

**WESTERN HIGHLANDS AREA AUTHORITY
SEPTEMBER 15, 2006, REGULAR MEETING**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Hendrick, Chair, Presiding; Nancy Carey; John W. Condrey; Patricia Franklin; Justin B. Hembree; Minnie Jones; Abigail Karroubi; Michele Lawhern; Rick McDevitt; Robert Ratcliffe; Mandy Stone; Michael Talbert; Ryan Whitson; and Arthur C. Wilson, Jr.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: William J. Cook, Jr. and G. Keith Parker.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Bridget Barron, Pardee Hospital; Angela Pittman, Buncombe DSS; Dan Zorn, Families Together; Mike Rhodes, RHA Behavioral Health Services; Gina Tipton, Tipton Therapeutic Foster Care Homes; Scott Parrott, Hendersonville Times News; Bill Bullington, NC Division of MH/DD/SAS; Nancy Baker, CFAC, Co-chair; Bob Carey.

ALSO PRESENT: Arthur D. Carder, Jr., Chief Executive Officer; Sharon Lentz, Chief Financial Officer; Kathy Rubendall, Access & Services Management; Jesse Smathers, Access & Services Management; 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, September 15, 2006, at 9:40 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. Carey made comments relative to dissolution funds. Mr. Rice made comments with respect to consumers, Task Force issues and public comments.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Ms. Hendrick asked that the item under Old Business be deleted as it will be discussed in Closed Session. Mr. Whitson asked that following closed session that number XIII be added: "Expenditure of Mitchell County Funds". Mr. Whitson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion, and it carried. (A copy of the amended agenda is included in the minute book with these minutes.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Condrey a motion to approve the minutes for the August 18, 2006, Regular Meeting and the minutes for the August 18, 2006 Closed Session; and to seal and withhold the minutes of such Closed Session from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purposes thereof. Ms. Karroubi seconded the motion. Mr. Hembree asked that Mr. Rice's public comments be more precise in the minutes. Mr. Buchanan suggested withholding voting on the motion and discuss public comments in closed session. Mr. Condrey withdrew his motion.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT: Ms. Hendrick stated that a slate of officers needs to be presented at the October meeting to allow new officers to be in place in November. The Nominating Committee representatives are Michael Talbert, Chair, Finance Committee; Artie Wilson, Chair, Personnel Committee; Nancy Carey, Chair, Human Rights Committee; and Patricia Franklin who will represent the Operations Policy Committee. The Nominating Committee needs to meet for the purpose of selecting a slate of officers.

Ms. Hendrick discussed the NC Council Conference in Pinehurst December 4-6. She encouraged board members to consider attending.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Carder presented the September CEO report. Mr. Carder stated that Western Highlands hears a lot of negative with respect to complaints and seldom anything positive. Mr. Carder shared a negative that will turn out to be a positive for the consumer. Mr. Carder stated that the charge that he was given for this board meeting was to meet with Will Callison and make a report to the board giving some alternatives with respect to New Vistas service delivery. After Mr. Carder and Mr. Callison met, Mr. Callison met with his board. The decision they made was, they needed to engage in a different process

before having a discussion with the WHN Board. Mr. Carder discussed some of the concerns of the largest provider, New Vistas-Mountain Laurel, one being the cost of Psychiatric Services which is a major deterrent along with purchase of services. Mr. Carder reported that he has requested that the State approve Single Stream funding. He explained that the funds that currently come to Western Highlands are designated to several different categories such as adult MH, child MH, etc. and the funds can only be used in those particular categories. Single Stream funding would mean the funds comes with no particular designation and Western Highlands would be able to provide services based on the need within our eight county catchment area. Mr. Carder reported that he spoke with Leza Wainright, Deputy Director, NC Division of MH/DD/SAS this morning regarding this issue. Mr. Carder reported that over the last few weeks Western Highlands staff has met with numerous providers and have found that many are interested and willing to consider expanding services in this area. One of the key factors for providers is the availability of Psychiatric supports and services. Mr. Carder requested board approval to bring Psychiatric Services under the LME. He reported that he has been given approval from the State for one-time funding of \$200,000 to cover the transition costs. Dr. Louis Stein, Medical Director has agreed to assume responsibility for helping manage this process.

After discussion, Mr. Whitson made a motion to authorize Western Highlands to move forward with bringing Psychiatric Services under the LME and prior to implementing the process, a special meeting of the WHN board be called. Ms. Stone seconded the motion, and carried by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Carder presented the Monthly Management Report for September. Mr. Whitson commented that the eight deaths reflected in the report seem high. Ms. Booker reported that there were a larger number of terminal illnesses as cause of death in the last month than typically seen. Ms. Carey requested that staff notify the Human Rights Committee members on a timely basis about deaths.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Ms. Lentz presented a preliminary unaudited draft of the financial report for June 30, 2006. She reported that Western Highlands is in a healthy cash position at June 30.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ms. Hendrick reported that QIAC will not meet today they will meet in October. Ms. Atkins will contact the Operations Policy Committee to set-up a meeting in the next couple of months. The suggested revised policies have been forwarded to her and Mr. Buchanan for review. The Operations Policy Committee will review and make recommendations for the full board to consider.

Ms. Booker presented the Strategic Planning Council report in Mr. Parker's absence. Ms. Booker stated that the following comes as a recommendation to the Board. In order to allow for a stronger consumer voice in planning, SPAC recommends and supports the development of disability specific consumer groups across the WHN catchment area. These groups will be consumer led and provide regular input into the planning process of the LME. The Strategic Planning Advisory Council will meet on a quarterly basis to review the progress of these disability groups. Furthermore, SPAC will be tasked with coordinating input into the next version of the Local Business Plan. Ms. Carey seconded the motion, and carried by a unanimous vote.

CFAC: Ms. Atkins reported that CFAC was not able to meet due to the lack of a quorum. Ms. Huntley and Ms. Baker asked that the board be reminded that CFAC is hosting a Legislative Candidate Breakfast for Mitchell/Yancey Counties 7:30 a.m., Monday, September 25, 2006 at Mayland Community College, they encouraged board members to attend.

STATE LIAISON REPORT: Mr. Bullington reported that the Division is hosting town hall meetings across the State in order to give a transformation update. The meeting for the Western Region will be held Wednesday, September 20, 2006, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Southwestern Community College in Myers Auditorium, Sylva, NC. This meeting is open to the public Mike Moseley, Leza Wainright, and others will be present.

CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made at 11:21 a.m. by Dr. Ratcliffe, seconded by Mr. Talbert, and carried by a unanimous vote to go into Closed Session, pursuant to Sections 143-318.11(a)(3) and (6) of the General Statutes of North Carolina, in order to consult with the Authority's Legal Counsel in order to consider personnel matter.

The open session resumed at 12:22 p.m.

Mr. Talbert moved to approve the minutes for the August 18, 2006, closed session and to seal and withhold the minutes of such closed session from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purposes thereof. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion; and he recommended that the Chair and Legal Counsel review all prior closed-session minutes to determine if any of them could be unsealed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

The Chair advised that the approval of the minutes for the August 18, 2006, regular meeting would be revised and would be considered at a future meeting.

After a statement by Mr. Whitson about a mental-health situation in Mitchell County, he moved to approve and authorize the allocation to Mitchell County of an amount not to exceed \$54,000.00 as a one-time allocation for a special pilot project (that is, the hiring, training, and equipping of a special deputy sheriff who shall specialize in mental-health matters and services, such as involuntary committals), provided that a portion of this allocation will be used for the purchase of an unmarked vehicle, with tinted glass in the rear portion thereof, to be used for mental-health activities (such as the transportation of individuals as part of involuntary committals), provided further that this allocation is for only the current fiscal year, and provided further that, after the current fiscal year, it will be the responsibility of Mitchell County to sustain this special deputy sheriff. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. McDevitt seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous vote; and the meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Atkins
Clerk to the Board