

**WASHOE REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY BOARD  
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES  
February 14, 2022  
3:00 p.m. to Adjournment**

**The meeting was held using remote technology in compliance with *Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 241.023.***

**1. Roll Call, Introductions, Announcements**

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Members Present:** Julia Ratti (Chair), Assemblywoman Sarah Peters, Char Buehrle, Sandy Stamates, Dr. Kristen Davis-Coelho, Cindy Green, Dr. Traci Biondi, Steve Shell (Vice Chair), Lt. Wade Clark, Henry Sotelo

**Members Absent:** Frankie Lemus (excused)

**Staff/Guests Present:** KT Greene; Ron Schnese; Alex Tanchek; Linda Anderson; Catrina Peters, Office of the County Manager, Washoe County; Kendra Gipson, Nevada PEP; Kelly D; Ana De la Masa; Christie Ackmann; Ana Huntsberger, Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS); Brandon Cassinelli; Tray Abney; Peter Ott and Gina Flores-O'Toole, Ridge House; Nohely Mariscal, Senator Cortez Masto's office; Lea Case; Valerie Balen; Lea Tauchen; Yolanda Chatwood; Andy Herod, Willow Springs Center; Kelly Marschall, SEI; Ethan; Regina De Rosa; Marianne McKown, Vitality; Amy Roukie; Linda Lang; Jessica Flood Abrass; Jeanette Belz; Christy Butler; Shannon Bennett, Tracy Palmer, Kendall Holcomb, and Joan Waldock, Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH)

**2. Public comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes for January 2022 Policy Board Meeting**

Ms. Stamates moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Green seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Washoe County Homeless Efforts Presentation**

Ms. Peters shared her [PowerPoint presentation](#). Despite having tripled their capacity, the shelter is nearly full due to increased rent and housing costs, decreased affordable housing, wage stagnation, COVID job losses, and Reno's growth. Chair Ratti clarified "affordable housing" means the units are subsidized in a program that keeps rents low, not what is available on the market. Ms. Peters said the County opened and began staffing its Cares Campus in May and Safe Camp in June. She described three areas of their work.

- Transitioning the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) continuum of care from the City of Reno to Washoe County. She explained "continuum of care" is HUD's way of saying they will provide

federal funding if the community can determine funding priorities and policies.

- Programs, for which they use contracted operators. Safe Camp is for people living unsheltered. It has a full-time case manager and provides basic services. The Cares Campus emergency shelter is their largest. A cold weather overflow opened recently to meet the extra need.
- Housing, for which they are establishing policy for federal funds through Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) 2 and ERA 1.

[Built for Zero](#) displays data for people experiencing homelessness by subpopulation. The report draws from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The county's [shelter census dashboard](#) shows the number of beds available at 9 a.m. each day and is not a real-time update. Their current priorities are staffing and training, safety and security, capacity management, and partnership development.

ModPods at Safe Camp are individual eight-by-eight-foot spaces with mattresses, electricity, heating and cooling, outdoor bike racks, and locking keycodes. To be at Safe Camp, individuals must be willing to end their homelessness as soon as they can and must be able to manage their activities of daily living. Of the exits from Safe Camp, 58 percent have been to HUD-defined permanent housing. At the Cares Campus, the success rate to permanent housing is 5.6 percent. Additional case management staff are being hired. Four heated garage bays furnished with cots and blankets are being used for overflow.

Not much progress has been in affordable housing since 2019. There are challenges that need to be addressed at the policy level. Group homes and other supportive living arrangements have dried up due to high rent and low Medicaid reimbursement rates. The County lacks permanent supporting housing that includes rental costs, case management, and wraparound services and lacks mental health and substance use treatment options.

Lt. Clark asked whether people not successfully housed go back into the community or continue to stay at the shelter. Ms. Peters said they do not collect that data yet. When they have been open longer, they will track recidivism rates. Those at Safe Camp must demonstrate progress on a housing plan as a condition of staying. Chair Ratti clarified the Care Campus is a low-barrier shelter, but Safe Camp has more stringent guidelines. Ms. Peters explained Cares Campus is for emergency shelter. Assemblywoman Peters asked if obtaining ID is part of the exit support effort. Ms. Peters said it is often the first step in a housing goal. Assemblywoman Peters asked if this is done at the Cares Campus. Ms. Peters explained that Volunteers of America (VOA) has nine case managers and one case manager supervisor for 604 people. Assemblywoman Peters asked if they could divide the Cares Campus into more manageable sections to make it easier to handle the population. She also asked whether the increase of non-veteran, non-chronic adults without children is a seasonal increase or tied to the rental market. Ms. Peters replied separating the women's dorm was the first attempt at segmenting the Cares Campus. The construction plan includes building

boundaries within the facility and creating “cubbies” with bunkbeds and more privacy. The non-veteran/non-chronic population of single adults has increased, perhaps due to the colder weather. Chair Ratti reminded members the shelter subcontracts with VOA at the Cares Campus and the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equity (RISE) at Our Place. It is unique for the county to take on case management. Assemblywoman Peters asked if they provide HMIS at no cost for those who want to use it. Ms. Peters said they paid for licenses with HUD funding and prioritize use by agencies and programs that are HUD-funded. Some agencies may have to have their own licenses. Mr. Sotelo stated having Washoe County provide case management will create stability. He asked if they plan to have more providers on campus. Ms. Peters replied they work with health care providers, managed care organizations, and providers across the community. Mr. Sotelo asked if they considered working with the weekly community court to serve the shared clients. Ms. Peters said she would welcome that relationship.

5. Discussion and Possible Recommendation to Division of Public and Behavioral Health Administrator to Fill Board Vacancy pursuant to *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 433.429.7(b)

**Position:** NRS 433.429.7 (b) The Administrator shall appoint to each policy board: *One Member who represents the interests of administrators or counselors who are employed at facilities for the treatment of alcohol or other substance use disorders.*

**Candidate:** Peter Ott, Executive Director, Bristlecone Recovery Center

Mr. Ott shared his background and his desire to serve on the Board. Dr. Davis-Coelho moved to approve recommending him for this position. Dr. Biondi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Ratti noted a vacancy for a behavioral or mental health provider. She would prefer they wait to see how the state’s behavioral health process moves along. There may be a provider in the crisis response system that could participate on the Board.

6. Washoe County Crisis Response System Implementation Plan Update  
Ms. Edwards reported this project would not be successful without the involvement of key regional stakeholders. They are waiting to find out who is awarded components of the crisis system. Ms. Marschall added the state issued the final implementation plan to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which provided funding to staff Crisis Support Services of Nevada to increase their capacity to respond to the July 16, 2022, implementation of 988. They are waiting for the state to make awards and issue a request for proposals for the care traffic control system that will be the technology hub for all of this.
7. Washoe Regional Behavioral Health Policy Board Annual Report Presentation  
Chair Ratti announced the final report will be approved at the next Board meeting. Ms. Edwards shared the draft of the Board’s [Annual Report](#). The final report will be available on the Board and on the DPBH websites. She noted the meat of the

report is section VIII, Regional Priorities and Strategies. She emphasized they can see changes in patterns by reviewing data, even if it is a couple of years old. It is the Board's task to explore what the community needs. The Board presents priorities, strategies, and recommendations based on what they learned from a careful examination of programmatic research, Nevada- and Washoe-specific data, national best practices, and the experience of regional experts in the field of behavioral health. Chair Ratti reminded them that over a year ago, they discussed whether the Board wanted to do a strategic plan, set priorities, and work toward their priorities, or bring information before the Board and have their report reflect what the Board did. She stressed the uniqueness of the behavioral health response to the pandemic by the Nevada Resiliency Project. From August 2020 to present, people have received phone calls to verify they are okay after their positive COVID test.

Dr. Biondi suggested they discuss mental health issues in seniors and youth-related mental health issues. Dr. Davis-Coelho noted the summary was comprehensive. Mr. Sotelo stated the report provided depth and context. He wants them to focus areas of the community they need to work on, then reach out for information they can act on. Chair Ratti asked members to provide feedback to Ms. Edwards. A revised draft will be presented at the next meeting. Ms. Edwards reminded members that this is to be their report, not hers.

**8. Discussion/Approval of Future Agenda Items**

Chair Ratti noted soon presentations to the Board will be policy recommendations. Board members or their colleagues can present suggestions for their bill draft request (BDR). Last legislative cycle, Ms. Edwards catalogued and summarized suggestions close to the deadline to submit, then the Board chose its BDR. The bill draft is due September 1. She urged folks to bring ideas forward. She will reach out to the state to see if there are any adjustments needed in NRS for the crisis response system.

**9. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**10. Reminder of Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held March 14. The Children's Mental Health Consortium will make a presentation.

**11. Adjourn**

Assemblywoman Peters made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Buehrle seconded it. The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.