

**\*\*\*APPROVED 1/10/2024\*\*\***

**MINUTES  
CENTRAL UTAH COUNSELING CENTER  
AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING**

**DATE:** November 8, 2023

**PLACE:** 1170 S College Ave  
Richfield, UT 84701

**TIME:** 4:30 PM

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Scott Bartholomew, Commissioner Dennis Blackburn, Commissioner Ralph Brown, Commissioner Marty Palmer, Commissioner Sam Steed, Nathan Strait, Richard Anderson, Anna LaDamus, Chad Williams, Jared Kummer, Holly Kunzler, Lynnette Robinson, Christian Matthews, Mindy Wright, Julie Lynn

**EXCUSED:** Commissioner Trevor Johnson

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Ralph Brown to approve the minutes of the October 11th, 2023 Authority Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marty Palmer. Votes by voice included Commissioner Marty Palmer yes, Commissioner Ralph Brown yes, Commissioner Scott Bartholomew yes, Commissioner Dennis Blackburn yes, Commissioner Sam Steed yes, and Commissioner Trevor Johnson absent. Motion carried.**

**II. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Richard Anderson presented the fiscal year (FY) 2024 financial report. Last month's financial report showed Medicaid revenue at 13% mental health and 12% substance abuse with a quarter of the year gone. The current financial report has increased to 30% mental health and 25% substance abuse. PRISM is Medicaid's new eligibility and payment system that continues to not provide needed detail. Medicaid Deputy Director Eric Grant held a meeting yesterday where he stated he understands the plight of finance directors throughout the state. Medicaid has a contract with Accenture software for 1,000 hours of coding time per month. The state has doubled the contract hours and submitted numerous task tickets. Accenture cannot hire and train staff fast enough to correct the problems. Current staff are told they cannot take vacation, and some of their staff are at their wit's end. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked if the Center will eventually receive the money. Richard answered yes, the money will be received. He previously mentioned how Medicaid was ending coverage when they should not have. The winding down of the pandemic has not gone as planned, and projections are off. Actuaries must be involved in any rate adjustments over 2%. The data analyst firm that sets rates and projects eligibility has committed to processing a mid-year adjustment to match payment with cost. Commissioner Dennis Blackburn asked when this adjustment will be. Richard answered the adjustment will

most likely be in January after PRISM eligibility numbers are corrected. Eric also promised a different data set that will specify payment information. Medicaid has made payments and then taken money back. Eric promised a report by the end of this month so the Center can know which fiscal year things fall. The independent audit was pushed back from October to November to December. Some centers have no faith in this process and have asked for a state audit exception. Richard thinks good numbers will be reported by the end of the month. Money has been pulled out of reserves with \$1.35 million recently put back in. This shows what the reserve fund is for and how it helps the Center with state payment delays. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked if construction can begin on the Gunnison administration building. Richard stated he would like to use the sale of the Richfield building for that. He has not completed the proper bidding on a real estate agency. There is a potential buyer at \$160 per square foot. The crisis commission is also a key part due to state legislative funding for a receiving center. The governor spoke today about helping with the mental health crisis in rural areas by building walkable communities and receiving centers. The article stated receiving centers are statewide, which is not true, so maybe this is an indication of the governor's projected budget. Nathan Strait stated funding for a crisis receiving center would cover most of the upgrade and site preparation such as the parking lot and sewer. Richard stated budgeted wages are spot on at 33%. Travel is also spot on. Capital expenditures show 103% for substance abuse due to the \$1.9 million taken from reserves that is being spent as a percentage of mental health and substance abuse. The revenue will be corrected at the end of the year. Educational assistance might be paused for a time due to its high percentage. Lynnette Robinson does a very good job at moving Public Treasurers Investment Fund (PTIF) money back and forth, which resulted in interest of \$60,000 to \$80,000 last year. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew stated Gunnison Valley Hospital attended the Sanpete County Commission meeting to give their annual report. Their chief executive officer, Brenda Bartholomew, stated they added a new wing where three of the rooms are designated for the prison. They have a contract with the prison to provide surgeries and other procedures rather than transporting inmates north. They hired a therapist who is on call 24/7 and can meet with the inmates when needed. This works right into the receiving center again. Richard stated the hospital hired a former Center employee for that position. Nathan asked if Brenda indicated any expansion plans. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew stated those were the only comments made. There was no reference to the building the Center is renting. They have a new clinic in Manti. They just finished the clinic in Gunnison. They announced they will build a clinic and pharmacy in Salina later this year. They have expressed interest in starting a clinic in Ephraim to counteract the Intermountain Healthcare hospital going in there. Nathan stated Brenda indicated to him she might be moving their administration to the building the Center is renting and using the basement for other things. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew stated they are remodeling a doctor's office next to the new clinic for an eye doctor. Richard stated the tentative plans for when the lease is up is for those administrators who live in Sevier County to work in the new Richfield clinic. Gunnison City is rewriting the warranty deed to match the proposed building schedule. They held a long executive session for the discussion.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Dennis Blackburn to approve the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Marty Palmer. Votes by voice included Commissioner Marty Palmer yes, Commissioner Ralph Brown yes, Commissioner**

**Scott Bartholomew yes, Commissioner Dennis Blackburn yes, Commissioner Sam Steed yes, and Commissioner Trevor Johnson absent. Motion carried.**

**III. PERSONNEL ACTIONS:**

Nathan stated two staff members resigned. Maria Linton was a Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT)/administrative assistant. Linda Peterson was a part-time client driver for the Sanpete team. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked what a client driver is. Nathan stated Linda was hired to transport clients from their home to group. Many clients do not have vehicles or driver licenses. Medicaid has Modivcare to provide transportation, but many clients do not qualify because they do not have Medicaid. Modivcare has even fired clients if they missed two or three pickups. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked if the position will be replaced. Christian Matthews stated the position will be replaced. Commissioner Marty Palmer asked if the staff member drives their own vehicle. Richard stated the staff member drives a larger Center vehicle like a van or bus. Modivcare is more for urban areas and does not work well in rural areas. They have trouble finding drivers, and the distances are much greater. Commissioner Dennis Blackburn asked if the position is part-time, as needed, or scheduled. Christian stated the schedule varies. Commissioner Dennis Blackburn asked if the MCOT assistant was for a certain team. Richard stated she helped MCOT and administration. Nathan stated the position was 75% administration and 25% MCOT. Commissioner Dennis Blackburn asked if the position will be replaced. Nathan stated a meeting was held yesterday to distribute her responsibilities amongst administration staff. A human resource director will be hired instead. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew stated he can see why the driver resigned but asked why the MCOT/administrative assistant resigned. Nathan stated that can be discussed in executive session if needed. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew stated that would not be necessary.

**IV. OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR REPORT:**

Julie Lynn stated the Office of the State Auditor sent out an Auditor Alert in October regarding public notice compliance for local governments. General noncompliance has been observed in five areas.

1. The Center needs to be listed on the Public Meeting Notice (PMN) website with the same information on file with the Office of the State Auditor and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, including entity type, entity name, and contact information. The Center is in compliance with this requirement.
2. The Center needs to post pending and approved minutes of public meetings within a reasonable amount of time after holding an open meeting. Approved minutes must be posted within three business days. The Center has posted approved minutes but will begin posting pending minutes with this meeting.
3. The Center must make an audio recording of open meetings available to the public within three business days after holding an open meeting. This requirement can be fulfilled by posting the recording on the PMN website or by posting a link to the PMN website to the Center's website where the audio recording can be found. The Center has recorded all public meetings but will begin posting the recordings with this meeting.

4. The Center must list the names of all board members, absent or present, in the pending and approved minutes of public meetings. The Center is in compliance with this requirement.
5. The Center must post the name, phone number, and email address of all board members on the PMN website. Commissioners reviewed the information Julie had on file for them and made changes as needed. The Center will begin posting this information on the PMN website.

Julie reminded the commissioners that board member annual training is required for all governing body members. Commissioners can enroll for free at [training.auditor.utah.gov/](http://training.auditor.utah.gov/). Two of the trainings on that website that are beneficial to the commissioners in regard to this board are Local District & Special Service District Board Member Training and Open & Public Meetings Act Training.

#### **V. OSUMH SITE VISIT REPORT:**

Jared Kummer stated the Center had its annual audit with the Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (OSUMH). The Center did very well with no findings. Jared created a corrective action plan for the few deficiencies found. Easy Compliance Checks require the local sheriff's office to ensure businesses are not selling alcohol and tobacco to minors. Elizabeth Hinckley is the team leader for prevention and will reach out to these offices to ensure the checks are taking place. There was a deficiency related to substance use disorder (SUD) client data. SUD data is sent to the state at admission and discharge. There was an issue where closed client data was not submitted properly. Ashlee Gleave took charge of the situation. The data was at 9% and was supposed to be under 4%. She worked tirelessly to decrease the percentage to 1.2%. The data also shows less clients attending social recovery support groups at discharge than admission. This might be a data entry issue. Another issue is criminogenic risk data. Assessments are completed to determine client risk level to determine which type of groups the client should attend. It is not good to mix risk levels. A quality assessment and performance improvement (QAPI) meeting will be held on November 15th at Snow College in Richfield with therapists and SUD counselors to train on nicotine use at discharge, social recovery support at discharge, and criminogenic risk data. Commissioners are welcome to attend. Commissioner Marty Palmer stated they will be at the Utah Association of Counties (UAC) that day. Jared stated MCOT is a leader in rural Utah, which is a credit to Anna LaDamus. Anna presented at a peer to peer learning session to help others understand what it is like in a rural area. Anna stated it was interesting to hear from other rural agencies across the nation and how they face similar challenges. Jared stated OSUMH noticed an increase in case management services, which is linking clients with other resources. Clients take a 30 question assessment called the Outcome Questionnaire (OQ) when they come in for treatment that tracks depression, anxiety, SUD systems, etc. The Center was above the rural average in each category. Tracking has taken place on how often therapists look at the OQ, which improved by 11%. Commissioner Sam Steed asked how the 11% compared to other years. Jared stated the jump really happened in FY2023, but he will run those numbers for the next meeting. The OQ is a great thing for therapists to discuss with their clients at the beginning of a session and alerts different symptoms. Sometimes clients do not see how far they have come until they can look at the results on a chart. Some court ordered clients are not honest at first because they are worried how it will affect their case.

Jared will bring in an OQ in the future for the commissioners to review. Health integration has been a big push in the state to help clients get into a doctor for medical issues. Some things have been added to help alert clinicians of areas to focus on. A therapist on each team is attending specialized training for maternal mental health today and tomorrow. OSUMH observed Holly Kunzler's team staff meeting where they discussed OQ scores and how a client's use of nicotine and caffeine are affecting them. The Center is involved in community partnerships and added Utah Behavior Services and Chrysalis to help with autism, developmental delay, and physical health needs. Commissioner Sam Steed asked what is the youngest age client the Center serves. Chris stated the youngest he has seen was 18 months, but typically it is two or three years old. Holly stated children who go into the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) custody are required to have an assessment. Jared stated services with young children look very different and include play therapy and sand tray therapy. Working with parents is one of the biggest pieces.

#### **VI. TRI-COUNTY TEAM REPORT:**

Holly is the Tri-County team leader. Her team covers Piute, Sevier, and Wayne Counties. Her team consists of two office managers, four case managers, eight full-time therapists, one part-time therapist, two SUD counselors, one peer support specialist, one nurse, one nurse practitioner, one team leader, and one maintenance worker. The team is doing well staffing-wise. A new clinic is being built that will be two stories with three conference/group rooms containing partition walls that can open and shut. Hopefully these rooms will meet the need for large staff meetings as well. The second floor framing is now complete on the new building. A new day treatment building is also being built. It is waiting for windows, doors, and drywall. It will have a brick exterior. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked if there have been any material shortages. Holly stated there has been a wait on windows and doors for the day treatment building. Richard stated that the building has more of a residential style. There have not been any delays with the commercial clinic building. Holly stated clinical services provided include mental health and substance abuse treatment with evaluations, recommendations, individual and group therapy, psychosocial rehabilitation groups, case management services, medication assessment and management, and residential living. The residential building has eight beds that are all in use. The new section of the residential building is currently being used for staff offices during construction. There are already potential clients ready to move in when it opens. Groups offered include moral reconnection therapy (MRT), dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), seeking safety, smart recovery, family support, connection group, day treatment, residential groups, why try, and peer support. Many groups are offered in person and over telehealth. The team also offers community sober socials, case management, peer support, medication assisted treatment, justice reinvestment initiative (JRI) drug testing, adult probation and parole (AP&P) referrals, DCFS referrals, school based services, prevention, addict to athlete, recovery court, mental health court, and family recovery drug court. Holly recently attended a conference where they discussed renaming drug court to recovery court to promote a recovery lifestyle. There is a need for increased services in Wayne and Piute Counties. She will start sending an SUD counselor twice per month to Wayne County and a therapist twice per month to Piute County.

Commissioner Dennis Blackburn stated it is good the Hanksville clients do not have to travel to Richfield for treatment. Holly stated there is a contract provider who will see adults in Hanksville, and she sends a therapist to see children. Commissioner Dennis Blackburn asked if the therapist goes to the schools on set days. Holly stated it is typically a set day that the therapist

coordinates with the schools. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked if children have a stigma if they have services at the school. Holly stated office staff call them out of class so their peers do not know they are attending treatment. There has been a collaborative treatment effort with Utah Behavioral Service (UBS) for autism mental health services and Southwest Behavioral Health (SBH) for eye movement desensitization response (EMDR) training. SBH contacted Holly offering to train therapists in EMDR after they received a grant due to the incidents in Enoch and Piute.

Holly introduced Mindy Wright, who is a therapist on the team. She began working as a student intern in 2019. She obtained her master's degree from the University of Phoenix in 2020. She has been fully licensed as a clinical mental health counselor (CMHC) since 2022. Mindy works with a variety of clients and provides many services. She runs a seeking safety group, high school DBT group, EMDR, cognitive behavioral therapy, and trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy. Mindy explained EMDR and how it works. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked how long it takes for EMDR to work. Mindy stated it depends on the client's history. She has some clients she has been seeing biweekly for four months who are just getting into present triggers. Sometimes they can clear things quickly. Commissioner Dennis Blackburn asked how often EMDR clients are seen. Mindy stated EMDR clients are seen every week or every other week. She does not like a lot of time to go by because their brain still processes the information, especially during sleep. Richard asked if she goes back to the earliest issue and works forward. Mindy stated that is correct unless there is something in their present life that is really affecting them. Recent traumatic experiences can be worked on, even in a group. Mindy presented a client profile and progress. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew asked if it matters if therapists see their own gender. Mindy stated it just depends on the client and level of comfort. Therapists who are uncomfortable cannot give the client what they need. Holly stated they try to match the client with the therapist based on their specialty. Chris stated sometimes barriers are too great to overcome. If the client can work through initial uneasiness, it can sometimes be used to their advantage to help them heal. Commissioner Sam Steed asked if Mindy was still a student when she came on as an intern. Mindy stated she started in September of 2019 and graduated in May of 2020. She had to obtain clinical hours prior to taking her licensing test. Commissioner Sam Steed asked if it is common for therapists to work as interns first. Mindy stated therapists must complete a practicum prior to being licensed. Commissioner Sam Steed stated Mindy is a great success story. Nathan stated hiring interns is a good test to see if they will be a good fit. Commissioner Scott Bartholomew stated Mindy's enthusiasm for her job is evident.

## **VII. UBHC LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:**

Nathan stated the Utah Behavioral Healthcare Committee meets at UAC monthly. They have set top priorities for the legislative session. The commissioners might hear about these priorities, and Nathan hopes they will support them.

1. The universal agreement throughout the state from the criminal justice coordinating council is asking for additional recovery court funding. Funding has remained static for many years and has not kept up with both inflation and demand.
2. The consensus on the federal Medicaid assistance percentage (FMAP) is to increase funding for the state match and public behavioral health system. Physical health

increases, but behavioral health does not. An increase needs to be requested every few years, and it should be proportional.

3. Expand the crisis continuum by funding additional receiving centers and MCOT and fund existing receiving centers and MCOT at the same rate as new ones. Funding decreased so the request is for the legislature to keep existing teams funded at the same rate as the new ones coming on so it is easier to maintain. Richard stated several centers did not use their allocation so they gave it to the Center. The Center spent \$1.1 million last year and is only receiving \$550,000 this year. Other centers are already offering their money. The idea is for MCOT to be funded at \$1 million to \$1.1 million. Temporary American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money was received and spent on hiring new staff, not knowing it was temporary. Now the funding is gone.
4. Increase the number of state hospital beds. As more individuals are arrested with mental health concerns and sent to the forensic unit, there are not enough beds so they are creeping into civil beds. The community that needs those beds do not have beds available. There has been no proportionate increase on the civil side so it makes the Center lose beds. The Utah State Hospital has not been able to fully staff their different units and have shut down a 30 bed civil unit. This priority also looks at increasing wages at the Utah State Hospital to staff those units.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Not needed.

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTION:**

Not needed.

**X. MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Nathan stated historically there is no Authority Board Meeting held in December so the next meeting will be January 10th, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. at Steve's Steakhouse in Richfield.

Nathan stated the commissioners are invited to attend the General Staff Meeting on November 29th at Snow College in Richfield. Lunch will be served. The Office of Inspector General will present on fraud, waste, and abuse.

**XI. OTHER:**

Nothing to report.

**XII. MATTERS FROM THE BOARD:**

Nothing to report.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Marty Palmer to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sam Steed. Votes by voice included Commissioner Marty Palmer yes, Commissioner Ralph Brown yes, Commissioner Scott Bartholomew yes, Commissioner Dennis Blackburn yes, Commissioner Sam Steed yes, and Commissioner Trevor Johnson absent. Motion carried.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.**

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**Julie Lynn, Accountant**