concern about being able to attract different kinds of funding because of the mission of Soteria being to bring in pre-Medicaid people. She states that The Web is making progress and understands that change is important, and the ability to be sustainable is in everyone's interest. She continues that a continuum of what integration might look like was laid out at the last meeting with the Trust and the combined boards. She adds that at the next level the continuum was the idea of committed shared resources, and people are awakening in terms of knowing what the organizations are doing. She continues that the third level is integrating administrations, the budgets and maintaining the separate boards. The fourth level is a merged organization with various potential alternatives for board configurations. She moves on explaining her role with CHOICES/Soteria. She states that the agency has chosen CARF for their accrediting body, which usually takes 18 months; and the process has just started. She continues that the training and recruitment are really important and the emphasis is working with peers. She adds that most agencies work with relatively untrained people, some do have bachelor's-level people and sometimes even master's-level, but our folks are peers. She continues that they are people who have been through the programs, are in recovery, and want to help other people. She states that she has realized that the trainings coming out of the Trust Training Cooperative, the affordability of those trainings, and the continuum of them are very important. She moves on, stating that Soteria is actually an assisted living home that admits people specifically with first-break schizophrenia and uses peers to aid in recovery. She continues that Peer Bridger is an important continuum for CHOICES and Soteria, and recognizes that one of the instrumental characteristics is that it is one of the last remaining organizations that is doing what was done before the State went to Medicaid. She adds that it is doing outreach and outreach is where people are found and it is not yet a billable service.

MS. BURKE adds that The Web is also doing outreach and is center-based. They are tapping into a population that crosses over substance abuse and mental health.

MS. STONE talks about the model of The Web, which provides a place of safety. She explains its success.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL states that with her history working with people, one of the biggest reasons people are not successful living independently is because they are lonely. She continues that sometimes their behaviors alienate people, and having a place that does not require filling out any forms and is just a place to feel safe and have someone to talk to works. She adds that this could make all the difference in a person's life. She states the need for ways for people to enter the system that is nonthreatening and nontechnical.

MS. STONE states that the agency helps one person at a time and is small enough to be able to work with one person at a time and everyone matters.

MS. BURKE states the need to figure out how to use the Trust resources to take care of some of the administrative activities or to at least find efficiencies for the organizations so they can do their work.

CHAIR EASLEY states that she has not heard about expanding services to communities outside of the major population centers, and there is an opportunity to use this as more of a pilot that can be put into communities that really want to do something about it. She adds that it is going to be that kind of peer-supported-service model that communities are going to be able to put together because there will not be enough money to do it differently.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL states the need of the Planning Committee to discuss and confirm where they are in terms of supporting these programs into the future and knowing what to recommend to the Full Board.

TRUSTEE WEBB states that there is no overarching philosophical agreement that the committee intends to occur and does not know where they are headed. He continues, when talking about changing the focus area to put emphasis on the employment part of the discussion, these peer projects were really described as employment programs. He asks how long it has been since a new Beneficiary project has been started.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON replies since at least 2006.

TRUSTEE WEBB states that if an accomplishment cannot be demonstrated, then the Full Board will not support the money into this. He continues that if these projects are sustainable as nonprofits, then get them sustainable and figure out what it will take to keep them alive. He adds that the plan cannot be that the Trust will permanently fund peer services, because that is not going to happen.

A discussion ensues.

CHAIR EASLEY states that essentially funds in the BPI focus area are being reallocated to these projects by not funding other projects.

TRUSTEE WEBB asks, in terms of the motions, the only thing to act on soon is changing the grant structure and the amount of money that goes to the projects that have been discussed today.

The discussion continues.

TRUSTEE WEBB suggests that the focus for the next year be what kind of comprehensive, integrated mental health program is wanted; what should the system look like. He continues that there is a framework for moving money within the existing focus area that requires no big philosophical statements, no long-term unending or unlimited commitments. He adds that this is

a move of money to accomplish working on sustainability for these particular programs that are considered to be important programs.

The discussion continues on sustainability and what is needed.

MS. STONE adds that the idea is not to change the model of getting people on Medicaid when trying to help them be independent.

CHAIR EASLEY asks if Ms. Burkhart has any questions or anything to add to the discussion.

MS. BURKHART states that earlier in the meeting there was a conversation about core commitment to the BPI grantees and asks if that extends beyond the three entities that have been discussed.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON replies that the thinking is, yes, they will continue and are separated by their mission, level of support, and the effort providing to Beneficiaries.

MS. BURKHART states that her understanding is that Anchorage Community, Southcentral and Stone Soup will not be receiving funding in FY15, and asks if the remainder of the BPI grantees will.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON replies, yes, and adds that a background document will be drafted that will provide some background information to the Trustees.

TRUSTEE WEBB talks about the role of the Planning Committee versus the role of the Finance Committee in terms of how the Trust functions as a whole. He states that if the role that the Planning Committee is not just planning, but also implementation, that should be part of the responsibility. He continues that being engaged in planning and implementation, the bylaws ought to reflect that in a way that authorizes the Planning Committee to make decisions about implementation like the one discussed today. He adds that the Finance Committee's role is looking at the big picture, and the role of the Planning Committee is to make things happen in both planning and proposing and then in the implementation. He adds that the Planning Committee should not have to go back to the Finance Committee every time to get money to accomplish something that everyone has already agreed to accomplish. He states that the Trustees ought to be looking at what to change in terms of the bylaws and gather overall understanding about how the Trust and the committees function. He states that the other piece is the broad expectation about the focus areas to be defined more specifically in terms of the outcomes, the indicators to those outcomes, and the strategies employed to do that. He continues that the committee should be coming back to the rest of the Trust with more definitive information about where that process is. He adds that it should be done with all of the focus areas.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL states agreement.

CHAIR EASLEY states that there is a retreat on the 16th.

TRUSTEE WEBB states it would be good to talk about that at the retreat.

A short discussion ensues.

CHAIR EASLEY asks for anything else to come before the committee. There being none, she asks for a motion for adjournment.

TRUSTEE WEBB makes a motion to adjourn the meeting.

TRUSTEE MICHAEL seconds.

CHAIR EASLEY adjourns the meeting.

MR. JESSEE thanks all.

(Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 12:45 P.M.)