

# Behavioural Health Advisory Council (BHAC)

## June 18, 2025 Minutes

| MEETING DETAILS          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <b>Date/Time</b>         | June 18, 2025 at 10:00am                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Venue</b>             | Virtual through Zoom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| COUNCIL DEMOGRAPHICS     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Present</b>           | Patrice Beard, Robin Binford-Weaver, Dietrich Bragg, Rhonda Bryant, Cristy Corbin, Adam Creveling, Bruce Crusier, Karen Grabowski, Martin Mash, Mary McQuown, Margie Millner, Nick Pappas, Heather Pate, Hannah Sower, Dreamel Spady, Kristinne Stone, Bently Wood, Nathanael Rudney, Rita Utz (Admin) |
| <b>Guest(s)</b>          | Heather Orrock, Ara Mendoza, Christine Schein, Andreia Ukrop, John Richardson-Lauve, Jessica Daggett, Rachel Coney-Bowles, Meghan McGuire, Heather Norton                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Unexcused Absence</b> | Kristin Vaughn                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Excused Absence</b>   | Jason Lowe, Sandra Nichols, Justin Wallace                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Minutes Taken By</b>  | Rita Utz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Presiding Officer</b> | Nick Pappas, Vice President                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Order Called</b>      | Council convened at 10:00am                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| Time    | Item                | Discussion/Action                                                                                                                                           | Responsibility/Follow-up<br>(if applicable)                                                                                          |
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| 10:00am | Welcome             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nick Pappas – opens meeting</li> <li>Reiteration of attendance policies and future enforcement in removal</li> </ul> | Presiding Officer: Nick Pappas, Vice President as Heather Orrock stepped down as President upon leaving Vocal Virginia               |
|         | Approval of Minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of Minutes from 12-11-2024, 2-19-2025, 4-16-2025</li> </ul>                                                 | 2.19 Minutes: Bruce Crusier moved to approve, Mary McQuown seconded, all in favor.<br>12.11 Minutes: Bruce Crusier moved to approve, |

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|         |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Mary McQuown seconded, all in favor.<br>4.16 Minutes: Bruce Cruser moved to approve, Mary McQuown seconded, all in favor.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 10:05am | Financial Report     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous Account Balance: \$16,713.83</li> <li>• Income: \$975</li> <li>• Current Expenditures: \$0.00</li> <li>• End Balance: \$\$17,688.83</li> <li>• Budget year ends 6/30, after which the final invoice for the year will be submitted to DBHDS</li> <li>• With Heather Orrock coming in as the Executive Director of Mental Health Virginia, she will become the Treasurer</li> </ul> | Bruce Cruser                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10:10am | Vote on New Officers | <p>Rhonda Bryant presented on behalf of the Nominating Committee a new slate of officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nick Pappas, President</li> <li>• Dietrich Bragg, Vice President</li> <li>• Justin Wallace, Secretary</li> </ul> <p>Nominations on the floor were called, with no response.<br/>Nick Pappas and Dietrich Bragg introduced themselves and shared their interest in these roles.</p>            | <p>Rhonda Bryant presented the panel.<br/>Bruce Cruser seconded nomination of Nick Pappas as President, all voted in favor.<br/>Mary McQuown seconded nomination of Dietrich Bragg as Vice President, all voted in favor.<br/>Mary McQuown seconded nomination of Justin Wallace as Secretary, all voted in favor.</p> |
| 10:10am | Committee Updates    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|         | Executive Committee  | Met May 23' Meeting included:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Nick Pappas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|  |                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update from Rhonda Bryant on upcoming officer nominations</li> <li>• Discussed Council's response to changes to ORS; agreed to respond with letter from BHAC President</li> <li>• Update from Nathanael on TA Request</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|  | Governance Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership – do we continue to pause until after bylaws are reviewed by a TA? Nathanael Rudney updated that one TA withdrew and another was not approved by SAMHSA, but a representative of the TA contractor Ellen Radis will assist in part at this time. The future of the TA request is currently uncertain.</li> <li>• Rhonda Bryant noted a lawyer that she is in contact with has volunteered to assist with the update of the bylaws. Bryant proposed dividing the initial bylaws review work among those on the committee.</li> <li>• Discussion around moving forward with the voluntary consultant and the lawyer</li> <li>• Membership marketing – Bryant's colleague has developed materials and a social media campaign and is prepared to submit them for review.</li> <li>• Discussion around initial reason for closing membership, including the completion of updates to the bylaws to create clarity around expectations, roles, onboarding, etc.</li> <li>• Bryant led discussion with the group about whether quorum needs to be adjusted in the bylaws to meet voting needs. Rudney suggested from experience with other orgs in growth periods to get business done until</li> </ul> | <p>Rhonda Bryant</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bryant and others will work with Ellen Radis</li> <li>• Bryant will explore potential rates with lawyer contact</li> <li>• Governance Committee can review proposed marketing materials and present to the Council</li> </ul> |

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|  |                                   | membership stabilized. Ultimately, the Council discussed this and decided to not pursue an adjustment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                 |
|  | Monitoring & Evaluation Committee | <p>Met May 28, meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on reviewing Block Grant reports and identifying and focusing on priority areas with the plan to work closely with the Advocacy Committee</li> <li>• Discussion about deliverables - Block Grant application submission is due at the end of the month and the upcoming letter to the commissioner is due by September 1<sup>st</sup>, prior to the final application</li> <li>• Rudney shared more about the letter – The letter to the Commissioner with needs, concerns, and recommendations to the Block Grant as well as the mental health field in Virginia will be due prior the September 1<sup>st</sup> submission and will be discussed at the next Council meeting. Prior letters can be a guide.</li> <li>• Bently Wood asked if it might benefit the BHAC to have additional organizational or community signers to this letter</li> </ul> | Kristinne Stone |
|  | Advocacy Committee                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy Committee has not met</li> <li>• Executive Committee did send a letter to DBHDS regarding the changes to ORS</li> <li>• Discussion around roundtable on ORS reorganization, SAARA made the recording available, and DBHDS created a website to gather feedback</li> <li>• Cristy Corbin shared about the need for collective efforts in order to achieve a greater impact</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Cristy Corbin   |

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| 10:40am | DBHDS Updates                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reiteration of TA efforts</li> <li>• Ellen Radis will assist with an initial review of the bylaws in lieu of a contracted TA</li> <li>• DBHDS ORS &amp; OBHW change - Encouraged questions during upcoming presentation from Heather Norton later in the meeting.</li> <li>• Provided an update related to the Addiction and Recovery Council and noted a 44% decline in overdose deaths</li> <li>• Introduced Community Housing Services guests in the meeting – Ara Mendoza and Andreia Ukrop, who shared information about their work</li> <li>• Referred to the upcoming Letter to the Commission and reminded committees to focus on this for the upcoming board meeting in August</li> <li>• DBHDS planning tables are available and contain changes in language</li> </ul> | Nathanael Rudney,<br>DHBDS      |
| 11:25   | Discussion - Reorganization of DBHDS: ORS & OBHW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Letter to DBHDS with Heather Orrock</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heather Orrock invited to discuss the letter to DBHDS regarding the reorganization of ORS, which she signed as president of BHAC</li> <li>• Executive Committee sent letter on behalf of BHAC</li> <li>• Executive Committee also invited Heather Norton or another member of the office join the meeting today</li> <li>• Note: State employees in BHAC were not included in the creation of the letter to be mindful of the relationships in their professional roles</li> <li>• Letter included acknowledgment of goals and offers alternative processes to move forward</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            | Nick Pappas with Heather Orrock |

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|  |                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>related to the Office of Recovery Services (ORS) and the Office of Behavioural Health and Wellness (OBHW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on potential written response to this letter in addition to attendance &amp; presentation in today's meeting</li> <li>• Kristinne Stone asked about how changes to the departments will impact child and family, as all existing materials refer to adult services</li> <li>• Heather mentioned that a work group has formed to address concerns that Heather Norton and Meghan McGuire mentioned during SAARA roundtable; Vocal Virginia has asked to join</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                 |
|  | <p>Discussion - Reorganization of DBHDS: ORS &amp; OBHW (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation and Discussion with Heather Norton, DBHDS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nathanael Rudney introduced Heather Norton, Deputy Commissioner for Community Services with DBHDS</li> <li>• Also in attendance: Meghan McGuire – Deputy Commissioner of Policy and Public Affairs with DBHDS</li> <li>• Norton confirmed that transition was happening; reporting structure is changing without impact to priorities, projects, commitments, or funding; partly in response to national pressure on impact, efficiencies, and cost</li> <li>• Norton wants to ensure the voice of lived experience is part of all the department is doing to support people through their journeys</li> <li>• Norton ensured commitment to prevention and recovery in continuum of care</li> <li>• Norton noted this realignment is to maximize resources across departmental work through</li> </ul> | <p>Nick Pappas with Heather Norton of DBHDS</p> |

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|  |  | <p>the embedding the principles of recovery through all operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Norton does not expect community to experience change; the realignment is internal to maximize funds, etc.</li><li>• Pappas asked questions about involvement of community in this decision-making process, which is scheduled to begin 7/1. Norton discussed internal review over 8 months with an intent to roll out to the public.</li><li>• Pappas spoke to the impact and success of ORS within the professional peer community</li><li>• Corbin asked how this will impact child and family services. Norton does not anticipate any functional changes to communications and implementation. Aletheia will remain the primary contact for the peer recovery community and Colleen will be for the prevention community.</li><li>• Norton acknowledges that most of the work of the department is cross-disability and co-occurring disorders. Reporting structure is changing but operating structure is more project-based and cross-departmental</li><li>• Conversation around peer representation in legislative work groups, particularly DBHDS peer subject matter experts</li><li>• Bently Wood spoke to the history of othering peers and that this was proliferated potentially through not including the peer community in this decision process and that this may have caused the resistance and feedback the DBHDS is experiencing.</li></ul> |  |
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|                                                           |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heather Pate acknowledged the potential that this could streamline prior contract concerns but spoke to concerns around the process to make this change, the information rollout, and the continued positive impact of ORS' relationship-building work.</li> <li>• Norton noted she is available to represent and field questions and concerns.</li> </ul> |                                                                                              |
| 11:05am                                                   | Public Comment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gratitude to Bruce Crusier for his contributions to the field and BHAC upon his retirement and gratitude to Heather Orrock as former president of BHAC</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          | Nick Pappas                                                                                  |
| 11:08am                                                   | Adjourn        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motion: Adjourn</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Nick Pappas<br>Bently Wood made the motion to adjourn, Cristy Corbin seconded, all in favor. |
| Next Full Council Meeting: August 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                              |