

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Carey; Phil Castro; William J. Cook, Jr.; Patricia Franklin; Susan Hendrick; Minnie Jones; Abigail Karroubi; Michele Lawhern; G. Keith Parker; and Robert Ratcliffe.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: John W. Condrey; Ricky McDevitt; Mandy Stone; Michael Talbert; Arthur C. Wilson, Jr.; and Steve Wyatt.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Leslie Boyd, Citizen Times; Leslie Huntley, CFAC Co-Chair; Robert Huntley, NAMI; Nancy Baker, CFAC, Co-Chair; Bob Carey; Michael Crooks; Larry Roof; Darlene Yanda; Jayne St. Clair; Paul Tax; Larry Thompson; Vicki Ittle; December Harris; Gail Levi; Curtis Venable; Mary Thomas; Meritta Thomas; Robert Thomas; Genevieve Loltahall; and Dan Zorn, Families Together;

ALSO PRESENT: Arthur D. Carder, Jr., Chief Executive Officer; Sharon Lentz, Chief Financial Officer; Rhonda McKee, HR Director; Charlie Schoenheit, Director, Access & Services Management; Lynn Trotter, Provider & Consumer Relations; Marsha Ring, Access & Services Management; Rose Stouder, Provider & Consumer Relations; Bill Bullington, State Liaison; and Victor W. Buchanan, Legal Counsel

CALL TO ORDER: The area board ("Board") of the Western Highlands Area Authority met on Friday, December 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: Ms. Mary Thomas made comments relative to the meeting in Yancey County regarding parent/guardian issue and their children being upset. Ms. Meritta Thomas made comments relative to her caseworker. Ms. December Harris made comments relative to her concern for the health and welfare of her son. Ms. Gail Levi made comments with respect to being parent/guardian for her son. Mr. Robert Thomas made comments with respect to his twin daughters and the parent/guardianship issue. Ms. Tammy Thomas made comments regarding their twin daughters and their special care needs. Ms. Genevieve Loltahall from Yancey County made comments with respect to her daughter who is mentally and physically handicapped. Ms. Jayne St. Clair, Asheville Radical Mental Health Collective, thanked Western Highlands for updating the website with the new provider information. Mr. Jerry Rice made comments with respect to the lack of consumer choice. Ms. Dari Yanda made comments regarding parent/guardian issue brought to the board by Yancey County parents. Ms. Hendrick asked Arthur to clarify this issue. Mr. Carder thanked Mr. Rice for helping bring attention to this issue. Mr. Carder stated that he has spoken with Mr. Venable and asked him to find time in his schedule to facilitate this issue. Mr. Carder stated that the bottom line is that this is not a good plan an implementation which is set for February. There needs to be changes made to allow family members to provide the appropriate supported care. The reality is that in many rural areas there will not be appropriate resources to help families deal with their needs. He hopes that in the next month Mr. Venable and others will be able to get some clarity regarding some of the points in the bulletin. Ms. Hendrick announced that at the beginning of the meeting is the time for public comments and no further public comments would be taken during the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Ms. Hendrick asked that the agenda be amended to add under Special Reports the LOC Report by Mr. Thompson. Mr. Carder asked that under New Business Family Guardianship be added. Mr. Parker made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Dr. Ratcliffe seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote. (A copy of the amended agenda is included in the minute book with these minutes.)

PRESENTATION OF APPRECIATION: Ms. Hendrick presented plaques of appreciation for Mr. Ricky McDevitt, County Manager, Madison and Ryan Whitson, County Manager, Mitchell for all their hard work. They will be missed.

NEW BOARD MEMBER: Ms. Hendrick introduced Mr. Phil Castro, Acting County Manager, replacing Ryan Whitson in Mitchell County.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Karroubi made a motion to approve the minutes for the November 17, 2006, Regular Meeting. Ms. Carey seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

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

- a. NC Council meeting in Pinehurst.
- b. Working on scheduling a meeting of WHN and CFAC Executive Committees
- c. Letter to Secretary Hooker-Odom. Ms. Hendrick worked on the letter along with Mr. Wilson.
- d. Membership of Board Committees continues to be updated.
- e. A Board member training will be held in the spring.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Carder made a report regarding the following:

- November Monthly Management Report
- Another press conference will be held the second week of January to share the good things that are happening.
- By-Laws need to be adopted at the January meeting as part of the Business Plan.
- Business Plan document limited to 40 pages. There will need to be public review regarding the issues included. Board approval needed at March Board meeting to meet March 31 submission.
- Distributed information "Eight Step Process of Successful Change".
- New Vistas Medical Records issue.
- Tail Insurance for NV/ML invoice has been received and is in process for payment.
- Caseload—all adult MH consumers have been assigned. A number of SA consumers need to be assigned.
- Physician coverage is still a concern.
- State Auditor met with WHN staff. Auditors will be looking at other LMEs. Auditors expressed concern regarding.
 - property going to the Counties and;
 - dissolution funds
- Transition: There is concern that a lot of billing is not coming in
- New data entry process for providers should shorten turn around time for IPRS funds
- Cost Model, material distributed---info only (further discussion at future meetings)
 - Increase staff capacity
 - A partial plan will be presented in January so as to move forward following the Cost Model.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT: Ms. Lentz presented the financial report for October 2006. (A copy of the financial report is included in the minute book with these minutes.) Ms. Lentz requested approval of Budget Amendment #3. These changes reflect an increase of \$3,616,736 making the new FY 07 budget \$45,531,861. Mr. Parker made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment as presented. Dr. Ratcliff seconded the motion, and it carried by a unanimous vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ms. Hendrick reported that Executive Committee is working on scheduling a meeting with CFAC. Ms. Carey requested that the Human Rights Committee have input into the Business Plan. Ms. Hendrick stated that QIAC will meet following the board meeting with Families Together, Mental Health Association of NC and Alpha-Omega having been invited to speak to the committee. A meeting of the Operations/Policy Committee needs to meet in January to review the By-Laws.

CFAC: Ms. Baker reported that CFAC did not meet in December because of illness, etc. The Executive Committee will meet the first Wednesday in January. The new meeting schedule for CFAC will begin in February with CFAC meeting the first Monday of each month.

STATE LIAISON REPORT: Mr. Bullington reported that he will no longer be a LME Liaison as this will be disbanded across the state. The state will create geographic teams. Mr. Bullinton will be in the western region with the responsibilities of monitoring the components in the Business Plan and providing feedback to the Division. Mr. Bullington was very complimentary with respect to Mr. Carder and his relationship with the Division. Western Highlands is looked at as a shining star in the state because of how the LME responded to the closing of New Vistas. The Division considers Western Highlands to be a model for other LMEs. Mr. Carder's initiative of working collaboratively with a number of providers rather than one large provider has been viewed as a major positive element with the Division. Mr. Bullington also stated that the Division has nothing but admiration and respect for what the Board has been able to do for the consumers in the catchment area with the accomplishment of no one going unserved. In response to a question from Dr. Ratcliffe, Mr. Carder stated that the CEO/LME Director will be the person who will be communicating with the Division. The CEO will be seen on a peer level with the Division. The Board's and LME's message to the Division needs to be relayed by the CEO of the LME.

LOC REPORT: Mr. Thompson made a report with respect to the Legislative Oversight Committee(LOC). He reported that the LOC has had four meetings this fall. Much of the money that was approved in this summer's Legislative session has been slow getting out. The LOC is interested in what the impact of the changes from the Legislative Session has been. Because one third of the allocations is one-time money, there is worry about the budget problems when the session begins January 24. LOC has two meetings scheduled in early January and will hopefully will have reports from the Division about on the impact of the money used. The members of the LOC are very concerned about the evolution role of the LMEs. They are interested in how the cost formula will strengthen the role of the LMEs. Another concern that the Department and the Legislature are not working together. He hopes to share additional information with respect to these concerns at the January meeting..

NEW BUSINESS: After discussion with respect to the Parent/Guardianship issue, Ms. Franklin made a motion to request that the Division of MH/DD/SAS and DMA re-examine issues associated with Implementation Update #19 in order to create reasonable alternatives and options for guardians/family members to provide services and supports so as to assure the provision of health, safety, and quality care. Mr. Cook seconded the motion and it carried by a unanimous vote.

BOARD COMMENTS: Mr. Parker announced that he will be leaving the board as soon as a replacement is found. Ms. Lawhern stated that a meeting will be held in Burnsville with respect to the family/guardianship issue. Ms. Franklin announced that Mr. Vernon Ponder will be joining the board as Acting County Manager for Madison County.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Cook made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Parker seconded the motion, which carried by a unanimous vote; and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhonda McKee
Acting Clerk to the Board