

Attendees

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**Voting Members:**

Mr. Leland Johnson, Chair  
Mr. Chris Mosley, Vice Chair  
Mr. Sherman Ross, Treasurer  
Mr. Steve Grimsley, Secretary  
Ms. Chantel Adams, Board Member  
Ms. Donna Whitener, Board Member  
Mr. Michael McElveen, Board Member  
Mr. Lane Bennett, Board Member  
Ms. Karen Sparks, Board Member  
Ms. Mary Ghorley, Board Member

**Others Present:**

Ms. Melanie Dallas, Chief Executive Officer  
Mr. James Catanzaro Jr., Legal Counsel  
Ms. Cheryl Lewis, Director of Outpatient Services  
Ms. Dena Payne, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms. Erica Collins, Human Resources Director  
Mr. Jerry Koester, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms. Kathleen Varda, Foundation Director  
Dr. Michelle Hamm, Chief Clinical Officer  
Mr. Michael Mullet, Community Relations Director  
Ms. Stephanie Bishop, Chief Compliance Officer  
Ms. Melissa Stone, Executive Secretary

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**I. Call to Order**

**Action:** Chair Leland Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

**II. Oath of Office for New Members**

**Action:** The oath was administered for Mr. Lane Bennett, Gordon County representative, and Ms. Mary Ghorley, Pickens County representative. The members welcomed Mr. Bennett and Ms. Ghorley to the Governing Board.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

**Action:** The agenda was approved as presented upon unanimous vote of motion by Ms. Mary Ghorley and second by Treasurer Sherman Ross.

**IV. Executive Session**

**Action:** Upon unanimous vote of motion by Ms. Karen Sparks and second by Vice Chair Chris Mosley, the Governing Board moved into executive session to authorize negotiations to

purchase, dispose of, or lease property; to consult with legal counsel regarding pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions; and to discuss or deliberate on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of an employee.

**V. Reconvention of Regular Session**

The regular session convened with no motions from the prior session.

**VI. Appointment of Policy Review Workgroup**

Chair Leland Johnson informed the members that it was time for the policies and procedures to be reviewed. He asked for volunteers to be part of a workgroup to review the documents and bring their recommendations back to the full board. Melissa Stone, Executive Secretary, would send the policies and procedures to the workgroup. Chief Compliance Officer Stephanie Bishop would also be able to help with any questions. Mr. Lane Bennett, Ms. Mary Ghorley, and Ms. Karen Sparks volunteered to be on the workgroup. Mr. Johnson thanked them for their willingness to serve.

**VII. Consent Agenda Items**

Chair Leland Johnson directed the members to the items under the consent agenda. He read through them and asked for any discussion. There was no discussion.

**Action:** The following consent agenda items were unanimously accepted for approval and adoption.

- Governing Board Meeting Minutes for June 23, 2021
- Ratification of FY21 Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Contract #42700-610-SA-0000010176 - Amendment
- FY22 Intellectual Developmental Disabilities Contract #44100-261-9072022103
- FY22 GHVP Housing Support Services Contract #44100-026-0000167318
- FY22 System of Care Contract #44100-026-0000166451
- FY22 Consumer Support Contract #44100-907-0000153906 - Amendment #01
- FY22 Behavioral Health Assessment Contract #44100-906-0000167580
- FY22 Crisis Respite Apartments Contract #44100-026-0000169701
- Permanent Supportive Housing Contract #GA0062L4B012013
- Community Relations Report
- Highland Rivers Foundation Report

**VIII. Finance Report**

Treasurer Sherman Ross informed the members that the committee had a positive report. The cash on hand was currently 14 days and was improving. The final CARES Act funds had been pulled down in the last quarter. Highland Rivers Health had received over \$1 million in funds to help with the costs of COVID-19. There was a profit of \$1,381,053 for June 2021. FY21 ended with a profit of \$2,325,420. Chair Leland Johnson asked for a vote to accept the report from the committee.

**Action:** The committee report was accepted upon unanimous vote of motion by Treasurer Sherman Ross and second by Vice Chair Chris Mosley.

## **IX. Agency Scorecard**

Chief Operating Officer Dena Payne informed the members that the final scorecard for FY21 had been included in the packet for review. The packet also included the FY22 scorecard. She had been able to get the data for the month of July after the packet was published. She shared the updated information with the members. Her update included the following information.

- The average audit scores were positive.
- The financial metrics were all positive. The only exception was the days cash on hand. However, it was getting better.
- Turnover was higher than the goal. The pandemic was making it a challenge to recruit and retain staff.
- Overtime for FY21 had exceeded the goal by 1.9%. This was due to the number of vacant positions.
- New metrics had been added to track hiring practices.
- The annual training had been completed for FY21. She would update the information for the next meeting.
- The performance management report (PMR) score was the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities key performance indicators.

## **X. CEO Report**

Chief Executive Officer Melanie Dallas directed the members to the CEO report in the packet. She gave the following highlights from the report.

- The report included the FY21 system wide accomplishments. Each year the agency stopped to look at the amazing work and dedication of the staff. She had never been more proud of the team. She was in awe of the staff every day.
- FY21 was a better year financially.
- The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and representatives from the General Assembly attended a presentation and a tour of the Women's Outreach program. They were able to sit and have lunch with the individuals and talk about the program and hear from those in the program. A high level DBHDD team member even shared a personal recovery story.
- DBHDD has been working to get Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) funds to help with funding two more CSBs to start the steps towards the new model. They were looking at using block grant funds and COVID-19 funds.
- DBHDD Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald had attended a meeting and gave the three strategic drivers for the system going forward. These included the CCBHC initiative, implementation of the 9-8-8 number, and Department of Community Health (DCH) managed care procurement. The State of Georgia was ahead of the game on the 9-8-8 number. DCH was currently in the managed care procurement process. The prior Commissioner of DCH, Frank Berry, had retired and taken a position with Ernst & Young. There could be a lot of change coming with DCH.



- She had been working with Whitfield County Commissioner Jevin Jensen to get a representative for Whitfield. He had identified someone and Ms. Dallas would be working with him to get the individual on board.
- Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton closed their psychiatric unit and clinic. Ms. Dallas had attended a community meeting that included other community partners to discuss issues the closure had caused in the community. She would be part of a follow-up meeting and was hopeful she would be able to help find solutions.
- The Highland Rivers Foundation would be hosting a donor breakfast in the spring. There would be tables that would each have a table captain. The captain would be responsible for finding people to fill up their table. The people should be ones who might want to donate and would be moved by the Highland Rivers Health story. There would be coaching and training for the captains. The target would be funding for the Green Zone for veterans. She asked that any members who were interested contact her for more information.
- The 3rd Annual Operation Gratitude would be held on September 21st at 7 p.m. The team was asking for short thank you videos to be included in a montage that would be shown at the end of the event. Chief Operating Officer Dena Payne would be the MC for the event. She had served in the Navy.

#### **XI. Compliance Committee Report**

Secretary Steve Grimsley informed the members that he had been asked by Committee Chair Larry Maxey to lead the meeting in his absence. It was a very positive meeting. The committee had reviewed several reports and updates. The most important point of discussion was the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) audit. The results were positive and the committee was happy with how staff had worked with Chief Compliance Officer Stephanie Bishop to make it a success. He asked Ms. Bishop to give a summary of the audit. She stated that Highland Rivers Health had received a three-year accreditation that would retro back to 2020 when the original audit should have happened. It had been delayed due to the public health state of emergency. The next audit would happen in September 2023. The most recent audit had been conducted digitally. There were a few items identified that needed correction. She would be submitting a quality improvement plan (QIP) to CARF. She stated that staff had worked very hard. She was really proud of them. Mr. Grimsley stated the committee thanked the staff for their hard work. It was amazing to get such few recommendations.

**Action:** The committee report was accepted upon unanimous vote of motion by Secretary Steve Grimsley and second by Ms. Karen Sparks.

#### **XII. Recognition of Visitors**

Chair Leland Johnson recognized visitor Mary Thelma Norris from Whitfield County.

#### **XIII. Public Comment**

Ms. Mary Thelma Norris, visitor from Whitfield County, stated that she appreciated the opportunity to attend the meeting. She wanted to learn more about Highland Rivers Health and what was happening with the agency. Chair Leland Johnson thanked Ms. Norris for her

attendance and public comment.

Chief Executive Officer Melanie Dallas presented Ms. Chantel Adams with an award for her outstanding service as the past Chair. She thanked Ms. Adams for her leadership and willingness to step back into the role when asked. Ms. Adams stated that she was honored to serve and enjoyed serving with the other members. She had learned a lot from everyone and from the experience. Chair Leland Johnson stated that the members wanted to take the opportunity to thank her.

**XIV. Adjournment**

**Action:** The meeting was adjourned upon unanimous vote of motion by Ms. Karen Sparks and second by Ms. Chantel Adams.

Leland Johnson                      10/27/21  
Chairperson                                      Date