

Jan 5, 2026

Behavioral Health Advisory Council

Invited Anna Willtrout Ashton Bennion Joshua Barson jjeffries@bgcnu.org Jeni Buist Misty Hewitt Michael Crane (UDC) Renee Milne Alden Jack Danelle Wasden Jordan Mathis Holly Budge Estee Hunt

Attachments Behavioral Health Advisory Council

Meeting records Recording

Summary

Joshua Barson welcomed Jordan Mathis, Michael Crane, Jenny Buist, Misty Hewitt, Jeunelle Jeffries, Alden Jack, Renee Milne, Anna Willtrout, Danelle Wasden, Ashton Bennion, Holly Budge, and Joshua Barson, who was designated as secretary, and led introductions focused on individual expertise and the Behavioral Health Advisory Council (BHAC)'s role in advising counties on substance abuse and mental health services, including guiding a three-year area plan. The council reviewed and drafted bylaws covering membership, staggering four-year terms, limiting service to eight years, and an attendance policy suggesting removal for missing 50% of meetings in a year. Key decisions included that a representative selected by a majority vote of the BHAC should represent their advisement to the counties, a simple majority of members will constitute a quorum, and a functional statement regarding BHAC's advisory role, including conflict resolution on the three-year plan, will be included in the bylaws.

Details

Notes Length: Standard

- **Introduction and Meeting Agenda** Joshua Barson welcomed attendees, noting

that this was the first meeting with everyone together, including Jordan Mathis.

The agenda included introductions, a brief overview of the council's role, and the main objective of drafting bylaws.

- **Council Member Introductions** The council members introduced themselves, starting with Jordan Mathis, the director/health officer for the health department, who stated that their focus is on improving and maintaining health outcomes in the community. Michael Crane, working with the Department of Corrections, Adult Probation, and Parole, shared their interest in the overall picture of health outcomes for the people they work with. Misty Hewitt, from CAPSA, emphasized the importance of networking and bringing their expertise in domestic and sexual violence survivor outcomes and prevention to the discussions.
- **Continued Introductions and Expertise** Jenny Buist, Director of Special Education for Cache County School District, expressed their interest in advocating for continued support and health services for students and people with disabilities after they age out of programs. JuenElle Jeffries, who works in program development for Boys and Girls Club, stated their interest stems from the need for a holistic approach to health as a key to families, especially low-income working families, becoming self-sufficient. Alden Jack, Executive Director of Student Services for Cache County Schools, highlighted the importance of early intervention and school engagement as a reflection of community health.
- **Bridging Gaps and Advocacy** Renee Milne, overseeing student services at Bridgerland Technical College, noted the significant crossover among attendees' roles and expressed interest in learning how best to support students and staff, and to bridge existing gaps with their population. Anna, a disability advocate, stressed the importance of having individuals with lived experience and investment in the communities represented on the advisory board. Danelle Wasden, a high school and elementary counselor in Rich County, shared their investment in kids and community and their appreciation for Cache County resources.
- **Mental Health and Council Leadership** Ashton Bennion, a school social worker at Promontory School, emphasized the need to advocate for the mental health side of issues and provide resources for children. Holly Budge, Deputy Health Strategist, focused on collaboration and coordination, as behavioral health remains the number one health concern in their community. Josh Barson, Director of Behavioral Health Services for the health department, outlined their

division's role in carrying out mental health and substance abuse services for the three counties and was designated as the secretary for the council.

- **Role of the Behavioral Health Advisory Council (BHAC)** The BHAC is intended to advise the counties on substance abuse and mental health services, including guiding the creation and submission of a three-year area plan to the state of Utah. The counties—Cache, Box elder, and Rich—are the local mental health and substance abuse authorities. Holly Budge explained that the council members are voting members, and their votes lead to recommendations made to the counties. Jordan Mathis clarified that the plan goes to the board of health for review and a public hearing before being recommended to the counties for final approval.
- **Council Operations and Bylaws Discussion** The council will meet quarterly, with a future goal of establishing a regular meeting schedule. The main task for the meeting was to review the draft bylaws, which were initially created by adopting and modifying Salt Lake's bylaws. A point of discussion involved who should represent the council's advisement to the counties, with the option of the Director of Behavioral Health Services or a representative selected by a majority vote of the council. It was suggested that a representative selected by majority vote should represent the BHAC's advisement, which would occur at most once a year, related to the area plan.
- **Bylaws on Council Membership and Terms** The interlocal agreement currently sets the council membership at nine members. Although there is an opportunity to advise on increasing this number later, for now, the council will consist of nine members. Josh Barson, as secretary, is not a voting member. Regarding terms, the full length is four years, and the terms are staggered initially to prevent all members from rolling off at the same time. The council discussed limiting service to two full terms, or a total of eight years, to encourage new ideas.
- **Attendance, Removal, and Officer Selection** The council considered an attendance policy, moving away from a fixed number of unexcused absences toward a policy where members who miss 50% of meetings in a given year may be subject to removal. The removal process would involve the council recommending removal for cause to the counties by a majority vote. Conflicts of interest were discussed, noting that members of agencies funded by the health department should disclose any conflicts. The bylaws designate a chairperson and vice chairperson to be elected annually, likely at the next meeting, to ensure the health department does not exclusively run the board.

- **Committees and Meeting Notifications** Regarding the use of committees, the council debated language around whether the BHAC should "utilize" or "invite" individuals and community partners for consultation on various issues, settling on inviting them for understanding and reviewing. For meeting notifications, the group agreed that notice for members should be provided two weeks in advance, while public notice requirements will follow state code of 24 hours. The public hearing process will primarily be hosted by the Board of Health, with the option for the BHAC to offer public comment at their meetings.
- **Meeting Logistics and Public Notice** Josh Barson addressed the scheduling and notice requirements for the meetings, noting that public notice will be given at least 24 hours in advance. They were impressed with the attendance at the current meeting, particularly because it was the first Monday after a holiday. Virtual presence is allowed for meetings, and the bylaws clarify that in an emergency situation, a vote may be taken by phone or in writing, followed by confirmation and inclusion in subsequent minutes.
- **Quorum Definition and Voting** The discussion covered the definition of a quorum, with Joshua Barson noting that a quorum is established when the majority plus one appear properly called, or simply a majority of members. The group discussed whether to opt for a majority plus one or a simple majority, with the majority preferring a simple majority. They also clarified that members may be virtually present for a meeting. An item for consideration in the bylaws is that once an issue has been decided and described in the articles, it should not be reopened for reconsideration for at least six months unless a member who voted on the prevailing side of the issue moves for reconsideration.
- **Bylaws and Amendments** reviewed the process for making amendments to the bylaws, noting that the chairperson or vice chairperson may call special or emergency meetings and may make recommendations for amendments by majority vote. Amendments become effective upon approval by the counties. Amendments at other times are possible but discouraged, and written notice of any proposed amendment shall be given to each member prior to the meeting. Robert's Rules of Order shall apply in all situations not specifically covered by the bylaws.
- **Role of the Behavioral Health Advisory Council (BHAC)** The group discussed the Bear River Behavioral Health Advisory Council's role, including its potential acronym,

BHAC. A key discussion point was ensuring the counties understand that any changes to the area plan or bylaws should come back to the BHAC for review, though it was noted they cannot hold the counties to anything. The bylaws define "counties" collectively as Box Elder, Cache, and Rich. The BHAC's function is to advise, suggested to include a functional statement in the bylaws to help address disagreements between counties on a three-year plan. A proposed function stated that BHAC may advise under the direction of the counties as requested, including concerns regarding behavioral health services and the three-year plan.

- **Future Agenda and Meeting Schedule** Josh Barson confirmed that the bylaws will be cleaned up, including the addition of details about voting and the conflict resolution function, and sent out to members. The group will vote on the bylaws at the next meeting and begin discussing the area plan and the election of a chair and vice chair. The next meeting date was tentatively set for Monday, April 13th, at 4:30 PM, as Monday at that time generally works for members.

Suggested next steps

Josh Barson will send out the area plan links so the group can familiarize themselves with them and formulate ideas for recommendations for this year's plan.

Josh Barson will reformat the BHAC bylaws document for better presentation and establish the quarterly meeting schedule.

Josh Barson will edit the bylaws to (1) state the term length as four years, and (2) state that members can serve a total of two full terms or no more than eight years.

Josh Barson will work on creating a drive to share the interlocal agreement, the area plan, and the bylaws with the group.

Josh Barson will send out the cleaned-up bylaws with the added information for the group to review and vote on for approval by the counties at the next meeting.

Josh Barson will send out the minutes from the current meeting.