

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 18, 2013

1:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bert Stedman, Chair
Senator Peter Micciche, Vice Chair
Senator Pete Kelly

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Johnny Ellis

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees

Russell Webb
Paula Easley

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

RUSSELL WEBB, Appointee
Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHTA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information related to his qualifications to be considered for the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees.

PAULA EASLEY, Appointee
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information related to her qualifications to be considered for the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:37:35 PM](#)

CHAIR BERT STEDMAN called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kelly and Micciche and Chair Stedman.

CONFIRMATION HEARING: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees

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CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the only order of business would be Confirmation Hearings for the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees.

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RUSSELL WEBB, Appointee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA), related that he has worked in government for about 35 years in the Departments of Health and Social Services and Corrections. Thirty of those years were in Alaska. He described his work history, including being a child protection social worker and an adult and juvenile probation officer. He said he also served as the Deputy Commissioner of Health and Social Services. He noted he has worked with AMHTA in various capacities, including as program officer, since its beginnings. He said he has worked directly with Trust beneficiaries providing services and in planning and management programs.

Mr. Webb said he has a personal interest in understanding the needs and issues faced by Trust beneficiaries, as the father of a child with developmental disabilities, as a family member of a person suffering with mental illness and alcoholism, and now, in assisting an elderly parent.

Mr. Webb shared that he has previously served on three of the four advisory boards that assist AMHTA, the executive branch, and the legislature in learning about issues faced by Trust beneficiaries. He said his service as an AMHTA trustee the last two years has helped him a great deal with the understanding of programs, services, and the budget, as well as the rules of the AMHTA.

Mr. Webb concluded that he wants to use his time in retirement to give back in some way to the state of Alaska in an area of personal knowledge. He said he is committed to helping the Trust develop its resources and to working with the executive branch and the legislature to target funds to best help beneficiaries.

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PAULA EASLEY, Appointee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA), noted her nomination is a reappointment to the Trust after having served for seven years. She spoke of her concern and dedication to improving behavioral health services in rural Alaska where she has lived since 1962. She said she is targeting the improvement of access in hub communities and delivery of programs to rural areas.

She noted as a member of AMHTA's Executive Committee and chair of the Planning Committee, she has done extensive research to find out which programs are working best, and has focused on how to improve delivery of those programs throughout the state. She stated that the planning process has resulted in a thorough examination of existing focus areas and she is currently looking at tapering down activities in focus areas and looking at new areas.

MS. EASLEY said resource development is a new area of interest. In order to help people in rural Alaska support themselves, new wealth must be created. She said Alaska does not receive much federal funding for resource development.

She highlighted a serious concern for AMHTA - the growing senior population and lack of affordable housing. She said lack of senior housing is a major focus for AMHTA.

CO-CHAIR MICCICHE moved to forward the governor's appointees to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees, Mr. Russell Webb, and Ms. Paula Easley, to a joint session of the legislature for consideration. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the names would be forwarded to the joint session of the legislature for consideration.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Stedman adjourned the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee at 1:49 p.m.