



## Board of Directors

### Hybrid Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2022

#### Board of Directors Members Present:

- **Peter Browning Chair**, Commissioner, Skagit County; Chair
- **Jill Johnson**, Commissioner, San Juan County, North Sound BH-ASO Chair
- **Cindy Wolf**, Council Member, San Juan County
- **Cammy Hart-Anderson**, Snohomish County Human Services; designated alternate for Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
- **George Kosovich**, Skagit County Public Health; designated alternate for Peter Browning
- **Nicole Gorle**, Legislative Analyst, Snohomish County; designated alternate for Nate Nehring, Snohomish County Council
- **Heidi Beazizo**, Sr. Legislative Analyst, Snohomish County; designated alternate for Jared Mead, County Council
- **Pat O'Maley Lanphear**, North Sound BH-ASO Advisory Board, Vice Chair
- **Jackie Mitchell**, Behavioral Health Program Specialist, Whatcom County, designated alternate for Satpal Sidhu
- **Sam Low**, County Council, Snohomish County
- **Kathy Kershner**, County Council, Whatcom County

#### North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (North Sound BH-ASO) Staff Present:

- **Joe Valentine**, Executive Director, North Sound BH-ASO
- **Margaret Rojas**, Assistant Director, North Sound BH-ASO
- **Darrell Heiner**, Senior Accountant, North Sound BH-ASO
- **Joanie Wenzl**, Clerk of the Board, North Sound BH-ASO

## **Guests Present:**

- Katelyn Morgan, Ombuds

## **Call to Order and Introductions – Chair**

Chair Browning initiated introductions and called the meeting to order. He asked the Clerk of the Board to read the names of the attendees that were participating in person and via Zoom

## **Revisions to the Agenda – Chair**

The Chair asked if there were any revisions to the agenda. Joe Valentine commented that the agenda has been revised to accommodate the Board's request for more time for discussion on Action Items. The Board was in agreeance with the revision.

## **Approval of the February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Minutes, Motion #22-11 – Chair**

Jill Johnson moved the motion for approval, Sam Low seconded, none opposed, no abstentions, motion #22-11 carried.

## **Comments & Announcements from the Chair**

Chair Browning spoke about the County's concerns regarding CMS and hospital funding

## **Reports from Members**

Chair Browning asked if there were reports from the counties. Whatcom, Island, Snohomish, San Juan, and Skagit all gave updates from their respective counties

## **Comments from the Public**

There were no comments from the public

## **Report from the Advisory Board**

Pat, O'Maley Lanphear, Advisory Board Chair, gave the report from the Advisory Board

## **Ombuds Presentation: Katelyn Morgan**

The Ombuds 2021 Annual Report was presented. Questions were answered

## **Report from the Finance Officer**

Joe Valentine and Darrell Heiner gave the Report from the Finance Officer. They answered questions from the Board members

## **Report from the Governance Operations Committee**

*All matters listed with the Consent Agenda have been distributed to each Member for reading and study, are considered to be routine, and will be enacted by one action of the Board of Directors with no separate discussion. If separate discussion is desired, the item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda by request of a Member.*

## Consent Agenda

### Motion #22-12

- To review and approve the North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization claims paid from February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, through February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in the amount of **\$2,769,287.51**.
- Payroll for the month of February in the amount of **\$158,044.62** and associated employer benefits in the amount of **\$74,029.70**.

Jill Johnson moved the motion for approval, Sam Low seconded, none opposed, none abstained, all in favor, motion #22-12 carried

## Action Items

**For Board Approval**

### Summary:

#### **Behavioral Health Enhancement Funds (BHEF)**

BHEF is a reoccurring legislative proviso specific to workforce retention and recruitment in the behavioral health system. North Sound has focused the funding on our crisis continuum of care. The six-month proviso allocation is **\$389,594**, the additional funding of **\$199,098** is from federal block grants funds designated for workforce initiatives. We solicit provider proposals with each six-month allotment. Proposals for the period of January through June 2022 resulted in the following allocations and specific actions.

- Compass Health BHEF funding is focused on the Mobile Crisis Outreach, Evaluation & Treatment and Triage workforce.
  - Funds will be used for increases in staff wage scales to improve retention and recruitment through a market-competitive pay structure. Newly developed wage scales offer accelerator scales at the first and third year of employment to encourage retention. In addition to wage increases, Compass is offering a 20% premium to on-call staff to increase our on-call pool for coverage, to support regular full and part time employees reduce burnout.
- Volunteers of America BHEF funding is focused on the crisis hotline workforce.
  - Credentialing reimbursement (DOH Licensing)
  - Retention bonus: >12 mo. bonus
  - Hiring Bonuses for 10 FTEs
- Pioneer Human Services BHEF funding is focused on the workforce at the Island County Ituha Stabilization Facility and Whatcom County Triage Facility.
  - PHS will increase the shift differential for both swing and graveyard shifts in order to encourage staff to stay with the programs. Additionally, the increase in wages is intended to

increase the number of individuals who are applying for any vacant positions for the withdrawal management and crisis stabilization programs.

- Telecare BHEF funding is focused on the Skagit County North Sound Evaluation and Treatment Center workforce.
  - Telecare will continue a retention bonus for our full-time prescriber as it has been challenging to maintain consistent. The retention bonus has resulted in consistent prescriber coverage 7 days a week for those hours. The recruitment portion is a 13-week program where the on-call pool, and other community-based RNs can be paid at a heightened scale to work a fixed number of shifts each week that have been difficult to staff.
- Evergreen Recovery Centers BHEF funding is focused on Lynnwood Acute Withdrawal Management workforce.
  - Funds will be used for added recruitment costs, signing bonuses, attendance, and retention rewards, paid sick leave for new employees with inadequate accrual to cover sick leave and retention bonuses to keep existing nurses in place.

#### **Motion #22-13**

- North Sound BH-ASO-Compass Health-ICCN-19-22 Amendment 8 providing BHEF in the amount of **\$200,000** for the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The contract term is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, with an automatic one-year renewal on July 1, 2022, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.
- North Sound BH-ASO-Volunteers for America-ICCN-19-22 Amendment 6 providing BHEF in the amount of **\$29,934** for the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The contract term is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, with an automatic one-year renewal on July 1, 2022, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.
- North Sound BH-ASO-Pioneer Human Services-ICCN-19-22-Amendment 8 providing BHEF in the amount of **\$70,200** for the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The contract term is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, with an automatic one-year renewal on July 1, 2022, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.
- North Sound BH-ASO-Telecare-ICCN-19-22 Amendment 4 providing BHEF in the amount of **\$215,058** for the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The contract term is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, with an automatic one-year renewal on July 1, 2022, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.
- North Sound BH-ASO-Evergreen Recovery Centers-ICCN-19-22 Amendment 6 providing BHEF in the amount of **\$73,500** for the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The contract term is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, with an automatic one-year renewal on July 1, 2022, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.

Cammy Hart-Anderson moved the motion for approval, Jackie Mitchell seconded, none opposed, no abstentions, all in favor, motion #22-13 carried

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#### **Summary:**

#### **Recovery Navigator Program (RNP)**

Recovery Navigator Program is a new legislative proviso delineated in the Blake Bill (ESB 5476), the funding is to establish a RNP in all five counties. The RNP is an outreach and engagement service to individuals with substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders who are risk of arrest and/or have frequent contact with law enforcement. Services include, but are not limited to, facilitation and coordination of community resources, coordination and communication with law enforcement, prosecutors, program staff and other partners. Intensive case management and care coordination are the cornerstones of the services. The funding is renewable and fully funded for one year. The RNP funding was added to our off-cycle amendment in November, however the funding is for a one-time annual allocation, covering July 2021 – June 2022.

The three contracts below are a result of the Request for Qualifications [RFQ] released in January for Island, San Juan, and Skagit Counties. The responses to the Request for Qualifications were reviewed and scored by the BH-ASO RFQ evaluation committee on January 28. The committee was represented by two Advisory Board members, two county coordinators, one ASO staff member and two LEAD Technical Assistants (TAs). The March 1, 2022 contract start date is due to the RFQ finalization process during the month of February. For the other two counties, Snohomish, and Whatcom, the RNP will be contracted through the respective LEAD programs.

#### **Motion #22-14**

- North Sound BH-ASO-Island County-RNP-22 for the provision of RNP services in Island County. The annual funding for this contract is \$528,855. The contract term is March 1, 2022, through February 28, 2023, with an automatic one-year renewal on March 1, 2023, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.
- North Sound BH-ASO-Community Action of Skagit County-RNP-22 for the provision of RNP services in Skagit County. The annual funding for this contract is \$528,855. The contract term is March 1, 2022, through February 28, 2023, with an automatic one-year renewal on March 1, 2023, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.
- North Sound BH-ASO-Compass Health-RNP-22 for the provision of RNP services in San Juan County. The annual funding for this contract is \$528,855. The contract term is March 1, 2022, through February 28, 2023, with an automatic one-year renewal on March 1, 2023, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.

Kathy Kershner moved the motion for approval, Cindy Wolf seconded, none opposed, none abstained, all in favor, motion #22-14 carried

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#### **Summary:**

##### **Community Behavior Health Rental Assistance (CBRA)**

The funding for rental assistance is provided by the Department of Commerce. Island County is the final contract being presented for approval; the other four counties were approved at the November 2021 Board meeting. All five counties have received CBRA funds for individuals discharging from inpatient/residential/corrections facilities. The rental assistance is intended to stabilize the individual in permanent supportive housing; however, short term housing can be accessed with these funds until a long-term housing solution is found. Each provider has additional funds for case management funded through

our federal block grant. The CBRA and FBG funding is renewable and is provided in six-month allocations. The providers for each county are listed below.

- Island County-Pioneer Human Services
- San Juan County-Compass Health
- Skagit County-Catholic Community Services and Lifeline Connections (HARPS provider)
- Snohomish County-Compass Health and Bridgeways
- Whatcom County-Lifeline Connections (HARPS provider) and Lake Whatcom Center

#### **Motion #22-15**

- North Sound BH-ASO-PHS-CBRA-22 for the provision of rental assistance to individuals with behavioral health challenges returning to Island County. The maximum on this contract is \$140,182 for period of March 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The contract term is March 1, 2022, through February 28, 2023, with an automatic one-year renewal on March 1, 2023, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract.

Jill Johnson moved the motion for approval, Sam Low seconded, none opposed, no abstentions, all in favor, motion #22-15 carried

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#### **Summary:**

##### **Volunteers of America (VOA)**

The Advisory Board asked the ASO to inquire of VOA if funding would be beneficial for the crisis hotline staff to help with work life balance during the pandemic. The Advisory Board has excess funding in their budget due the pandemic and wanted it to be used to help alleviate some of the stress and burnout crisis hotline staff might be experiencing. They offered \$10,000 in one time funding.

VOA is thankful to the Advisory Board for recognizing their work and is honored to be recognized by the Board. VOA employees identified the incentives listed below.

The proposal submitted and approved by the Advisory Board is as follows:

- Nutritional snack & food items available for all shifts (24/7/365) at no cost to the employees.
- Placing art/décor in the work setting to make the space more appealing and calming to staff. VOA would like to partner with local and indigenous artists. Since VOA will be moving into a new facility, this will help make the office environment a more welcoming place.

#### **Motion #22-16**

- North Sound BH-ASO-VOA-ICCN-19-22 Amendment 6 to provide one time funding of \$10,000 from the Advisory Board budget to help VOA with morale and retention of crisis hotline staff. The contract term is July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2022, with an automatic one-year renewal on July 1, 2022, based on continued compliance with the terms of the contract

This motion was tabled until next month. The Board asked that the ASO speak to the auditor first. The information from the auditor will be brought back to the Board next month (April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022).

#### **Introduction Items**

- Federal Block Grant/Peer Outreach Follow up Services

**Background:** In 2020, VOA instituted a suicide prevention and follow up service program through a SAMHSA (ERSP) Grant. The ERSP program funded through SAMHSA focused primarily on serving individuals in behavioral health crisis that need support and follow up, but do not qualify for the services offered by our regional mobile crisis outreach teams. Much of the referral base for the ERSP program came from area hospital emergency departments. The Grant was a short-term grant and expired in 2021, because the program was so popular with local hospitals VOA applied for Federal Block Grant funds to keep the program in existence. The program fit well in the suicide prevention funds set aside in the Mental Health COVID Grant. VOA submitted a proposal and was awarded the grant in November 2021. The funding continues the staffing provided in the SAMHSA Grant, three FTEs, two follow up crisis counselors/navigators and one follow up crisis coordinator. These funds were approved in VOA's January amendment.

**April Action Item:** In our MH & SUD approved COVID Federal Block Grant plans we set aside \$150,000 for Peer/Outreach Worker for crisis follow up for individuals with serious behavioral health challenges. It was determined by our Operations Team & Leadership Team the suicide prevention funds for follow up services were a nice enhancement to the VOA project. Our clinical team reached out to VOA to discuss the idea of adding peers to the crisis follow up service. VOA expressed interest in adding peers/outreach workers, it had been on their "wish list" for some time. The ASO determined it was a good fit to add the peer outreach services to VOA's crisis follow up services. With the addition of peers/outreach workers VOA will be expanding the referral base for the program.

**Summary:**

- Authorizing a 2.75% COLA for the Executive Director

**Background:** The Executive Director's performance evaluation was conducted in February, and it was determined the 2.75% COLA would be applied to the Executive Director's salary.

**April Action Item:** The motion will give the ASO authority to add the 2.75% COLA with an effective date of May 1, 2022.

There was conversation among the Board members regarding the ED's COLA. The feedback was that the COLA be retro to the start of the year, as the budget approved it accordingly, (even though his performance evaluation didn't take place until February).

**Discussion Items**

Proposal to provide an updated overview of the current BH-ASO structure and scope of services to each of the five North Sound County Councils/Commissions

All five counties took part in the discussion above.

- Skagit: would like the overview
- San Juan: would like the overview
- Snohomish: Heidi Beazizo will talk to Jared Mead and see if there is interest
- Whatcom: would like the overview and would like their Incarceration Task Force to be invited

## Report from the Executive Director

Joe Valentine gave the report from the Executive Director. It included the following topics:

- o BEHAVIORAL HEALTH LEGISLATIVE BILLS
- o LEGISLATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS
- o COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RENTAL ASSISTANCE [Update]
- o HOMELESS OUTREACH STABILIZATION TEAM [HOST]  
The Board asked that the Counties be invited to the upcoming HOST meeting
- o WHATCOM COUNTY FIRST RESPONDER CO-RESPONSE OUTREACH PRORAM RFQ UPDATE
- o CRISIS SERVICES UPDATE
- o CRISIS SERVICES ASSESSMENT
- o CLOSURE OF GREENHOUSE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY
- o UPDATE ON CHANGES TO BH-ASO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
- o SUCCESSION PLANNING
- o SOFT RE-OPENING OF NS BHASO OFFICE

Joe shared with the Board that we are proposing a soft-reopening of the BH-ASO office on April 1st. We are working on a “hybrid” business model that would balance in-office attendance requirements with telecommuting.

One proposal is to require staff to come into the office at least two days a month from April – June.

The Board asked that Joe and the ASO re-look at the proposal and take action to require staff to come into the office more often to support better synergy and interaction between staff. The concern is that relying primarily on virtual meetings will not support the energy and dynamics necessary to better plan and manage programs.

The other concern is that staff could become isolated in their work without immediate access to one another on a face-to-face basis. Board members shared that County offices have been open for quite a while now and that the ASO, like them, serves the public and there is an expectation to be available to serve.

**Adjourn:** 2:51 p.m.

*Next Meeting:* April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanie Williams  
Clerk of the Board



APPROVED