
State of California

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION**

Minutes of Teleconference Meeting
February 17, 2021

MHSOAC
1325 J Street, Suite 1700
Sacramento, CA 95814

974-7226-0775; Code 513141

Lynne Ashbeck
Chair
Mara Madrigal-Weiss
Vice Chair
Toby Ewing, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Members Participating:

Lynne Ashbeck, Chair
Mayra Alvarez
Ken Berrick
Sheriff Bill Brown
Keyondria Bunch, Ph.D.

Itai Danovitch, M.D.
David Gordon
Gladys Mitchell
Khatera Tamplen
Tina Wooton

Members Absent:

Mara Madrigal-Weiss, Vice Chair
John Boyd, Psy.D.
Assembly Member Wendy Carrillo

Staff Present:

Toby Ewing, Ph.D., Executive Director
Filomena Yeroshek, Chief Counsel
Norma Pate, Deputy Director, Program,
Legislation, and Administration

Brian Sala, Ph.D., Deputy Director,
Research and Chief Information Officer

CONVENE AND WELCOME

Chair Lynne Ashbeck called the teleconference meeting of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC or Commission) to order at 9:10 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

Commissioner Tamplen asked for a moment of silence in honor of Janet King, Native American Health Center, who recently passed away. On behalf of the Commission,

Chair Ashbeck shared memories of and gratitude for Janet King's work and accomplishments in the mental health field.

Chair Ashbeck reviewed the meeting protocols.

Announcements

Chair Ashbeck provided the announcements:

- The next MHSOAC meeting is scheduled for February 25th and will include a panel presentation on prevention and early intervention.
- Applications for members of the public to serve on the Client and Family Leadership Committee (CFLC) or Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee (CLCC) are posted on the website.
- The next CLCC meeting is scheduled for March 11th.
- The next CFLC is scheduled for March 18th.
- The March 25th Commission meeting will include an update on the Workplace Mental Health Project.
- The next Regional Listening Sessions for the Prevention and Early Intervention Subcommittee are scheduled for February 22nd, March 1st, March 3rd, and March 8th.
- The California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) has authorized that state offices reopen at 25 percent as of February 1st.
- New staff member Heather Barr, Triage Research Project Manager, joined the Commission staff since the last Commission meeting.

Roll Call

Filomena Yeroshek, Chief Counsel, called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Stuart Fiedler, Client Network, shared their experiences in trying to navigate the system.

Susan Gallagher, Executive Director, Cal Voices, agreed with public commenters in the Rules of Procedure Subcommittee meeting earlier today that the Commission should not only be listening to clients and stakeholders but should be acting accordingly. The speaker stated one of the things they kept hearing from staff and Commissioners is that the Commission cannot please everyone. Very rarely has the Commission changed action based on the public comment given. The speaker urged the Commission to listen to stakeholder feedback and to take it into consideration when making decisions.

Susan Gallagher stated the Rules of Procedure are being rushed through so the Executive Director can continue acting as he has without these rules. The speaker stated the Executive Director has already been doing these things without the revised

Rules of Procedure in place and without stakeholder input. In the meantime, programs that matter such as Ambassadors are being defunded. The Commission is getting into technology suites and Innovation incubators that clients do not care about.

Susan Gallagher encouraged the Commission to get back to the business it is commissioned to do – to respond to stakeholders, make a system that is recovery-oriented, and to listen to communities that matter.

Stacie Hiramoto, Director, Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition (REMHDCO), thanked Commissioner Tamplen for asking for a moment of silence in honor of Janet King.

Stacie Hiramoto stated the hope that there will be consideration for allowing members of the CLCC from last year to be reappointed since there was only one meeting last year.

Stacie Hiramoto thanked Chair Ashbeck for facilitating the difficult Rules of Procedure Subcommittee meeting earlier today. The speaker stated they wished more Commissioners were in attendance.

Poshi Walker, LGBTQ Program Director, Cal Voices, and Co-Director, #Out4MentalHealth, thanked the Commission for taking a moment of silence to honor Janet King. The speaker stated may her memory be a blessing.

Poshi Walker echoed the previous speakers. The speaker stated stakeholders' restricted ability to speak with staff, Commissioners, guests of the Commission, and each other due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult. The speaker asked for a way that stakeholders can exchange contact information during Zoom meetings.

Elizabeth Oseguera, Senior Policy Analyst, California Primary Care Association, asked if the public will have an opportunity to learn about the feedback received in the Regional Listening Sessions and how that has influenced the priority setting for prevention and early intervention services as directed in Senate Bill (SB) 1004.

Chair Ashbeck asked staff to follow up with Elizabeth Oseguera offline to answer these questions.

Vernon Price stated they will email a document to the Commission and representatives of different branches of nonprofit organizations called "The Five Faces of Oppression." The speaker stated one of the types of oppression is powerlessness. The speaker discussed the culture of silence and asked how individuals can be effective advocates and activists with lived experience with a needed voice in the community when they feel that they are powerless and that their voices are being circumvented.

Lorraine Zeller, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Steering Committee, County of Santa Clara; Coordinator, Community Living Coalition, stated the importance of committee participation in supporting the Commission to do its work. The speaker urged the Commission to act on Cal Voices' suggestion expressed in their letter of February 11th to create an Innovations Committee to review Innovation plans and a Community Planning Committee to develop a model community planning process, which can help define what meaningful stakeholder participation looks like.

Commissioner Berrick stated his understanding of the problems with the chat feature as it relates to public comment. He stated another Board he serves on assigns email addresses so Board members can easily receive correspondence. He stated he has benefited from conversations he has had with advocates at past in-person meetings to better understand issues and that have affected his decision-making. He suggested receiving communications from the public as individual Commission members.

Chair Ashbeck agreed with Commissioners being available to the public. She stated the chat feature is not possible during Zoom meetings because it does not equitably engage participants who do not access through Zoom.

Commissioner Berrick asked the Commission to move Item 3 up in the agenda in consideration for individuals who participated in the Rules of Procedure Subcommittee meeting prior to this meeting.

Chair Ashbeck stated Item 2 includes presentations from elected officials and cannot be moved.

INFORMATION

1: Budget Overview

Presenter:

- Norma Pate, Deputy Director

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will be presented with an update of the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, and a mid-year update of the Commission's current year budget. She asked staff to present this agenda item.

Norma Pate, Deputy Director, reviewed the Highlights of the Governor's Proposed Budget for 2021-22 document, which was included in the meeting handouts, and provided an overview, with a slide presentation, of the Commission budget as of February 3, 2021. She noted that a column has been added to the Commission's Three-Year Comparison of Expenditures to show the actual expenditures for prior years.

Commissioner Questions and Discussion

Commissioner Danovitch asked why funds had not been allocated for research and communications for the coming year.

Deputy Director Pate stated the research and communications allocation will be included in her July budget report after the Governor's May Revise.

Commissioner Berrick suggested adding a column to Chart 1 of the budget showing outyears that have already been committed for comparison.

Public Comment

Mandy Taylor, Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator, California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network, asked for an update on the \$2 million COVID-19-related funding allocation.

Deputy Director Pate stated an expenditure plan for the COVID-19 funding allocation was presented at the last meeting. She stated the program is being modeled after the existing Solano County Innovation Project to address racial disparities. More information will be provided at a future meeting.

ACTION

2: Legislative Priorities

Presenters:

- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Estefani Avila, Legislative Aide, Assembly Member Wendy Carrillo
- Toby Ewing, Executive Director

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will consider legislative and budget priorities related to Commission initiatives, including Senate Bills 14 and 224 (Portantino) and Assembly Bill 573 (Carrillo), for the current legislative session. She asked Senator Portantino to present his bills.

Senator Anthony Portantino provided an overview of SB 224, which underscores the need for mental health education. He stated there is a tremendous stigma associated with mental health, which often causes individuals to ignore, dismiss, or rationalize a child's true need for help. Mental health education is one of the best ways to increase awareness and empower young people to seek help while reducing the stigma associated with mental health challenges.

Senator Portantino stated SB 224 proposes to ensure that students between grades one and twelve receive mental health education from a qualified instructor at least once during elementary school, once during middle school, and once during high school. He asked for the Commission's support for SB 224.

Senator Portantino provided an overview of SB 14, which is about school employee and pupil training in pupil health and is a companion bill to SB 224. He stated teacher training is not a new topic but what is not known is the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and teachers. COVID-19 has increased the feelings of isolation and loneliness and has exacerbated the youth mental health crisis. He stated the need for as many allies and as much discussion as possible on this issue.

Senator Portantino suggested a braided funding and strategic partnership as is listed in the Commission's strategic plan. He stated the need to ensure that members of schools and communities are equipped with skills and knowledge to recognize and respond to

signs of mental health and substance use challenges. He asked for the Commission's support for SB 14.

Chair Ashbeck asked the representative from Assembly Member Carrillo's office to present AB 573.

Estefani Avila, Legislative Aide, Assembly Member Wendy Carrillo's office, provided an overview of AB 573, which is about establishing youth mental health boards and continues the Commission's work on schools and mental health. She stated the bill seeks to support youth leadership, particularly in times of increased mental stress and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Avila stated this bill seeks to require each community mental health service to have a local youth advisory board and to simultaneously provide young people with a platform to better advocate for effective and quality mental health programs. She asked for the Commission's support for AB 573.

Commissioner Questions and Discussion

Commissioner Bunch asked what the SB 224 mental health curriculum will look like and who would be initiating it.

Senator Portantino stated it would go through the normal curriculum process for the state.

Commissioner Bunch stated the need to ensure that the curriculum process includes an emphasis on multiculturalism.

Commissioner Alvarez asked why schools are such a critical partner in ensuring that young people are receiving the mental health services and supports that they need during this time.

Senator Portantino stated the time young people spend in school is a significant part of their lives and not every influence that a child has at school is a productive one. He stated these bills seek to ensure that prudently productive influences and learning about and destigmatizing mental health are injected into the school experience and that teachers and school staff have access to training to recognize warning signs and to provide a nurturing environment for students.

Commissioner Tamplen stated the Youth Innovation Planning Committee prioritized Senator Portantino's bills last year focusing on mental health in the school setting. She stated the youth would be thrilled to work with Senator Portantino's office on this.

Commissioner Tamplen stated appreciation for including the peer support piece at the schools. She stated this will be a powerful resource for students to have access to. She stated the hope that the mental health principles discussed in the bills will focus on the resiliency of the youth and the strength that they bring.

Commissioner Gordon stated his appreciation for Senator Portantino's dedication to ensuring that schools become centers of wellness.

Commissioner Gordon stated his appreciation for Assembly Member Carrillo's proposal on youth. He stated Sacramento County is just beginning a youth committee that

reports to the board of supervisors. He noted that the input received from the young people is extraordinary. Commissioner Wooton asked if Senator Portantino will be including the suicide prevention information developed by the Commission in his bills or in the curriculum.

Senator Portantino stated it has not expressly been defined in the legislation as the bill will not create the curriculum, but suicide prevention should be a large piece of mental health curriculum.

Public Comment

Daniel Offer, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) California, spoke in support of SB 224 and stated NAMI California is ready to work with the Commission on implementation of this bill. The speaker encouraged the Commission to support SB 224.

Isabella Valentine, Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Action Team Member, and part of the Youth Empowerment Network, advocated for mental health education in elementary, middle, and high school. She spoke in support of SB 224.

Adrienne Shilton, Senior Policy Advocate, California Alliance of Child and Family Services, spoke in support of SB 224.

Christine Frey, Founder, Youth Mental Health Project and Community, Brain XP, representing the youth voice on several councils, including the California Behavioral Health Planning Council, spoke in support of SB 224.

Mandy Taylor spoke in support of SB 224 and SB 14. The speaker stated the hope that federal funding will be sought to help fund the implementation of these bills. The speaker stated the need for more information on how AB 573 plans to nest the youth boards both at the state and local levels within the requirements that are written into the MHSA. Also, the state is required to pay for anything it requires and may run into challenges in implementing anything that will cost money for state and local governments.

Stuart Fiedler stated one of the root causes of mental illness is bullying. He suggested as a deterrent holding parents accountable for their children who bully others and financially responsible for damages.

Marisol Beas, Project Coordinator, Mental Health America of California, spoke in support of SB 224.

Rachel Velcoff Hults, National Center for Youth Law, spoke in support of SB 224.

Lorne Wood, Board Member, California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN), spoke in support of SB 224.

Richard Gallo, consumer and advocate, spoke in support of the legislation.

Elia Gallardo, Director of Governmental Affairs, County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), spoke in support of SB 14.

Aracely Navarro, Children's Partnership, spoke in support of SB 224.

Herman DeBose, Ph.D., former member of the CLCC, spoke in support of SB 224 and SB 14. The speaker stated the hope that the curriculum deals with issues related to institutional racism and trauma. The speaker asked about the criteria for selecting the 15 members of the youth advisory panel to ensure representation of California's diverse population.

Xiayuan Zhang, Board Member, CAYEN, spoke in support of SB 224.

Mariel Mastrili, CAYEN, spoke in support of SB 224.

Susan Gallagher stated it was unkind to stop Stuart Fiedler's comments since many commenters talked about things that were not exactly related to the bills.

Susan Gallagher stated the California State Auditor's Report about the local educational agencies and the lack of mental health services points to the fact that there is no infrastructure to provide those services. The mandate is on the education department to provide those services.

Susan Gallagher stated, since moving the requirement to provide those services through mental health back into the education system, the rates of individual education plans (IEPs) have substantially gone down. These are things that need to tie into this legislation. Individuals can be educated about mental health needs but, if there are no services or not enough services to connect people to, it can be harmful. The speaker stated, although they support these bills, the infrastructure needs to be in place before implementing the legislation.

Action: Commissioner Danovitch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Berrick, that:

- *The MHSOAC supports and/or cosponsors Senate Bill 14, Senate Bill 224, and Assembly Bill 573 depending on the authors' needs and staff capacity.*

Motion carried 10 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Alvarez, Berrick, Brown, Bunch, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, Tamplen, and Wooton, and Chair Ashbeck.

10 MINUTE BREAK

ACTION

3: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

Presenter:

- Filomena Yeroshek, Chief Counsel

Chair Ashbeck stated the Commission will consider adopting amendments to its Rules of Procedure. She summarized the background of the amendments to the Rules of Procedure. She stated staff undertook the update and revision of these rules largely to bring some of them up to day, to reflect the Commission's practice, and to more clearly

define terms such as “quorum” and “attendance.” These are issues that came out of the strategic plan.

Chair Ashbeck stated, based on comments received in this morning’s Rules of Procedure Subcommittee meeting there is concern about the proposed changes regarding outreach, engagement, and committees and the authority of the Executive Director to spend independently of public action. She suggested approving the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure with the exception of the two areas of concern. She suggested creating a Subcommittee to work with staff on those two areas of concern.

Filomena Yeroshek, Chief Counsel, stated many changes were made to the Rules of Procedure to address the public comments and concerns received since January of 2020. She stated, as per Chair Ashbeck’s proposal, today’s proposed motion would be to approve the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure with the exception of the two areas requiring additional discussion. Thus, the current composition of the Committees would stay at two consumers, two family members or care givers, and two representatives of unserved and underserved communities, and the current contract authority at \$100,000 for contracts and \$200,000 or less or interagency agreements would remain.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Berrick moved to approve the proposed noncontroversial amendments to the Rules of Procedure.

Commissioner Danovitch seconded.

Commissioner Alvarez asked staff about the number and types of Commission contracts above \$200,000 to better understand the number and types of contracts that go through a more transparent process.

Commissioner Alvarez stated the need to ensure that the contracts made through delegated authority remain consist with the Commission’s strategic plan, projects, priorities, and processes, and reminded everyone that those priorities and processes have been agreed upon in principle by the Commission and informed with stakeholder input. She asked staff to provide information that can demonstrate this based on past contracts to help inform the discussion on the areas of concern.

Chief Counsel Yeroshek stated a rudimentary list of all current contracts dating back to fiscal year 2018-19 have recently been posted on the website and includes the contract number, the name of the contractor, the dollar amount, and a brief summary of the work. She stated the goal is to make the list more dynamic, similar to the Fiscal Transparency Tool, with search capabilities, links that can be clicked to download documents, etc.

Public Comment

Susan Gallagher stated stakeholders are in consensus; it is the Commission that does not agree. The speaker provided an example of an approved Innovation project that is being used as a glorified emergency department, where the Commission and

stakeholders were unaware of this when it was approved. The speaker stated more scrutiny is required for Innovation projects because these kinds of things tend to happen. This is an example of why the process of approving Innovation projects should not be marginalized and why public input cannot be limited on these projects. Things tend to get pushed through public processes. This kind of accountability is essential. Advocates are forced to dig for public records due to the lack of transparency.

Susan Gallagher provided another example of the social finance contract that the Executive Director approved. The speaker stated appreciation that staff is putting the Commission contract information on the website. The speaker stated the need for increased transparency and contracts that are vetted through a public process. The speaker asked how the public can weigh in on where funding should go to best serve the community when contracts are chosen without a competitive bid and they are sole-sourced.

Herman DeBose referred to Rule 6.1, Structure, under Committees / Subcommittees / Other Multi-Member Bodies, and stated the concern that the proposed language changes the word "shall" to "may." The speaker stated the CLCC has not met on a consistent basis. The word "may" means that the Commission could decide it does not need input from the CLCC, while the word "shall" means it must occur.

Herman DeBose echoed the previous speaker about Innovation projects. The CLCC was not given an opportunity to look at and provide input on the Solano County Innovation project. Sixty percent of the population of the state of California is individuals of color; the Solano County project does not reflect that. The speaker stated changing the language from "shall" to "may" does a disservice to the majority of the population of the state of California.

Karen Vicari, Director of Policy, Cal Voices, stated Cal Voices is in support of postponing the vote on the two items of concern – the Committees and the delegated authority. The speaker asked the Commission to include Rule 2.6, Authority to Approve Innovation Projects, as an item to be discussed further. The rule change allows the Executive Director, working with the Chair, to approve an Innovation project as long as it has been approved in the past three years in another county. The speaker stated this goes against the purpose of Innovation to create new projects, against local control, and against the community planning process where a community is supposed to determine what their needs are. The speaker strongly requested adding Rule 2.6 to the amendment as something that will be further discussed in the Subcommittee and voted on at a later date.

Mandy Taylor asked Commissioner Berrick to amend his motion to include Rules 4.12, Voting, and 4.13, Public Comment, as items for further discussion in the Subcommittee.

Poshi Walker stated many Commissioners have the perception that this process has been great and that they have done their due diligence. She gave the analogy of a professor giving a test where most of the students failed. It is not the students who did not perceive the test properly; it is the fault of the creator of the test. While Commissioners and staff may have wonderful intentions about including public comment, all members of the public who provided public comment at the Rules of

Procedure Subcommittee meeting earlier today stated they did not feel good about this process. The speaker stated something is wrong and it may be that something is wrong with the test and not the test-takers.

Poshi Walker requested that Rule 4.13(C), addressing public comment, be included in the motion as an item for further discussion in the Subcommittee. The speaker stated concern about items that have been struck, such as the sentence “public comment and stakeholder involvement at the committee level does not replace public comment at the Commission meetings” and others about the Committee Chairs’ responsibilities to report back to the Commission. The speaker stated that sentence would not be struck unless it was meant to limit public comment. The speaker suggested moving this section to the Rules of Procedure dealing with Committees.

Stacie Hiramoto agreed that Rules 2.4 and 6.1 are controversial and require further discussion. The speaker spoke in support of Karen Vicari’s and Cal Voices’s requests to set aside Rule 2.6 and Mandy Taylor’s request to set aside Rule 4.13, particularly 4.13(B).

Elizabeth R. Stone, CFLC member, stated they disagreed with the way the Executive Director reframed the concerns about the Committees. Concerns are not just around the membership; it is also that the CFLC only met once or twice last year and is about the proposed “shall” versus “must” language in the Rules of Procedure. The speaker stated the need for regularity in Committee meetings with sustained, consistent input.

Laurel Benhamida, Ph.D., Muslim American Society – Social Services Foundation and REMHDCO Steering Committee, echoed the comments of the previous speakers, especially Stacie Hiramoto.

Elissa Feld, Senior Policy Analyst, CBHDA, stated the need to ensure that Rules 6.1(A) and (B) are set aside. The CBHDA has concerns that there is not guidance about when the added language to Rule 6.1(B) should be followed versus setting up a Committee. The speaker stated the term “multi-member body” does not have specifications about the use of consumers and stakeholders who are driving equity, which is important.

Eba Laye, President, Whole Systems Learning, echoed Stacie Hiramoto’s comments regarding Rule 4.13. Providing public comment before the Commission is of vital importance. The speaker encouraged the Commission to include Rule 4.13 in the motion as an item for further discussion in the Subcommittee.

Steve McNally, citizen and family member, stated the Commission is hearing from individuals who feel safe enough with this group to provide public opinion on a topic. The speaker stated the MHSA is simple on paper and yet very few individuals attend meetings or, even if they attend, very few individuals provide public comment out of fear of retribution from local agencies. The speaker stated advocates need to understand what the Commissioners’ “why” is for being on this Commission, what drives Commissioners, and what they are trying to accomplish. The speaker stated Commissioners could help stakeholders organize locally.

Vernon Price agreed with previous speakers to set aside additional rules for further discussion in the Subcommittee.

Andrea Crook, Advocacy Director, ACCESS California, stated the overall consensus among stakeholders is to leave the Rules of Procedure as they are. The speaker stated the need to pause to ensure everyone is working together. The speaker encouraged the Commission to take no vote today and to strive for consensus with community stakeholders.

Commissioner Discussion

Commissioner Bunch asked for the exact language of the motion on the table.

Chief Counsel Yeroshek stated the motion is to approve the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure except the increase in the delegated authority for contracts in Rule 2.4 and the changes to the Committee membership composition in Rule 6.1.

Executive Director Ewing stated staff is working to provide email addresses for all Commissioners to strengthen communication. They should become available next week.

Executive Director Ewing stated the Commission is committed to the kinds of transparency issues that stakeholders are asking about. Commission contracts will be posted online so individuals can review them over time. He stated the goal is to have an active link to each contract so individuals can sort through when contracts were agendized or approved through delegated authority and the number of contracts that are ministerial types of contracts such as the contract with the paper shredder versus contracts of concern to stakeholders.

Executive Director Ewing stated not all concerns raised today will be addressed through the Rules of Procedure, such as concerns about the consistency of county Innovation plans and how they are operationalized with what was proposed. He stated this is difficult, in part because of the time that the Commission has to dedicate to this work. He stated the Commission wants to create opportunities for better communication, clarity on the work that the Commission is doing, and the outcomes and impacts of the Commission's work and decisions.

Executive Director Ewing stated the kind of listening to stakeholders that Commissioner Gordon championed through the Schools and Mental Health work all the way through legislative and budgeting priorities happening in the Legislature today is an example of why Commissioners join the Commission. The Commission is trying its best to streamline the process to best value Commissioner time and energies in these meetings with community input and guidance.

Executive Director Ewing stated one of the things that he and staff are taking away from the discussions today is that staff must do a better job of communicating on all the community engagement that is happening. He spoke in support of continuing to dialogue if the Rules of Procedure are not yet right.

Commissioner Berrick stated appreciation for the concerns raised and for requests to set this entire agenda item aside but stated there have been substantive comments made in the past about noncontroversial areas in the Rules of Procedure. He stated Chair Ashbeck's proposal allows the Commission to move forward and still allows for further dialogue on areas of concern.

Commissioner Danovitch agreed. He stated he heard a theme and sharp critiques of the Executive Director and the Commission of distrust and lack of confidence. It is incumbent upon the Commission to communicate more clearly on Commission activities.

Commissioner Danovitch stated the Executive Director has performed his job incredibly well and consistent with the strategies the Commission has set forth as transparently as possible through strategic planning meetings and other meetings within the Commission. He stated he has a lot of confidence in the Executive Director's intelligence and the coherent effectiveness with which Executive Director Ewing has been pursuing both the Commission's short- and long-range goals.

Commissioner Danovitch testified to the depth and sincerity of the Executive Director's personal passionate commitment to the Commission's values, including listening openly to all voices and listening to the critique, even when it is difficult to hear.

Commissioner Berrick strongly agreed and stated appreciation of the forum for continued input. He suggested that county Innovation project processes be included for discussion in that forum.

Commissioner Brown echoed the comments of Commissioners Berrick and Danovitch. He stated this is about balance – balance between the work of government and the input of the community. It is not unlike what happens at city council meetings, the Legislature, and anywhere else in society where there is a task of conducting business and listening to input. The Commission needs to be respectful and needs to listen but it also needs to understand that the balance is boiling down to public comment, in this case, and agenda and time management in terms of the Commission.

Commissioner Brown reminded everyone that the Commission is comprised of volunteers, almost all of whom have other full-time jobs, which are demanding. Time must be balanced as well in terms of what Commissioners can do. The attempts at modifying how the Commission does its business have been made in good faith and in the best interest of time to balance and achieve the best possible outcomes with the limited amount of time available and the large number of topics and tasks the Commission is charged with.

Commissioner Brown reminded everyone that Commissioners are here because they share a passion with stakeholders and advocates for helping individuals with mental illness. Commissioners are working to do the best that is possible and are listening to stakeholders. He stated there is a diversity of opinion and thought from individuals who provide input both inside and outside of these meetings. No one likes the present situation of being unable to meet in person and interact together, but the Commission is doing the best it can.

Commissioner Brown also reminded everyone that Commissioners have a professional staff of individuals led by the Executive Director to assist Commissioners in making these decisions. The Executive Director and his team are talented, competent, caring, and professional. They act in the best interests of this cause as well. They do the best they can in providing Commissioners with recommendations. Commissioners do the best they can in supporting, modifying, or opposing those recommendations.

Commissioner Brown stated the reality is everyone is on the same page. This needs to be recognized, but there must be a compromise over limitless input and limitless amounts of time to spend on these subjects.

Commissioner Brown emphasized that the Commission listens to stakeholders and values and encourages stakeholders to take advantage of and to come and provide public input.

Commissioner Gordon underscored the last few comments and recognized the balance mentioned by Commissioner Brown. He stated the Commission has made great strides in a number of areas – most recently, criminal justice and education. There always is a balance listening to stakeholders. He stated he appreciates hearing from stakeholders and, at the same time, he stated he appreciates the nimble and thoughtful leadership of the Executive Director and the team he has assembled.

Commissioner Gordon stated the Executive Director is here for exactly the right reasons – he is here to move the cause forward and to move the work forward. The struggle for the Commission to hear the best it can and also to move the agenda the best it can will never be eliminated. He stated he agreed with the revised motion.

Action: Commissioner Berrick made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Danovitch, that:

- *The Commission approves the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure except the increase in the delegated authority for contracts in Rule 2.4 and the changes to the committee membership composition in Rule 6.1.*

Motion carried 9 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Alvarez, Berrick, Brown, Bunch, Danovitch, Gordon, Mitchell, and Tamplen, and Chair Ashbeck.

The following Commissioner abstained: Commissioner Wooton.

INFORMATION

4: Staff Report

Presenters:

- Toby Ewing, Ph.D., Executive Director
- Dawnté Early, Ph.D., Chief of Research and Evaluation

Chair Ashbeck tabled this agenda item to the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Chair Ashbeck thanked participants who joined the 8:00 a.m. meeting and everyone who joined the 9:00 a.m. meeting.

MHSOAC Teleconference Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2021

Page 15

Chair Ashbeck asked everyone to leave the meeting in remembrance of Janet King. She shared the sentiment given by Poshi Walker for Janet King: may her memory be a blessing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:22 p.m.