

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
FOR THE TRUST FUND FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Draft Minutes  
July 13, 2007  
Via Videoconference**

Legislative Building  
Room 3137  
401 S. Carson Street  
Carson City, NV

Grant Sawyer Building  
Room 4412  
555 E. Washington Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV

**TRUSTEES PRESENT :**

Robin Titus, MD  
Mary Anderson, MD, MPH  
David Lupan, PhD  
Jade Miller, DDS  
Terrence McGaw, MD  
Carol Sala  
Lawrence Sands, DO, MPH  
Tyree Carr, MD  
Sally Jost for Walt Rulffes  
Richard Whitley for Alex Haartz

**TRUSTEES ABSENT:**

Alex Haartz, MPH

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Cindy Pyzel, Attorney General's Office  
Karen Brumhall, Nevada Health Division  
Susen Speth-Briganti, Saint Mary's  
Marta Elliott, UNR  
Barbara Kohlenberg, UNSOM  
Kerry Seymour, UNCE  
Mark Hemmings, NV Health Centers

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Titus. Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. and a quorum was established.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of April 20, 2007**

**MOTION: Dr. Anderson moved to approve the minutes of April 20, 2007**

**SECOND: Dr. McGaw**

**PASSED: Unanimously**

**3. Financial Statement Report of Trust Fund for Public Health Investments**

Ms. Janice Wright, State Treasurer's Office, was not in attendance.

Dr. Titus suggested moving on and coming back to look at the numbers submitted later.

**4. Request for additional \$2,000 funding for new UNR project, *Near-Lethal Suicide Attempts: Analysis and Recommendations*, 7/1/07– 6/30/08**

Karen Brumhall stated, the letter from Dr. Marta Elliott asked for an additional \$2,000 for the UNR “Near-Lethal Suicide Attempts” grant.

Dr. Elliott explained that when the budget was submitted the investigators were unaware there was a \$2,000 fee required by Renown Medical Center for their review of the Human Subjects Protection protocol. Since other hospitals have not charged a review fee for previous research projects and the University does not charge a fee, the fee came as a surprise. Extra dollars had not been built into the budget to cover additional costs, hence the reason for the request.

Dr. McGaw noted that in one of the memos exemptions were mentioned and wanted to know if the project qualified for any of those exemptions.

Dr. Elliott answered, no and grants are expected to pay.

Dr. Titus asked if there was money in the budget for the \$2,000 request.

Ms. Brumhall replied the grant funding for 07-08 comes close to the bottom line but \$2,000 could be managed.

Dr. Titus asked if the Trust Fund had ever had a grantee request additional funds, and if this was a new precedent the Board should be sure it was something that could be lived with in the future.

Ms. Brumhall responded to her knowledge it had never happened before.

Dr. Titus stated, depending on the rest of the Board, she would be in favor of the request with the understanding that it was a one-time issue and that wouldn’t necessarily mean other applicants asking for additional funding could depend upon receiving them. It would depend on whether or not there were additional funds available.

Dr. Anderson suggested that in the next RFP some guidance be included about checking for hidden or unknown costs such as (Institutional Review Board) IRB fees so applicants are aware and this doesn’t happen again.

Dr. McGaw inquired if the additional funds are not awarded what would the plans be?

Dr. Elliott indicated Renown IRB would be informed the request was not awarded and see if the project could apply for a wavier.

Dr. Miller asked if within the funding already approved if there would be any possibility of using any of those funds to cover the fee or if there were other options.

Dr. Elliott indicated it might be possible to take the money out of the personnel category and underpay personnel to pay for the fee that way.

Dr. Lupan commented that UNR has an IRB that has to be passed and would Renown waive their IRB requirement in favor of the UNR IRB? Or, would they reduce the fee?

Dr. Elliott stated no. Both IRBs need to be submitted independently and the fee is required. Nothing was said about waiving the fee.

**MOTION: Dr. Miller moved the applicant be granted the \$2,000 with the provisions that were originally stated.**

**SECOND: Dr. McGaw**

**PASSED: Unanimously**

**5. Request from UNR, Cooperative Extension to modify the existing *Nutrition in the Garden* project budget, 10/1/06-9/30/07**

Ms. Brumhall reported a letter to the Board from UNR, Cooperative Extension concerning its present grant, requested a budget modification of a fund transfer from one category to another. Ms. Kerry Seymour could answer any questions.

Dr. Titus asked Ms. Seymour to give a little explanation of the need before taking questions.

Ms. Seymour summarized, the needs in the personnel category had changed over the course of the grant because a partial salary was absorbed by Cooperative Extension and a resignation created a three month vacancy in a position. Therefore approximately \$7,000 was available in the personnel category and which could be used in the operating/supplies category. That would allow the outdoor classroom in the garden project to expand - it would enable the purchase of additional educational materials for the students and the library of nutritional based garden information to be expanded.

Dr. Lupan inquired if the items were essential to the project why weren't they budgeted the first time around? Rather than reverting the extra funds back to the Trust Fund, this seems to be a case of finding ways to spend the extra monies. Some of these things may well be essential items, but I'm not convinced.

Ms. Seymour responded that as indicated in the letter, the bulk of the expenditures would go into the evaluation component. The project has a complex research component that looks at physical activity, changes pre and post, food intake analyses using a number of means. One is quite innovative involving labeling every single item in the school cafeteria that a child selects and then going back at the end of the lunch period and weighing and measuring food that was not consumed. It is analyzed for actual calorie and nutrient consumption pre and post. The nature and extent of the research component would be enhanced and simplified with the items purchased with those additional funds.

Dr. Lupan indicated that a Mettler scale and a battery power pac for the Mettler would not necessarily be considered evaluation tools, rather they are data collection tools. Also the \$2,500 worth of garden material and supplies was not an evaluation component but a part of the basic project. If these were essential to the project why weren't they identified as part of the essential materials?

Ms. Seymour replied that this is a pilot project and as it has progressed it has become apparent that what was in the initial proposal was based perhaps more on theory than on practice. With the opportunity to implement and conduct the program over the last school year there is a more realistic picture of what can be used in the project.

Dr. Lupan asked Ms. Brumhall if there was a mechanism for returning funds back to the Trust Fund.

Ms. Brumhall reported that whatever is not spent automatically rolls back to the Trust Fund at the end of the grant year. After all the requests for reimbursement have been paid, the

Treasurer's Office is notified of the amount that was granted at the beginning of the grant year and the amount of unexpended funds from the grants which will be rolling back.

Dr. Titus commented this is an issue she's observed with government agencies having monies left over at the end of a fiscal year and then rushing to use up the money so it doesn't get taken away from them. Instead of just not spending it, sometimes unwise choices are made in expenditures.

She too felt a sense of having monies left over and now looking where they might be spent. As a pilot project it might be better to see how it goes and then come back at a later date for more funds. I'm hesitant to just spend money because you happen to have it.

Dr. McGaw clarified, if this money weren't used it wouldn't materially change the grant, correct? This wouldn't impact in a negative fashion? It sounds like this would enhance your ability to do some of the evaluation, but it doesn't take away from the fact you could accomplish what you'd originally said you would.

Ms. Seymour said, right. There is the possibility that since the funding was originally for salaries it could be used in the salary capacity to hire additional evaluation personnel.

Dr. McGaw asked Ms. Brumhall if the change were not made the money stays in the grant? And, if other personnel issues arise there would be no problem or does it have to be reallocated?

Ms. Brumhall confirmed that if they so choose to make a hire before the end of the grant, the money is in the personnel category to do so. The timing of this grant is different because it doesn't until the end of September, so it's feasible for them to still hire.

**MOTION: Dr. Miller moved to deny the transfer of funds per the request.**

**SECOND: Dr. McGaw**

**PASSED: One abstention**

The chair voted in favor of the motion to deny the change of use of the monies and encourages the use of it as designated.

Ms. Seymour gave thanks to the Board for funding the pilot project since it had been a rich learning experience, a positive and worthwhile one, for both the faculty and the students involved.

Dr. Miller commented that the development of the Mariposa Village seemed like an exciting possibility for the project to be a part of.

Ms. Seymour confirmed they have wonderful community support in developing and expanding the garden as a learning center for Mariposa Academy.

**6. Request from the new UNR, *Nevada Pregnancy/Diabetes Research Study*, to modify the budget, 7/1/07-6/30/08**

Ms. Brumhall indicated a third letter, from a new University project, was asking for a budget modification of the salaries and fringe for the nurse educator and the case manager to be moved from the personnel category to the consultant/contract column for a total of \$57,150. The letter indicated \$45,000 be moved, but a last minute email asked also for the \$12,150 fringe to be added.

Ms. Brumhall reported that support staff for the University is hired through Med Associates, a part of the University but separated in some way. The issue is to be able to hire through Med Associates rather than to hire through the state system which is a more cumbersome process to find qualified people to fill positions. Perhaps Dr. Lupan could clarify the situation.

Dr. Lupan answered, Med Associates is the practice plan incorporated within the School of Medicine. It is not obligated to use the state of Nevada's classified employees' hiring system so the practice plan can hire at an accelerated pace and doesn't have to go through the search process as required of the University's employees or other state employees.

Dr. Titus requested a clarification so that policy wasn't being set. This is not a request for change of use for the funds because the funds would still be used for personnel; it is not a request for additional funds; it is simply a request to change the designation of the type of personnel that is being used and they're still the same people doing the same project?

Ms. Brumhall replied, exactly.

**MOTION: Dr. McGaw moved for approval.**

**SECOND: Dr. Miller**

**PASSED: Chair in favor, one abstention**

## **7. Discussion and recommendations for evaluation procedures, evaluation forms, and other pertinent issues concerning the evaluation process in selecting proposals for funding.**

Ms. Brumhall summarized several points which arose during the evaluation process for the 07-08 grant applications. Could language added to the RFP make evaluating easier such as restricting proposals for capital campaigns, or not funding established projects looking for another source of funding to just continue a program? Should proposals with collaborative pieces include letters of agreement showing support and willingness to participate?

Did the large number of proposals submitted last year and the differing quality make the current process unfair or unequal? Is another review needed after the three committees review and score proposals?

Could changing the evaluation form improve the process and the outcomes?

Dr. Miller suggested that after each subcommittee looked at its particular grant requests, getting together before the actual scoring to share information and determine which are the strongest proposals. That would make an additional meeting, but to be aware of the proposals from the other subcommittees would enhance our ability as a Board to evaluate and name the appropriate awards in the order we felt would be the best to fund.

Dr. Titus asked, so the suggestion is to hold an additional meeting, prior to the awarding of grants which would have to be a public meeting with all the public notification, etc., to review all of the grants? That's basically what we do now, but you're talking about one more step before awarding.

Dr. Miller answered yes, it's just a possible idea to try to make this a better process, but it may not be worthwhile.

Dr. Anderson asked is it possible to have a public meeting and exclude the people who have submitted applications?

Ms. Pyzel replied you can't exclude them. By constructing the agenda in terms of the comments you'll take can limit the amount of input people will have. You still have to pose public comments for any public meeting.

Dr. Lupan indicated that he would dislike the notion of rejecting proposals because of the quality of the writing. A comment was made that there were some very well written proposals that came from the School of Medicine and he would very much dislike endorsing a policy that said because you write well we wouldn't consider the proposal.

Continuing, Dr. Lupan remarked that Dr. Titus and other members of the Board, including himself, have always been proud of the ability to give money to projects in rural Nevada and other places that have come from individuals who are not pros but touch areas of health and medicine and care that would not normally be supported by any other agency. We need to keep that in mind and not disqualify proposals simply because they do not have the finesse that many professional writers do. We need to be sensitive to both ends of the scale. The proposals that are well written need to be recognized and endorsed and at the same time we need to recognize there are needs elsewhere for individuals and programs that need support and don't necessarily have the key skills that it takes for grant writing.

Ms. Brumhall replied the intention was not to misspeak but to mention some of the things that had come up during the evaluation sessions.

Dr. Lupan confirmed that this year more than any other in the past there was a clear demarcation in the quality of the proposals.

Dr. Anderson reflected what Dr. Lupan said was true and there was a very distinct cut point between the professionally presented proposals versus the less sophisticated presentations.

Dr. Titus commented that as a Board member since the Trust Fund's inception, the Board has been able to adjust to the differences in writers and can continue to adjust. The Board has worked hard to be thorough and unbiased and very open to applicants.

Perhaps by looking specifically at the evaluation form, subtle adjustments can be made to balance out how well a proposal is written with how good an idea or project it is that's being proposed. The room for improvement probably is in the evaluation form itself because the process of breaking into three subcommittees, reviewing by focus group, works well especially with the increasing amount of money to be awarded and the increasing number of grant applications.

We're all busy professionals, but we want to look at the proposals submitted to us and devote the time necessary to review them. We don't want to have to review all the proposals that are submitted, so this process of having a thorough look at a third of them works. We want to trust then that the evaluation sheet that's presented offsets some of the issues, and with the highs and lows in each group the averages will make for fairly common ground. Some of the new members perhaps are a little more generous and the seasoned members become a bit more objective about their evaluations and it all settles out.

Everybody should look at this evaluation form and come back with ideas on how to improve the form and solve some of the issues we had at the last grant awarding.

Dr. McGaw asked Ms. Brumhall if there had been recommendations or requests from grantees in the past that would help in terms of what they'd like to see.

Ms. Brumhall answered no, there's never been a recommendation to include this or that.

Dr. Lupan asked to bring something to the Board's attention that was unfair to two applicants who were not funded. In a kind of postmortem, looking at who wasn't funded and looking at the scores, the last project that was funded was tied with the two projects immediately following. This was brought to Ms. Brumhall's attention and what was the analysis?

Ms. Brumhall confirmed the last proposal funded had a score of 70.33, the next one had a 70 and the third scored 69.50. The scores were averages of the reviewer's numbers and that's just the way they fell. Even if we wanted to go back and award at this time, we wouldn't be able to because the awards made came almost to the bottom dollar available in this cycle.

Dr. Lupan commented it's too late to change what happened and it worked out mathematically, so it's defensible, but those projects were equally deserving. There's nothing we can do about it now but as we look forward to next year perhaps we should look not only at the top ten but also to the bottom two or three. You're right and I agree there are X number of dollars and we have to draw the line somewhere and the Board has to make the decision where that line is.

Ms. Brumhall said, it was just unfortunate this time.

Dr. Lupan agreed very unfortunate.

Dr. Anderson asked if it was possible to get forms from other organizations or agencies that do grant review so we might have samples to look at?

Dr. Titus remarked this was the form the Trust Fund started out with originally and she'd like to take a look at another form. We could see what kind of paperwork or evaluation process other grantors use.

Although this is a somewhat subjective process, we want to make sure it's a fair process and a consistent process. When we award these grants we want to be able to come back and say this is the process and this is how it happened.

Dr. Sands stated this was his first experience in doing evaluations for the Trust Fund and one of the things he'd recommend improving is the form. The categories are just fine but they need better definition of what is meant by each item. Perhaps we need statements or more descriptions of what we as a group define as being an adequate or reasonable proposal in each of these areas or what kinds of things we are considering or assessing.

The part Dr. Sands was most uncomfortable with was having questions on inconsistencies or concerns, with either the design of the project or their evaluation strategies or their budget or very technical questions, that depending on how they might respond back or how they might get resolved, might sway the decision on that project one way or the other. Usually there is a step in the process where questions may be addressed to work out a best and final with the project before giving the final decision.

Dr. Anderson commented about "Other Factors Deemed Relevant for Best Value for the State" section on the evaluation form as a particular challenge and how it should be interpreted. Could there be a definition as to what some of the other factors might be for most consistency in the evaluations?

Dr. Titus summarized the members desire to look at the TFPH evaluation form and other forms used by other granting entities to try to come up with some consensus. She asked the members to put suggestions in writing and then at the next meeting look at those ideas and any new forms.

Ms. Brumhall requested those suggestions be sent to her before the next meeting to be put in summary form.

### **8. Letter from Trust Funded grantee Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, 7/1/06-6/30/07, expressing disappointment on not being refunded.**

Ms. Brumhall reported the Tribe has concluded its grant with the Trust Fund but in light of their performance they were disappointed in not being able to continue the project.

Dr. McGaw remarked that one of the charges to the committee is to spur and support new and innovative programs but not necessarily to continue support. This allows the Trust Fund to expand its purview and entertain more applicants on a regular basis. It's wonderful it's a good program and hopefully it can be sustained but our response would have to include that the Trust Fund can not be a sustaining body and that's not the intent or the mission.

Dr. Titus also stated for the record, the last line of the letter hoped the Board recognized the Tribe can be successful and she'd like to acknowledge that it does recognize the program as being successful. However, the Board has to look at additional funding and programs at each cycle.

Dr. Lupan reiterated what Dr. McGaw said and added from the very first day the Board considers applications, the issue of sustaining funding and where the next round of resources for year two, year three and so on may come from is a factor. The submitting agency needs to have put some thought into this.

It's a disappointment they weren't funded again, but so too is it a disappointment for all the other applicants who were considered but not funded. As Dr. Titus said this was a successful program but we look at other programs and think they will also be successful. The Tribe is encouraged to resubmit an application in the next cycle as we encourage everyone who wasn't funded this time.

### **9. Staff report on TFPH activities**

Ms. Brumhall presented the Board with a list of projects which had received a site visit since the April Board meeting and comments about each project. The 06-07 projects ended on June 30<sup>th</sup> and final reports and reimbursements are to be completed by July 31. The indication is that there will be little roll-back money to the Fund this year. Some of the 07-08 projects are a little slow off the mark and for some it takes a while to get going.

Dr. Titus requested a return to the financial status report since Ms. Wright was not in attendance and it needed to be addressed before meeting end. Dr. Titus asked for an overview and wanted to know if there were funds to cover the \$2,000 request.

Ms. Brumhall reported the amount listed on the sheet from the Treasurer's Office as available for the 07-08 funding cycle was \$1,456,944. That was the basis for the granting of \$1,369,335 and added to that total will be administrative costs of \$96,825 budgeted for the year. Those two figures bring the total a little over the amount available but unexpended funds should cover that.

Dr. Titus responded that the \$1,456,994 reported by the Treasurer's Office as *Anticipated Total Unobligated Funds as of June 30, 2007* was not a correct statement because that money had been awarded so they were obligated.

Ms. Brumhall confirmed yes, it has been obligated as grants and admin expenses, and the approved \$2,000 would be added to the \$1,369,335.

Dr. Titus continued and asked, the figure for next year's *Estimated Interest Earnings* is \$1,407,246?

Ms. Brumhall confirmed yes.

Dr. Titus pointed out there will be less monies to spend next year than the Fund had this year, according to the report. Isn't the Fund fixed, with an additional 10% of the tobacco allotment added each year, so it should be increasing each year?

Ms. Brumhall answered yes but part of the monies has been held up because of litigation over the projected amounts owed to the states. It's the whole issue of fewer smokers producing less revenue. The \$1.4 million is just an estimate.

Dr. Anderson remarked it would be useful to have the total amount of money in the Fund and the percentage that's applied for the interest to see the total picture. The information on the Treasurer's report is too narrow a snapshot and it's hard to get a feel for a trend line.

Dr. Titus agreed with being dissatisfied with the report because it doesn't really give the information needed by the Board, especially saying funds are unobligated when in fact they are obligated. Also totals are inaccurate about anticipated interest monies for the next granting cycle because of the unobligated/obligated issue. The total for the possible second year of funding for this year's grants should be figured in too, because in good faith those monies have been awarded even though they weren't guaranteed and are dependent upon performance.

Ms. Brumhall said a meeting with Ms. Wright would be set up to talk about doing the financial report differently so the Board would have a better sense of what the Fund looked like at a particular time.

Dr. Miller expressed confusion over the financial reporting and the comments made about the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of funding saying doesn't that figure need to be deducted from the 08 unobligated funds thus making even less available to grant in the next cycle? That's important information the Board needs to have.

Ms. Brumhall said yes.

Dr. Lupan stated it seems important because that's a significant reduction in the unobligated funds for the next funding cycle that could potentially change the process from a two year back to a one year process. In the October meeting consideration of a process for assessment of the proposals for a second year award needs to be established. It's not automatic and instructions in the last RFP specifically said the second year of funding would be dependent upon evaluation and assessment of the project. Also will those second year applicants be evaluated with the new applications or will they be handled separately?

Dr. Titus agreed that's going to be a factor in the next RFP because the amount of available funding to be awarded is written in the text and decisions about who and how much will be awarded in the second year is crucial. Should the reapplicants be reviewed before the new ones to see how much money is going to be available? What's the process going to be?

## **10. Direction to Staff**

Dr. Titus directed staff to see about a different report from the Treasurer's Department and to work on the evaluation forms and process.

Dr. Titus also extended appreciation to Ms. Brumhall for her dedication and professionalism.

**11. Confirmation of next meeting date, time, location: October 12, 2007, 9:30 a.m., Legislative Building**

Dr. Anderson indicated there is a Nevada Public Health Foundation annual meeting on October 11 and 12.

Dr. Titus asked if October 5, 2007 would work instead. There was agreement for that date.

**12. Public Comment**

Susan Briganti from Saint Mary's suggested that grantees would appreciate being able to clarify or comment on their proposals before the granting meeting so that the evaluators would not misunderstand or misinterpret applications. The suggestion was also made to look at the Fund for Healthy Nevada's evaluation methods and forms for ideas.

The major reason for attending was to say thanks for funding a project at Saint Mary's that is really unique in the U.S. This is the WIC Program for pregnant moms where there is intervention with oral health services. When the preterm birth data, as a percentage of all births in Nevada, was looked at the rate was 13.5% and the low birth weight babies born in Nevada was 8%. With oral health the preterm births are 7.4% among the population being assisted and low birth weight is 4% rather than 8%. Addressing oral health early on is helping to improve the rates.

Dealing with a very high at-risk population and many women who may have never seen a dentist in their lives, this project is making a huge impact on pregnant moms, their unborn babies, their toddlers and extended families. Partnerships with 150 dentists and dental assistants providing cleanings, restorative care, dental and nutritional education makes this a phenomenal program and thank you for participating and being our partner.

Dr. Titus thanked Ms. Briganti for her comments.

**13. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.