

Alabama Department of Mental Health Board of Trustees Meeting

In-Person / Virtual

Friday, August 15, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Commissioner's Conference Room

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair, Donna Foster, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and introduced a new board member, Johnna Breland.

II. Roll Call – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell, Board Secretary

Trustees Present:

Vice Chair, Donna Foster

Secretary, Commissioner Kimberly Boswell

Dave White (Proxy for Governor Kay Ivey, Chair)

Rodney Barnes

Dr. Cynthia Bisbee

Johnna Breland

William "Pete" Cobb

Colin Harris

Judge Christopher Hughes

John Scherer

Trustees Absent:

(Proxy for Lt Governor Will Ainsworth)

(Proxy for Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter)

Judge Sherri Friday

Dr. Edward Hall

Leslie Sanders

Chief Charles Ward

Interested Parties Present:

Collier Tynes, Chief of Staff

Andrea Hutchings, Director of Legislative and Constituent Affairs

LaVonda Blair, Associate Commissioner for Administration

Malissa Valdes, Director of Public Information

Kathy Sawyer, Associate Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities

Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner for Mental Illness & Substance Use

Tommy Klinner, Chief Legal Counsel

Mary Ogden, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Boswell

Alander Rocher, reporter for The Alabama Reflector

III. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Vice Chair Donna Foster

There were no additions to the agenda. Rodney Barnes moved to accept the agenda as presented, Dave White seconded. Agenda accepted unanimously. (Attachment 1)

IV. Review of the May 16, 2025, BOT Minutes – Vice Chair Donna Foster

There were no corrections to the May 16, 2025, minutes. Rodney Barnes moved to accept as written, Dave White seconded. Agenda accepted unanimously. (Attachment 2)

V. **Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell**

Commissioner Boswell provided the new board members with a Board orientation, which included an overview of the mission and vision of ADMH (Attachment 3). After a discussion on jail-based competency, the Commissioner stated that we will have our staff reach out and investigate more jail-based competency/restoration options. In addition, she explained that we are creating a team to meet with the DD providers who handle our more challenging situations we currently have, such as the dually diagnosed, which includes the medically fragile. ADMH has held discussions about standing up an ICF in a small setting as most providers cannot address those with high medical needs. We do not have the ICF level of care for complex needs.

VI. **Divisional Reports**

A. **COS and Legislative/Constituent Affairs Report –Collier Tynes Dixon** (Attachment 4)

- Chief of Staff Tynes Dixon shared that we tracked 236 bills during the 2025 session, of which 81 were enacted, which is a 34% passage rate. She further explained that we are in the time of year where we are focusing on three (3) budgets at the same time: one closing out, one recently passed, and one to pass for next year.
- The 2026 Legislative Session starts January 13, 2026, and therefore planning efforts will begin earlier in the year.
- The VMHSC administered RFPs and gathered a great committee together to review submissions. The selection committee had four veterans, two veterans' family members, and one individual who oversees the operations and grants for a veteran's program. Our next VMHSC meeting is on Thursday, August 28, 2025, virtually.
- Senator Albritton has called for Summer Budget Hearings with certain state agencies and the House and Senate General Fund Committees. The purpose of the hearings will be to review whether the One Big Beautiful Bill and other federal changes have impacted agencies budgets. ADMH Commissioner Boswell will have her presentation on August 26, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

B. **Division of MHSU –Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner** (Attachment 5)

ADMH/MHSU will be participating with the Substance Use/Alcohol Policy Academy (12 months) being held through SAMHSA. We are partnering with ADPH, the March of Dimes, VitAL (UA), Alabama Perinatal Quality Collaborative, the Nurse Family Partnership, and peer doulas (women in recovery themselves). Our goals are, 1) to increase prevention efforts and educate about fetal alcohol syndrome and the stigma that goes along with it, 2) to reduce the prevalence of fetal alcohol syndrome, and 3) to reduce the impact on individuals and their families. An explanation was given about what the educational side looks like and how it will make a great difference in the long run.

C. **Division of Developmental Disabilities – Kathy Sawyer, Associate Commissioner** (Attachment 6)

- The waiting lists were explained to the board. A large portion of the waiting list are those with complex needs (dually diagnosed). The goal of the Community Waiver Program, or CWP, was to keep individuals in their own home without a heavy reliance on institutions. With the 1115 Waiver, costs cannot be at or exceed the cost of an institution.
- We make sure that our providers are compliant with requirements by auditing to hold them accountable for the level of care.
- We are continuing to collaborate with DHR to serve children with behavioral needs. There are significant challenges to this work that all states are facing.

Discussion was held on the need for ICF beds to help kids with behavioral needs. We are looking into ways to intervene earlier. We have held conversations regarding mobile crisis teams for kids, and having foster families engaged in juvenile court. We are also working in schools to reach the kids who need services most, doing everything we can to imbed trauma responsiveness to everyone who touches a child.

D. Division of Administration – LaVonda Blair, Associate Commissioner (Attachment 7)

- The Office Certification Administration will be implementing an Alabama Certification Program (ACAP) later this month, an electronic system for processing certification applications with an automated database, which replaces the manual process. We will demo the actual system in a future meeting.
- Human Resources is updating the automated Exempt application process, which is one of two ways our Human Resource system operates (Exempt and Merit). We are enhancing that now and it will be more efficient and consistent.

E. Office of Public Information – Malissa Valdes, Public Information Officer (Attachment 8)

- Upcoming ADMH events include Overdose Awareness Day-9/29, Suicide Prevention Month (September), Recovery Month (September), and DSP Recognition Week (9/7-9/13, a DD-centered event).
- ADMH is working with the Alabama Association of Recovery Residents to promote access to care and hand out NARCAN at colleges and in public spaces, and working with ROSS on Boots on the Ground, to promote access to care and trauma care.
- License plates sales have been increasing.

F. Board/Stakeholder Discussion

No reports.

VII. Other Business

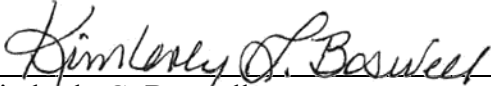
Dave White spoke on Rural Health Transformation, which is included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, HR 1. Mr. White has requested information

VIII. Next Meeting - November 21, 2025. All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

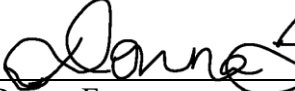
Respectfully Submitted:



Kimberly G. Boswell
Secretary of the Board and Commissioner

11/21/25

Date



Donna Foster
Vice Chair of the Board

11/21/25

Date