

**RURAL REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY BOARD  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 16, 2022  
1:15 PM TO ADJOURNMENT**

**The meeting was held using remote technology in compliance with Nevada revised Statutes 241.023.**

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call - Chair, Fergus Laughridge or designee.**

**Members Present:**

Chair, Fergus Laughridge  
Coordinator, Valerie Haskin  
Brooke O'Byrne  
Matt Walker  
Amanda Osborne  
Sarah Dearborn  
Bryce Shields  
Jeri Sanders

**Members Absent:**

Senator Pete Goicoechea - Excused  
Dr. Erika Ryst - Excused  
Amy Adams - Excused  
Sean Burke - Resigned  
Steven Brotman - Excused

**2. Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**3. Action Item:** Review and possible approval of Bill Draft Request (BDR) Development Subcommittee Minutes from August 12, 2022 - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair*

This item has been tabled. No action was taken.

**4. Action Item:** Review and possible approval of meeting minutes from August 24, 2022 - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair*

Chair Laughridge requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the August 24, 2022, meeting.

Ms. Osborne made a motion to approve.

Mr. Walker seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Informational:** Introduction of new member of the Board, Chris McHan, Chief at Elko County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair; Valerie Haskin, Rural Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator (RBHC)*

Chair Laughridge welcomed Mr. Chris McHan as one of the newest members of the board. Mr. McHan will be filling Mr. Sean Burke's seat who has retired from the board. Mr. McHan was highly recommended by people from around the state, the Division of Emergency Management, and by Ms. Osborne.

Mr. McHan introduced himself to the board members and gave a brief history on his qualifications. Mr. McHan has been Chief of the Elko County EMS for little over a year. Prior to this, he was the EMS Deputy Chief for 12 years. He is happy and excited to be representing Elko County and EMS as a part of the Rural Behavioral Health Policy Board (BHPB) and is looking forward to working with everyone.

6. **Action Item:** Nomination and Voting of Patrick Rogers to replace Steven Brotman as Board Member.

Mr. Rogers was unable to attend today's meeting as he was in an all-day training session for the Nevada Health Centers where he works. Mr. Rogers has been recommended to replace Mr. Brotman as Mr. Brotman is moving out of state at the end of November.

Ms. Haskin stated she has had the opportunity to work with Mr. Rogers in a variety of board capacities. Mr. Rogers has acted as President of the High Sierra Advanced Health Education Center (AHEC) and has been involved with the Bill Draft Request (BDR) for the upcoming Legislative Session.

Ms. Haskin advised the board this is an action item and Mr. Rogers is not present. The board can choose not to act on this item and vote on his nomination at the next board meeting.

Chair Laughridge made a request for a motion on Mr. Rogers nomination.

Ms. Osborne made the motion.

Ms. Sanders seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Informational:** Brief overview of progress of efforts related to the Rural Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board's bill for the 2023 session of the Nevada Legislature. *Fergus Laughridge, Chair; Valerie Haskin, Rural RBHC; and Dr. Sara Hunt, Director of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Mental and Behavioral Health Coalition*

Ms. Haskin stated their Bill Draft Request's final draft language has been approved and submitted to the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) for final drafting. They have met with the Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education, Dale Erquiaga and his Chief Financial Officer, Andrew Clinger, to ensure they are aware and prepared with the fiscal note going into this upcoming legislative session. They also met with Governor

Sisolak's team to make sure the Board's BDR is not overlapping any of his priorities. Ms. Haskin met Senator Hansen and Assemblywoman Hansen at the Annual Nevada Farm Bureau Meeting. She introduced them to what the Rural BHPB is and what they do. She also informed them about the BDR the Board is presenting next year. Ms. Haskin also stated no negative feedback has been received regarding their Bill Draft Request.

Dr. Sara Hunt thanked the Board for taking on the Workforce Development Concept as their BDR. Dr. Hunt stated this will help not only the rural communities but the State of Nevada as a whole.

Ms. Osborne inquired if Taylor Allison with the Nevada Association of Counties (NAC) has been made aware of this.

Ms. Haskin stated, Ms. Allison is the Chair for the Northern Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board (NRBHPB) and they have discussed how this could affect the counties and the public health sphere. It is strongly recommended, every county make an assessment so not only will they get their allotted funds from the opioid settlement, with the additional assessment, they can apply for additional funds.

Chair Laughridge stated, Governor Elect Lombardo has assembled his transition team, and this includes Senator Heidi Gansert. Senator Gansert is aware of this process and is very much in favor of this BDR and can be an ally to them. They will also be meeting with Andrew Clinger who is a part of the fiscal department at the Chancellor's office. He will be helping with the fiscal note.

8. **Action Item:** Review and approval of draft language of BDR 34-361, for inclusion in the Rural Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board's bill for the 2023 session of the Nevada Legislature - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair; Valerie Haskin, Rural RBHC*

Chair Laughridge stated, as quorum was not met for the last meeting, this item has been carried over to this meeting.

The draft language for BDR 34-361 has been developed for the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB). Ms. Haskin sent a copy of the BDR to the board members for the last meeting and the edits to the LCB. These suggestions were entered into the BDR and as a result, have made this much stronger. Because of time restraints, as of today's date, November 16, 2022, we have pre-filed the BDR so a bill number can be assigned to it. Ms. Haskin has sent the board copies of the bill with the revised language. As this is an action item, Chair Laughridge confirmed the board members have been engaged and approved it .

Chair Laughridge requested a motion to approve the draft language for BDR 34-361. Mr. Shields made a motion to approve. Ms. O'Byrne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**9. Informational:** Updates regarding the activities, resources, and challenges identified by the Rural Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator - *Valerie Haskin, Rural RBHC*

Ms. Haskin stated she was made aware of six suicides in Elko and Humboldt Counties. These occurred before September 8, within a 40-day period. There also was an additional death two weeks prior to this meeting. Two of the deaths were high school students, one from Elko High School, and one from Spring Creek High School, both located in Elko County.

After the passing of the student from Elko High School, she had the opportunity to engage with the school district and began working on prevention planning, this was boosted into overdrive in the wake of the other students suicide. She called Family Support Center, and they were able to leverage their resources through their psychologist, to work with staff members. Ms. Haskin stated, because of these tragedies, perhaps the school district will be better prepared by making sure there are communication templates, such as safe messaging, which includes who to call, how to activate a response system and to empower students. There is a push to implement Hope Squads which was first developed in Utah. Hope Squads empower youths as agents of school culture and peer support. This gives an opportunity for students to learn how to have tough conversations in a structured format. Grant funding has been found to move forward on this. They are reaching out to law enforcement to provide additional support. Ms. Haskin stated, there is a huge gap of support group services provided for survivors of suicide loss in the rural areas. There are no support groups for grief in general. Ms. Haskin also informed everyone attending today's meeting, the Golden Health Clinic site in Elko has three licensed clinical workers (LCW's) on staff who are very good and to please refer them to anyone who is looking for assistance.

Ms. Haskin attended the Mental Health Summit in Elko on September 20. At the summit, they heard from the First Responders & EMS community. The summit was paid for by MedEx. They have services at Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital (NNRH) which are specifically oriented towards forensic interviewing and improving trauma informed care. Ms. Haskin stated they should speak to their partners what trauma is, what to look for and the different needs of people who have experienced trauma.

Ms. Haskin was able to co-train her first Safe Talk training as a provisional Safe Talk trainer. She needs two more sessions to maintain her licensure and become a full Safe Talk trainer. She also completed the Youth Mental Health First Aid training. This is to enable adults to help young people.

Ms. Haskin spoke about the funding the Regional Boards get and how this funding is dispersed. Ms. Haskin stated the funding has been completely braided among three funding streams. These are, Substance Abuse Block Grant, Mental Health Block Grant, and the State Opioid Response Fund. The coordinators are funded through these three funding streams. In the past, it would all be placed as one big deposit, now they need to break things out more specifically as to what activities are being billed through which grant. This allows the coordinators to know what they can, cannot and should be doing.

Ms. Sanders inquired about the Hope Squad. She wanted to know if this program is within the High Schools and does this entail student-to-student groups, where the students would be in charge of it as long as they have a peer support leader.

Ms. Haskin stated, this is the understanding. She does not know if this is a closed support group in the same context as an adult support group. It may be a little less structured and formal. There are two or three staff members from the Elko School District already getting their initial training.

Chair Laughridge stated for the record thanking Ms. Haskin on behalf of the board, for all her a hard work.

- 10. Action Item:** Approval of Draft letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) leadership regarding concerns over the long-term funding and programmatic focus of the Regional Behavioral Health Coordinator positions and administrative functions - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair; Valerie Haskin, Rural RBHC*

Ms. Haskin stated, back in September, there was confusion on the different holders of these grants. There was concern as to lag time of when the boards were funded and when they received the funding. Would these organizations have to fund the coordinators themselves for several months, which would not be feasible for many of these programs. Also, would the coordinator positions be eliminated or turned into state employee positions.

The Northern RBHPB drafted a letter which was sent to Mr. Richard Whitley, Director of the DHHS, stating the importance of the coordinator positions and how invaluable they are to the boards. Also, they need to know if they will be able to continue with their established duties. Since then, they have been informed the positions will not be eliminated, just the funding stream has changed. The funding levels remain the same and the general activities will also remain the same.

Chair Laughridge and Ms. Haskin also drafted a letter expressing concern, the seats stay seated within local organizations. Will these become state positions. If the positions do become a state employee position, will it become more difficult to be true advocates for local communities and organizations. Also, the ability to travel would be hindered if travel requests have to be approved and submitted as there are times when the notification of an event has been sent in a very short amount of time and no other medias are available to attend the event. Ms. Haskin read aloud the draft letter so people who were attending the meeting via conference call, can know what the content of the letter holds. A copy of the letter can be found at:

[https://dphh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board\\_Meetings/2018/Rural\\_Regional/](https://dphh.nv.gov/Boards/RBHPB/Board_Meetings/2018/Rural_Regional/).

Chair Laughridge requested a motion to approve forwarding the letter with his signature and those of the other board members.

Ms. Osborne motioned to approve the forwarding of the letter.

Ms. Sanders seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

**11. Action Item:** Determination of Future Subcommittee Work - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair; Valerie Haskin, Rural RBHC*

Chair Laughridge inquired of the board if there were any subcommittees they would like to form. He stated the board should develop a legislative subcommittee to support their bill.

Ms. Haskin suggested there should be a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of the subcommittee members. Ms. Haskin stated the subcommittee should have bi-weekly meetings. Having a tighter schedule will allow the subcommittee to cancel a meeting without having to call an emergency meeting. Also, the subcommittee is one, where having open meetings to work out the language for the bill, will give opportunity for the public to comment. As with regular board meetings, all agendas will need to be submitted to the Department of the Attorney General's Office (DAG) for review and approval 16 days prior to the meeting.

Laura Oslund, Executive Director of PACE Coalition, inquired if the public can also be a part of the subcommittees or are only board members allowed on them.

Ms. Haskin stated she believes only the board members need to be named on the committee but others from the public can participate. She will contact the DAG and verify this.

Ms. Haskin stated the subcommittee will be launched after the holidays. She also stated for the record, to propose the formation of a subcommittee for the RBHPB to commence during the month of January 2023, which would meet on a bi-weekly basis in order to identify any potential amendments to the Rural BHPB's bill, develop and approve those amendments, submit those amendments on behalf of the board, as well as to hear and support other opportunities of legislation in the form of letters of support.

Ms. Osbourne moved for a motion to create a Legislative Subcommittee.

Ms. O'Byrne seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

**12. Action Item:** Determination and approval of future Rural RBHPB meetings through June 30, 2023 - *Fergus Laughridge, Chair; Valerie Haskin, Rural RBHC*

Ms. Haskin presented a tentative schedule for future meetings for the regular board meetings and items which could be included in the meetings. Ms. Haskin stated, if the board members do not want these meetings because of the subcommittee meeting's schedule, this will be o.k. Ms. Haskin also stated, the subcommittee has all board members named, what each member's assigned responsibility is, and the subcommittee must meet quorum with those members.

Chair Laughridge recommended the Board enter these meeting dates into their calendars to ensure quorum can be met.

Ms. O'Byrne stated, reassessing the meeting times, as it has been a while since this has been done, will help the new members of the Board. She suggested a doodle poll be taken.

Ms. Haskin stated, as long as another meeting is scheduled by the end of this meeting, they can decide the rest of the schedule. She will send out a survey about keeping the fourth Wednesday of the month with a set time, or if they prefer more flexibility with the times.

Most of the Board members will be able to attend the December meeting. Ms. Haskin suggested moving the meeting to noon. The Board members agreed on December 12, at 12:00 p.m. Ms. Haskin reviewed; 12:00 p.m. on December 21, the board will meet, and one of the items on the agenda will be reassessing the time frame regarding board members availability.

Mr. Walker made a motion to approve the meeting dates.

Ms. Osborne seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

**13. Public Comment:**

Chair Laughridge took a moment to thank everyone, both members of the public, as well as the Board for attending the Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board meetings over this past year and providing comment. Chair Laughridge stated, the input has been very valuable and has kept the board moving forward. He continued by saying, the board is very active and has a very broad representation as they are not in an isolated, small geographical area, which creates challenges. Chair Laughridge expressed how very much he appreciates the work everyone has contributed.

**14. Adjournment:**

Chair Laughridge adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.