



Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Advisory Board (Minutes of the meeting of February 7, 2024) **FINAL**

<u>2024 BHAB Membership</u>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ryan Campbell - BOS	Meeting Cancelled	✓										
Anaiah Kirk – BOS Alt		E										
Cathie Peacock		E										
Elizabeth Marum		E										
Jenn Salazar		✓										
Maureen Woods		✓										
Sherry Bradley		✓										
Terry Ann Garcia		✓										
Valerie Shuemake		✓										

Present = ✓ Absent = A Excused = E Virtual Attendance = V 8 MHAB Members, 1 BOS Alternate

<u>Tuolumne County Staff in Attendance</u>
Tami Mariscal, Director – Behavioral Health Department
Pandora Armbruster, Administrative Assistant – Behavioral Health Department
<u>Others in Attendance</u>
Blake Dolman, Student Intern, Veterans Services
Mary Anne Schmidt, community member
Marshall Romeo, community member
And one other unidentified community member

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Behavioral Health Advisory Board Chair, Ryan Campbell, called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm. Six members were present and accounted for at the time of roll call, completing a quorum for the Board. Those present were Ryan Campbell-District 2 Supervisor, Jenn Salazar, Maureen Woods, Sherry Bradley, Terry Ann Garcia, and Valerie Shuemake. Cathie Peacock, and Elizabeth Marum were excused from attending.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Behavioral Health Advisory Board members in attendance introduced themselves to all present.

Introductions were made by Tuolumne County staff in attendance, as follows: Tami Mariscal, Behavioral Health Director and Pandora Armbruster, Administrative Technician, Behavioral Health Department.

Others present were Mary Anne Schmidt, community member, Blake Dolman Veterans' Services Student Intern, and Marshall Romeo, community member. One other community member was present but declined to introduce themselves.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

Members of the public may be heard on any item not on the Board's Agenda. A person addressing the Board will be limited to **three minutes**. Comments by members of the public on any item on the agenda will only be allowed during consideration of the item by the Board.

A community member shared her opinion that the Behavioral Health Advisory Board should step up and provide input on spending of potential Opioid Litigation funds scheduled to be discussed at an upcoming Board of Supervisors Meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A correction to Page 5, Section 16, Announcements, second sentence of the December 6, 2023, draft meeting minutes was noted by Mary Anne Schmidt to show that Salvation Army Red Cross should be American Red Cross. Pandora Armbruster will make the correction.

A motion was made by Maureen Woods and seconded by Terry Ann Garcia to approve the December 6, 2023, Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting Minutes with the noted correction. The motion passed unanimously.

(Ayes: 6 – Supervisor Campbell, Jenn Salazar, Maureen Woods, Sherry Bradley, Terry Ann Garcia, and Valerie Shuemaker. Abstentions: 0 Nays: 0 Members Absent: 2 – Cathie Peacock, and Elizabeth Marum)

5. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Tami Mariscal, Behavioral Health Director

Tami Mariscal requested the group's opinions on specific criteria which will aid the department in identifying potential properties suitable for supportive housing for behavioral health clients. Written questions were distributed to the group which covered a range of important aspects, including accessibility to services, community integration, and the role of various environmental factors in supportive housing. Tami explained that some of the questions may feel like a duplication; however, each question addresses a distinct facet of the topic. Those questions are listed below along with the responses received from those present at the Behavioral Health Advisory Board meeting.

1. How could the proximity of supportive housing properties to essential services, such as healthcare facilities and grocery stores, contribute to residents' overall recovery and well-being?
2. Does walkability contribute to self-sufficiency and accessibility of essential services for residents in supportive housing? What are the advantages/concerns?
3. Why is having convenient access to public transportation crucial for the success of supportive housing tenants?
4. How does the location of supportive housing properties near educational institutions (colleges, libraries, community centers, etc.) contribute to the educational opportunities and advancement of residents?
5. Is feeling a part of the community important for supportive housing residents? How can the dispersion of housing contribute to personalized care?
6. What are the advantages/disadvantages of supportive housing within dense residential areas?

7. What are the advantages/disadvantages of locating supportive housing within a less dense areas?

Val Shuemaker relayed that several questions seem to be related to a general theme, proximity to services, walkability. Her feeling is that essential services need to be available within a walkable distance. Tenants need to be self-sufficient without having to rely heavily on public transportation or transportation benefits received through their providers. In her experience, relying on those types of transportation which may be unreliable and/or may not cover all areas, sometimes makes it difficult for clients to make it to scheduled services, contributing to missed appointments and high no-show rates. Missed appointments are detrimental to clients in their progress towards improved mental health.

Sherry Bradley expressed her opinion that most community members are opposed to having this type of housing near grade schools but does feel that it would be advantageous for clients to locate supportive housing near colleges or secondary education institutions and community centers. She also shared her experience with locating supportive housing in a dense residential area while working in a previous county. At that time, it was highly protested when first implemented, but as time went by, tenants were more accepted as neighbors got to know each other. The benefits to this housing location far outweighed the protests. She also stated that it would be important to share information regarding potential locations in a positive way to assure the community's understanding as stigma continues to impact the public's perception and fears surrounding mental health.

Terry Garcia feels that being able to access necessary services nearby or within walking distance would be good for clients' self-esteem, rather than having to ask for help with transportation to meet basic needs, such as grocery shopping. Walking is also healthy and provides a sense of freedom if it can be done safely.

Maureen Woods shared that feeling a part of the community could make a positive impact on clients, eliminating feelings of isolation and depression. Many clients have internalized feelings of shame of their mental illness making it hard to feel accepted by their community. These feelings of exclusion or isolation can contribute to recidivism.

Jenn Salazar noted that Resiliency Village is a good example as she struggles with the cost of gas to utilize their support. If this type of housing is chosen, transportation concerns would have to be addressed. Locating mental health consumers away from others also enforces the feeling of stigma, and perceptions of mental health clients as outcasts. Several members of the group identified various disadvantages to locating supportive housing within a less dense area, such as isolation, transportation challenges, and lack of freedom.

Sherry Bradley shared information regarding Shepherds Gate, a program her brother was involved with. They take in autos that need repairs and use them as teaching aids and vocational training for students. Once repaired, they are donated to someone in need. National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) purchased rural property that allowed room for farming. This enabled tenants to learn farming, animal husbandry, technical skills, all as a part of their therapy and an introduction to independence.

Mary Anne Schmidt recently attended a candidate forum and was surprised at the uninformed viewpoints being shared by candidates. She recommended that the public be made aware immediately of any potential plans or projects so that education and awareness become a part of the planning process. She feels that while this takes time

to educate the public on all aspects of potential projects, it is very important in our county to assure acceptance and alleviate stigma. She identified the Soulsbyville property as an ideal place for supportive housing that is located within a residential community and feels it will positively impact that area. She noted that some of the best choices for this type of housing may not meet every positive aspect identified.

Marshall Romeo relayed that they feel that walkability is one of the most important aspects when considering housing locations. Independence and freedom to roam are important for good mental and physical health. Asking for help can be detrimental for someone suffering from mental illness. In their experience, there are pockets everywhere where acceptance can be found. Allowing those with mental health issues to find acceptance, create self-sufficiency, build relationships, friendships, etc. enables them to build a community within the community.

Tami has requested that any additional feedback be supplied after the meeting directly to the Behavioral Health Advisory Board's Administrative Support, Pandora Armbruster @ PArmbruster@co.tuolumne.ca.us. Pandora will assure that it is received by Tami on February 13, 2024, where she is scheduled to present to the Board of Supervisors about behavioral health housing.

6. NEW BUSINESS

The group reviewed an application for appointment to the Behavioral Health Advisory Board submitted by Marshall Romeo as well as an application for re-appointment submitted by Maureen Woods.

A motion was made by Jenn Salazar and seconded by Sherry Bradley to move both applications forward to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation of appointment. Motion passed unanimously.

(Ayes: 6 – Supervisor Campbell, Jenn Salazar, Maureen Woods, Sherry Bradley, Terry Ann Garcia, and Valerie Shuemaker. Abstentions: 0 Nays: 0 Members Absent: 2 – Cathie Peacock, and Elizabeth Marum)

7. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

No written reports have been received nor reported out on.

8. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS:

Jenn Salazar reported her recent experience with several friends from the unhoused population and their challenges in securing assistance in gaining suitable, affordable housing. She feels that their inability to find safe places to stay is negatively impacting their mental health and desire to stay sober.

Tami Mariscal relayed that the Behavioral Health Department now has a two day turn around in assessments and encouraged Jenn to refer those of her friends in mental health or substance use crises to reach out to the Behavioral Health Department directly.

Blake Dolman, Veterans Services Representative, reported that Veterans Services also will see any veteran impacted by mental health, housing and substance use disorder problems. Many times, they can get them the assistance they need.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2024, at 4:00 pm at the Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Enrichment Center, 101 Hospital Road, Sonora, CA 95370. Detailed meeting information will be provided on the March 2024 Agenda.

17. ADJOURNMENT

The February 7, 2024, Behavioral Health Advisory Board meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.