

**WESTERN HIGHLANDS AREA AUTHORITY
APRIL 20, 2007, REGULAR MEETING**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Carey; Phil Castro; William J. Cook, Jr.; Susan Hendrick; Minnie Jones; Abigail Karroubi; Robert Ratcliffe; Mandy Stone; Arthur C. Wilson, Jr.(via telephone); and Steve Wyatt

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: John W. Condrey; Patricia Franklin; Michele Lawhern; Vernon Ponder; Steve Smith; and Ryan Whitson

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Brian Hopkins, Congressman Heath Shuler's Office; Robert Huntley, NAMI; Leslie Boyd, Asheville Citizen Times; Leslie Mislner; Bob Carey; Jayne St. Clair; Jerry Rice; Scott Parrott, Hendersonville Times News; Molly Sprengelmeyer; and Dan Zorn, Families Together.

ALSO PRESENT: Arthur D. Carder, Jr., Chief Executive Officer; Sharon Lentz, Chief Financial Officer; Rhonda McKee, HR Director; Anne Doucette, Provider & Consumer Relations; Lynn Trotter, Provider & Consumer Relations; Charlie Schoenheit, COO; Victor W. Buchanan, Legal Counsel; and Beverly Atkins, Clerk to the Board.

CALL TO ORDER: The area board ("Board") of the Western Highlands Area Authority met on Friday, April 20, 2007, at 9:35 a.m. in the second-floor Conference Room (Room 312/315) of 356 Biltmore Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina. The Chair called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mr. Rice stated that he appreciates the Board's action and taking a stand with regard to Carmen Hooker-Odom. He then made comments relative to the Virginia Tech situation and his concern for children. The rate being cut for Community based services will damage these children. Community support workers need to be kept in the school and home environment at early ages of children. Ms. St. Clair thanked the WHN Board and Arthur for acting on the CS rate crisis and for calling for the removal of Secretary Hooker-Odom and Mr. Moseley. She has developed an online petition to the Governor asking for the immediate firing of Secretary Odom and Mike Moseley. She personally thanked Mr. Carder for risking his job and reputation in the State by taking a stand and setting aside the funds for agencies that otherwise might fail.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Ms. Hendrick asked that the agenda be revised removing item XIII Closed Session and add item #4b under VII. Transfer of Funds. Mr. Cook made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Castro seconded the motion, and it carried. (A copy of the amended agenda is included in the minute book with these minutes.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Jones made a motion to approve the minutes for the March 16, 2007, Regular Meeting as presented. Mr. Castro seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT: Ms. Hendrick made a report with respect to the following:

- (a) Ryan Whitson was officially sworn in this week representing Polk County. A County Official from Madison has not been sworn in yet.
- (b) Regarding the use of MOE funds Henderson and Transylvania are the only Counties who have submitted an accounting. Ms. Atkins will send a reminder to the other County Managers.
- (c) Ms. Hendrick requested nominations for a new Treasurer to replace Mr. Talbert. After discussion, Ms. Stone made a motion to elect Mr. Ryan Whitson as Treasurer. Mr. Wyatt seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.
- (d) Committee representation Strategic Planning and Operations Policy Committees are being deleted therefore members of these committees will need to be reassigned. Ms. Hendrick asked that members email her with their preference.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Carder reported that there is good news to report. A check in the amount of \$337,072 was received from Mr. Callison. This is reimbursement for the extended coverage policy for NVML's professional liability for a three-year period. Mr. Callison requested that WHN use a portion of the funds to hire someone to manage the medical records for NVML. It is very unlikely that this avenue will be pursued. WHN will probably manage the records issue in-house. We may need an additional partial staff person to assume some of those duties. The cost will be passed on to those requesting records.

Mr. Carder made an announcement around four grant projects for which WHN applied. A report will be sent out in a week or so showing a summary of all the grants that WHN currently has coming through the system. WHN will receive the following:

- \$644,000 for a provider called Homeward Bound to so some additional housing support teams (primarily Buncombe).
- \$200,000 for Family Preservation Services for project Seven Challenges relates to evidence based practices for recovery needs for MH and SA (Buncombe, Henderson, Polk and Rutherford).
- \$41,000 for Mental Health Association to do some WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) training (Buncombe)
- And \$35,000 Alexander Youth Network to do multi-systemic therapy.

All the proposals submitted were funded.

Mr. Carder circulated a brochure with respect to a new movie coming out called Canvas, which focuses on schizophrenia. He believes that there needs to be a strong effort to promote this film. He hopes that CFAC's around the State will take the lead to bring attention to this movie. The more people that see this movie can see how it can affect them, their families, and neighbors. There is a website www.canvasthemovie.com.

He reported that a staff retreat is being planned for late June. We really need to get some structure together organize some functions and be very clear what the direction and mission is for the future. Target for a Board retreat is as proposed in the business plan late September or early October. It would be a one-day event ending with a banquet and guest speaker. Mr. Carder reported that he has been asked to speak to the Mental Health Commission on May 17, in Raleigh to discuss CFAC role, what Western Highlands has been doing, and the involvement and interaction with the Board as it is different around the State. He stated that in the NC Council Update distributed there is a spotlight article "How Western Highlands and Community Work to Avert a Crisis". It is a summary actions taken due to the closing of NVML.

Mr. Carder presented a CS update by clarifying that the retroactive requirement for \$40.00 rate has officially ended and will not occur until April 5 it will be \$40.00 from April 5. This afternoon there is a meeting that began at 9:00 a.m. regarding the cost study of the 20 providers. Ms. Hendrick read an email from Dan Zorn who is part of this meeting. There will likely be a reduction from the \$60.00 rate and in the number of units/hours authorized. He reported that the LME would be involved more in the Medicaid review process. The expectation is that the LME will do post reviews of high users of CS services. Mr. Carder stated that he appreciates the coverage of the Asheville Citizen-Times and Hendersonville Times-News. The editor of the Citizen-Times did take a position requesting the resignation of the Secretary, which was in the paper Thursday. Mr. Wyatt stated that the Wednesday Hendersonville Times-News did a similar type article. This will continue to impact other services within the area including the psychiatrists, ACTT, out-patient therapy, etc. He is looking at putting together some additional packages to add some service options for providers. He discussed the SA proposal information that was emailed to Board members on Thursday. Unless WHN is the regional choice for these dollars, this could put providers at risk.

Mr. Carder went over the March Monthly Management report. Down in total day-time requests up in after-hours, authorizations have stayed stable, added seven new providers this month now have 321 in WHN provider network, provider training has increased, discharges from State facilities is up, number of complaints are up slightly and the number of critical incidents are up. There were two level II deaths which are being monitored.

Mr. Carder discussed the email traffic after the March meeting regarding Polk County and the Police officer issue. He wanted to clarify that he never took a position as the CEO to oppose this plan. The request was approved by the Board to spend \$80,000 but State law requires that dissolution funds must be returned to the LME without condition. When the Polk dissolution funds are received WHN, can the appropriate the \$80,000. Mr. Carder has spoken to Mr. Whitson about this issue. Mr. Wyatt requested a one-page document showing the dissolution funds and which Counties have returned to the LME and which have not and for what purpose they were used. Mr. Wilson made a motion requesting the Board Chair to send a letter to the County Commissioners of the Counties that have not returned the dissolution funds. Dr. Ratcliffe seconded the motion and after some discussion Mr. Wilson withdrew, his motion and asked that the Board Chair contact the County Commissioner Chair of these Counties to explain the situation. Mr. Wyatt suggested that this be an agenda item for the May meeting.

CRISIS FACILITY UPDATE: Mr. Schoenheit reported that construction has begun and walls are up. The addition will be constructed first as services are being provided. When the addition is complete, services will be moved into the new structure and the existing facility will be renovated. Construction began March 1st and should be completed by August.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Ms. Lentz requested approval to move 15% of the IPRS budget from age/disability line items where the funds would not be earned by the end of the fiscal year into other age/disability line items where Western Highlands would have a shortage of funds to cover the services. This process is necessary to maximize the earnings of Western Highlands. It would not affect services in any of the age/disabilities. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve the transfer of funds request as presented. Mr. Wyatt seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

Ms. Lentz presented the financial report for February, 2007. Ms. Lentz stated the financial statements continue the same trend as the previous several months. Income statement shows a surplus of \$2,840,878 which primarily represents MOE funds and dissolution funds received but not yet expended. (A copy of the financial report is included in the minute book with these minutes.)

Ms. Lentz presented proposed budget amendment #4 for adoption. The budget amendment represents 14 new allocation letters including funds for psychiatric chart reviews and consultation, provider specific transition/start-up costs, traumatic brain injury, SA training, regional crisis funding and mobile crisis. The admenment also includes \$500,000 to appropriate fund balance for the purpose of assisting providers with the community support rate cut. The \$500,000 was approved by the Board at the April 13 special Board meeting. This comes as a recommendation from the Finance Committee. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ms. Carey reported that Human Rights Committee would meet on May 1, 2007. Ms. Hendrick stated that QIAC would meet immediately following the Board meeting.

CFAC: Mr. Bob Carey presented the CFAC report, which was distributed. CFAC continues to be concerned relative to the use of MOE funds and, more particularly the use of dissolution funds across the region. Mr. Carey read the letter from the CFAC Executive Committee with respect to the \$80,000 allocation approved at the March meeting. CFAC membership committee has interviewed several people and will make recommendations at the May 7th meeting. Ms. Lentz attended the April meeting to provide training with respect to the WHN financial statements. CFAC members have volunteered to attend various WHN committee meetings.

LOC REPORT: Mr. Thompson stated that the LOC is in a state of inactivity once the Legislature began. His role is to track legislation. He presented Legislative recommendations which were distributed. Mr. Thompson went through each of the 14 items on the list regarding where legislation was in the House or Senate.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Wyatt reported on the action taken by the Henderson County Commissioners at its meeting on Wednesday. The Board received public comment regarding the recent unpleasantness. Mr. Carder presented an update. The Board unanimously took a position to request a change in leadership at the Department specifically with the Secretary. The letter to the Governor was written and mailed on Thursday. A copy of the letter was mailed/emailed to each County at the request of the Board encouraging each to take similar action. Ms. Carey stated that there were articles from both the Charlotte Observer and the Raleigh News and Observer which gave a response from both the Secretary and Governor. They pretty much demonized some of the things they feel that have gone on with providers. It is sad that all providers are being punished for what only a few have done. Ms. Hendrick asked if there had been harsh words from other parts of the State? Mr. Carder stated that there have been other articles from other LME's but nothing as bold as WHN. Mr. Carey stated that John Tote, Mental Health Association, sent a letter similar to WHN. He sent copies to all of the announced candidates for Governor.

BOARD COMMENTS: Ms. Jones commented that she learned something from Mr. Carey today. She agrees with Mr. Wyatt that the squeaky wheel gets the oil. Ms. Hendrick stated that there is to be a moment of silence for Virginia Tech at 12:00 p.m. QIAC will be honoring this at the meeting. Ms. Stone asked if it would be possible to set a deadline regarding when a policy would be ready to review regarding how new topics can be introduced for the agenda. Ms. Hendrick stated that this will be on the agenda for May.

ADJOURNMENT: Dr. Ratcliffe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Wyatt seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous vote; and the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Atkins
Clerk to the Board