

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 24, 2009
1:32 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stoltze called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Hawker, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Thomas, Jr., Vice-Chair
Representative Allan Austerman
Representative Harry Crawford
Representative Anna Fairclough
Representative Les Gara
Representative Reggie Joule
Representative Mike Kelly
Representative Woodie Salmon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Richard Foster

ALSO PRESENT

Jeff Jessee, Chief Executive Officer, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Dr. William Doolittle, Fairbanks; Mr. Daniel Hoffman, Fairbanks; Paula Easley, Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Trustee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

SUMMARY

HR 6 Encouraging the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to develop its land and resources to the fullest extent possible consistent with its legal and moral responsibility to provide jobs and protect and enhance the lives of those who benefit from the mental health trust.

CSHR 6 (FIN) was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with a new zero fiscal note by the Legislature.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees Confirmations

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^Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees Confirmations: Dr. William Doolittle, Daniel Hoffman, and Mary Jane Michael

DR. WILLIAM DOOLITTLE, FAIRBANKS, testified via teleconference. He related that he has been on the Mental Health Trust Board for five years. He said he was impressed by the challenges and responsibilities of the board. He noted that he was "addicted to the concept of beneficiaries first".

Co-Chair Stoltze expressed gratitude that Dr. Doolittle was willing to serve on the board.

Representative Fairclough asked what the geographical composite of the board was. Dr. Doolittle replied that one member is in Juneau and, upon confirmation, there will be two in Fairbanks. The rest are from Anchorage.

Representative Fairclough asked if there was a fair representation across the board of mental health sectors. Dr. Doolittle said he was impressed by the broad scope of the trustees when contemplating rural, urban, and beneficiary-dominant activities. He spoke highly of the board's emphasis on beneficiaries first, and the development of a mental health network in rural Alaska.

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Representative Fairclough was impressed by the representation of a law enforcement perspective on the board. She requested more information about other perspectives represented by board members. Dr. Doolittle reported that there is a realtor, a social services worker, and the person from Juneau has had broad experience with hospitals and commissions.

Co-Chair Stoltze noted that Ms. Michael, the third candidate, is not able to call into the meeting.

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Representative Fairclough asked if anyone represented a community of 5,000 or under. Dr. Doolittle said no.

Representative Austerman asked if Dr. Doolittle has served on the board of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority because his resume does not list it. Dr. Doolittle reported that he has been on the board for five years. The resume is out of date.

Representative Kelly voiced appreciation for Dr. Doolittle's service.

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MR. DANIEL HOFFMAN, FAIRBANKS testified via teleconference. He related his 20-year work history in law enforcement in Fairbanks. He noted his vast experience and with local mental health populations. He spoke of the challenges with segments of the mentally ill and chronic inebriant population. He spoke of work on his master's degree dealing with the chronic inebriant issue. He stressed the importance of having a law enforcement perspective on the board.

Co-Chair Stoltze asked Mr. Hoffman if he has had any personal connection related to his desire to serve on the board. Mr. Hoffman shared his 20-year experience in law enforcement dealing with beneficiary groups, especially the chronic inebriant.

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Representative Fairclough thanked Mr. Hoffman for his years of public service. She wondered if he would have the time to fully participate on the board. Mr. Hoffman replied that he is retiring from his job as police chief soon and will no longer be involved in related organizations.

Representative Kelly spoke of his personal knowledge of Mr. Hoffman's service in the Fairbanks community.

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Representative Gara spoke of Mr. Hoffman's outstanding credentials. He asked if Mr. Hoffman was planning changes to the board because it has gone down the wrong road, or if he would be bringing a law enforcement perspective to the board. Mr. Hoffman said it was the latter.

Representative Gara asked Mr. Hoffman for his comments on the chronic inebriate population. Mr. Hoffman said he plans to be watchful to ensure that that group's needs are addressed. He emphasized that that group needs to be dealt with due to their huge impact on the quality of life in a community.

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Co-Chair Stoltze noted that the third candidate could not attend, but stated familiarity with Ms. Michael. He testified as to her excellent qualifications.

Co-Chair Hawker concurred with Co-Chair Stoltze's opinion of Ms. Michael. He spoke in favor of her as a candidate.

Representative Fairclough added comments in favor of Ms. Michael. She listed her qualifications: actively involved in the Office of Economic and Community Development in Anchorage, executive director of The Arc of Anchorage.

Co-Chair Stoltze spoke highly of Ms. Michael.

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Co-Chair Hawker took over the meeting.

#hr6

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

Encouraging the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to develop its land and resources to the fullest extent possible consistent with its legal and moral responsibility to provide jobs and protect and enhance the lives of those who benefit from the mental health trust.

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Co-Chair Stoltze MOVED to ADOPT the work draft for HR 6 labeled, 26-LS0572\E, Bullock, 2/23/09. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

Co-Chair Stoltze read the title of the resolution:

Encouraging the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to develop its land and resources to the fullest extent possible consistent with its legal and moral responsibility to advance mental health services and employment opportunities that protect and enhance the lives of those who benefit from the mental health trust.

He related the process of establishing the trust and the resources for the Mental Health Trust. He said he wanted to provide a strong voice for backing up the Trust when contentious situations arise. The Trust's highest responsibility is the beneficiaries. He thanked Mr. Jesse and Ms. Easley for their help in drafting the resolution. He pointed out the numerous sponsors of the resolution.

Co-Chair Hawker asked if the Committee had any questions.

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JEFF JESSEE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY, expressed appreciation on behalf of the Trust for this legislation.

Mr. Jessee described the Trust as a unique combination of missions and tools. He said it was an intersection of a very positive health and social service mission with economic development and a revenue generating mission. He spoke of the Trust's contribution to the state's economic activity. He noted that there are often opposition issues surrounding the development of the lands. He emphasized that the Trust attempts to develop resources with a mind towards community impact.

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Co-Chair Hawker asked if Mental Health Trust lands in the Nenana Basin would soon be explored for potential natural gas resources. Mr. Jessee said that was accurate. Near Livengood, there was also potentially very valuable gold exploration going on. Mr. Jessee reported that the Executive Director of the Trust Land Office, Harry Noah, has brought renewed enthusiasm and a long-term vision to the Authority. He is putting together a land exchange involving Southeast timber that could generate 30 million to 40 million board feet of timber.

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PAULA EASLEY, SECRETARY/TREASURER, BOARD OF TRUSTEE, ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY testified via teleconference. She spoke in support of the legislation. She related personal history with the Trust. She maintained that the Trust has been considerate regarding local needs when developing the lands. She stressed the importance of the legislation as an expression of support for the Trust's goals.

[2:06:50 PM](#)

Co-Chair Hawker noted a zero fiscal note.

Co-Chair Stoltze MOVED to REPORT CSHR 6 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSHR 6 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with a new zero fiscal note by the Legislation.

[2:08:30 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:08 PM.