

## MEETING OVERVIEW

The Jefferson County Behavioral Health Consortium meeting on December 12, 2024, focused on refining the **BHC's structure, voting processes, and role definitions**, as well as exploring **the relationship between the BHC and the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC)**. Members engaged in **a candid discussion about transparency, collaboration, and efficiency**, with strong perspectives on the best way to structure the consortium moving forward.

## Resource Documents

[12/12/24 Meeting Packet](#), [12/12/24 BHC Governance Meeting Video](#), [Meeting Discussion Guide](#), [Ratified Vision, Mission, Strategy Statements](#), and [Draft BHC Member Roles](#)

## Attendees

Rebecca Marriott, Therapeutic Court; Apple Martine, Director, JCPH; Greg Brotherton, Commissioner; Joe Nole, Sheriff; Jolene Kron, SBH-ASO; Patrick Johnson, NAMI; Tom Olson, Chief, PT Police; Tim McKern, Chief Quilcene Fire; Jim Novelli, CEO, DBH; Bret Black EJFR; Gabbie Caudill, Believe In Recovery; Richard Davies, Public Defender; Viola Ware, OlyCAP; Lori J. Fleming, Director, BHC.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Governance Model & Voting Structure

#### SUMMARY

- **Majority support for a hybrid governance model**, balancing sector-based and organization-based representation.
- **Concerns raised about decision-making efficiency and potential dominance of larger organizations.**
- Proposal for a **time-limited leadership structure (Chair & Vice-Chair model) to ensure continuity.**
- Need to **formalize governance policies** around quorum, decision-making thresholds, and leadership transitions.

#### DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hybrid Model Support:** Many members felt that a hybrid governance model, which incorporates both **sector-based and organization-based representation**, would best serve the consortium's needs. This approach ensures that **small organizations have a voice**, while also **allowing sector-wide coordination** on key decisions.

- **Collaborative Model Preference:** Some members advocated for a purely collaborative model, citing concerns that **the hybrid model still favors structured decision-making over open consensus-driven approaches.**
- **Chair & Vice-Chair Proposal:**
  - Proposal for a two-year term for a Chair, with a Vice-Chair serving as an overlapping successor to ensure smooth leadership transitions.
  - This model would allow a gradual leadership transition and institutional knowledge retention while avoiding stagnation.
  - Some hesitation around adding too much structure—some members expressed preference for a more organic approach to leadership.
- **Governance Policies & Formalization:**
  - A need for clear decision-making structures, quorum rules, and criteria for leadership selection.
  - Members supported formalizing governance policies, but stressed the importance of maintaining flexibility as the consortium evolves.

## 2. Voting Models & Decision-Making

### SUMMARY

- Debate over weighted voting vs. equal representation.
- Preference for a consensus-first approach with a fallback majority vote.
- Proposal for a "Fist-to-Five" voting method to gauge consensus levels.

### DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Weighted Voting Concerns**
  - **Brett** argued strongly **against weighted voting**, noting that in many regional meetings, smaller entities (like Jefferson County) end up with **disproportionately less influence** compared to larger entities.
  - **Apple** raised a counterpoint—**what if weighting was based on service contribution rather than organization size?** For example, a smaller agency providing a unique and critical service should **have a proportionate say in decisions.**
  - **Lori** suggested that **weighted voting should only be used in limited cases where it is appropriate.**

- **Consensus-Based Approach**

- Strong preference for a **consensus-first approach**, ensuring all voices are heard before moving to a vote.
- **Fallback Vote**: When consensus is not reached, a **simple majority vote would be used** to prevent deadlock.

- **Fist-to-Five Model Proposal** (This method allows for **gradual consensus-building before triggering a fallback vote**)

- Greg suggested adopting a Fist-to-Five voting model:
- **5 fingers** = Strongly agree
- **4 fingers** = Agree
- **3 fingers** = Neutral
- **2 fingers** = Disagree but willing to move forward
- **1 finger** = Strongly disagree
- **Fist (0 fingers)** = Absolute block (requires further discussion)

### 3. Member Roles & Responsibilities

#### SUMMARY

- General agreement on defining roles but keeping descriptions flexible.
- Concerns raised about roles being too rigid and potentially conflicting with evolving agency missions.
- Agreement that member role descriptions should serve as a guiding framework rather than a strict mandate.

#### DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Need for Clarity**

- Past confusion over members' roles led to difficulty in participation and accountability.
- Lori emphasized that role descriptions are intended as a starting point, not a mandate.

- **Concerns Over Rigidity**

- Brett and others expressed concern that defining roles too rigidly could lead to conflicts with individual agencies' evolving priorities.
- Proposal: Keep descriptions broad and adaptable while maintaining a shared vision.

- **Flexibility & Future Adjustments**

- Agreement that **role descriptions should be “living documents”** that evolve alongside member agencies.
- Each organization can **update its role statement** as needed.

#### **4. BHC & BHAC Relationship & Transparency**

##### SUMMARY

- Concerns over **perceived duplication** between BHC and BHAC.
- Discussion on **whether BHC should merge with BHAC or remain independent**.
- Agreement on **the need for clear cross-representation roles and reporting processes**.

##### DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Merging BHC & BHAC?**

- Brett & Gabby questioned whether the two groups should be combined to avoid redundancy.
- Apple, Greg, and Jim argued that the BHC has a broader focus while BHAC is more focused on administering specific funding streams (1/10th of 1% tax and opioid settlement funds).
- Greg noted that merging could create governance challenges due to differing missions and funding structures.

- **Cross-Representation Role Clarity:**

- Proposal to establish **a clear role for representatives between the two groups** to ensure transparency without unnecessary duplication.
- **Apple suggested a structured 5-10 minute update between meetings** to maintain alignment.

- **Formalization of the BHC as a Legal Entity?**

- **Gabby raised the question** of whether the BHC should establish itself as an **independent legal entity** to directly apply for grants.
- **Consensus:** No immediate plans to formalize the BHC, but **the idea remains open for future consideration**.

## ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

**Governance Model – Formalize Hybrid Model** that is designed to blend elements of **collaborative decision-making** with **structured organizational oversight**. Our goal is to balance **efficiency, equity, and inclusivity**, ensuring that smaller agencies have a voice while maintaining effective leadership and decision-making structures. **Next Steps include:**

- **Finalize the governance structure** in written policy, including leadership roles and voting structures.
- **Ensure clarity in decision-making responsibilities** to avoid overlap between governance and advisory roles.
- **Provide orientation and governance training** for members, ensuring all representatives understand their roles.
- **Test governance model with real scenarios**, adjusting as needed before full implementation.

**Voting Mechanism – Formalize Adoption of Fist-to-Five Model** to allow for gradual consensus-building before triggering a fallback vote. **Next Steps include:**

- **Create BHC’s governance policies** to reflect the **Fist-to-Five Model** as the primary approach to decision-making, and ensure the model’s **fallback majority vote process** is clearly defined.

**Develop a Quick Reference Guide for Members:** Provide a **one-page overview** or **visual aid** outlining the **Fist-to-Five voting process** to ensure members understand how it works. Include examples of **how consensus is reached** and when a fallback vote would be triggered.

**Conduct a Trial Run / Training Session at a Future Meeting:** Introduce a **test scenario** to walk members through the process in real time, allowing space for **feedback and refinements** before full implementation.

**Clarify When and How the Fist-to-Five Model Will Be Used:** Define **which decisions require Fist-to-Five voting** (e.g., funding allocations, governance changes, new initiatives). Also Identify scenarios where **alternative methods (e.g., majority vote)** might still be necessary.

- **Monitor & Adjust the Model Over Time** - Conduct a review of its effectiveness and make refinements as needed to ensure clarity and fairness.

**Member Roles:** Note that Role descriptions are living documents and are intended to be adaptable to agency changes.

**BHC & BHAC Collaboration:** Draft formalized cross-representation roles for clarity. (Note draft of Role for BHC Member to represent BHC at BHAC meetings is included on final pages of this document.)



**Long-Term Consideration:** Explore any structural changes for consideration that can enhance efficiency and alignment with BHAC.

#### MEETING SENTIMENT & CLOSING REMARKS

- Strong debate on structure and efficiency, but shared commitment to improving behavioral health outcomes.
- Lori Fleming expressed appreciation for the group's engagement and emphasized continued collaboration.

**Next Meeting** is set for **February 13, 2025 @ 3p on zoom** (Evites have been sent.)

## BHC REPRESENTATIVE TO THE BHAC – ROLE DESCRIPTION (DRAFT)

**Purpose of the Role:** The BHC Representative to the BHAC serves as a liaison between the Behavioral Health Consortium (BHC) and the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BHAC), ensuring bidirectional communication, alignment of shared priorities, and strategic collaboration on behavioral health initiatives in Jefferson County.

### Key Responsibilities

#### Information Sharing & Reporting

- Attend BHAC meetings and provide concise updates on key discussions, decisions, and initiatives from the BHC.
- Ensure that BHAC members are aware of BHC-led projects, collaborations, and funding opportunities relevant to behavioral health priorities.
- Report back to the BHC on key BHAC discussions, decisions, and funding allocations that impact behavioral health initiatives.

#### Facilitating Collaboration

- Act as a conduit for identifying areas of alignment between BHC and BHAC efforts, including funding strategies, program development, and data-sharing opportunities.
- Bring forward concerns, questions, or feedback from BHC members to the BHAC for discussion.
- Help coordinate discussions between the two groups when joint efforts or input is needed.

#### Accountability & Transparency

- Maintain a neutral and balanced approach in conveying information between the two groups.
- Provide brief, structured summaries of meetings rather than personal opinions or interpretations.
- Ensure that updates are documented and made accessible to both BHC and BHAC members.

#### Meeting Participation & Engagement

- Participate in BHAC meetings as a designated non-voting liaison (unless the representative holds separate voting rights as a BHAC member).
- Ensure that BHC-related agenda items are presented and discussed when necessary.
- Engage in discussions with BHAC members while respecting the decision-making autonomy of each group.

### Coordination with Other Representatives

- Work alongside other cross-representatives (e.g., Public Health, County Commissioners) to ensure alignment and avoid duplication.
- Stay informed on broader county-level behavioral health strategies to maintain consistency in messaging.

### Term & Selection Process

- The representative shall serve a **[1-year] term** (or another time period agreed upon by the BHC).
- Selection shall be made by **[BHC voting members]** to ensure representation aligns with consortium priorities.
- A designated **alternate representative** may be identified to attend in cases of absence.

### Desired Qualifications

- Active engagement in BHC discussions and initiatives.
- Strong communication skills and ability to summarize key information clearly and impartially.
- Willingness to serve as a neutral liaison and uphold collaborative principles.