

S. C. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING
SCDMH Administration
2414 Bull Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201
September 9, 2022

A Business Meeting of the S.C. Mental Health Commission was held in Room 320 at the S.C. Department of Mental Health Administration Building on Friday, September 9, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. The meeting notice and agenda were posted prior to the meeting and notice made to all individuals and news media who requested information in accordance with State law.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pearce called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m. Chaplain Daniel Loffredo provided the invocation.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Chairman Pearce welcomed everyone. Visitors present virtually were: Rebecca Carney, Children's Law Center, USC; Gail Cordial, Director, Policy and government Relations, Alkermes; Beth Franco, Executive Director, Disability Rights South Carolina; Ashlei Hart, Genoa Healthcare; Bill Lindsey, Executive Director, NAMI SC; Jon Siler, Regional Access Manager, Otsuka; and Susan von Schenk, Capital Information Affiliates (CIA). Wanda McMichael, Program Manager, Liberty Healthcare Corporation, was also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the Agenda for today's Business Meeting.

All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Jones noted that Colonel Alexander Conyers, President of South Carolina State University, is a Retired U.S. Army Colonel, not Lieutenant Colonel as listed on page 3 of the minutes from the August 5, 2022 Commission Business Meeting.

By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the minutes from the Facility Presentation of August 5, 2022, the minutes as corrected from the Commission Business Meeting of August 5, 2022, the Called Commission Meeting of August 18, 2022, and the Called Commission Meeting of August 24, 2022.

All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF 2023 COMMISSION MEETING DATES

By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the 2023 Commission Meeting dates with the understanding that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges and modifications may be made accordingly.

All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.

FY24 BUDGET REQUEST

Mr. Morris presented the proposed FY24 Budget Request Summary, copies of which were provided to the Commission. A copy of the summary is filed with the minutes in the Office of the State Director.

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Dr. Levy reported that he met with the Chair of the House Ways & Means Committee and his take away from that meeting was that it seems like prioritizing the Agency's budget requests to indicate what is the most important might be the best opportunity to get our requests approved. Dr. Rogers reported that he and Mr. Morris met with House Speaker Murrell Smith, and the Budget Chairs for the House and Senate, and that he met with Director Robbie Kerr, Executive Director, SC HHS, and the Master Plan Advisory Committee to look at the priorities of Medicaid and HHS, and the priorities for where the State is headed with regard to mental health. The FY24 Budget Request Summary is a reflection of priorities based on those meetings. There was discussion. Chairman Pearce asked if anyone from the Governor's immediate staff contacted Mr. Morris concerning the budget. Mr. Morris replied, "No." Following discussion, Mr. Morris reviewed the 2024 Budget Request Summary. He noted that the Department has not received approval for MHP salary increases. There is a 45% vacancy rate and turnover rate of 34%. The total proposed budget request for FY24 is \$100,978,315. An updated FY24 Budget Request will be emailed to the Commission by Monday, September 12, 2022.

REPORT ON STATUS OF NEW NURSING HOMES

Mr. Morris reported the following:

- Certification of Palmetto Patriots Veterans Nursing Home, Gaffney, SC
 - Survey passed April 21, 2022
 - Written recognition by the Under Secretary for Health in Veteran Affairs
- Certification of Veteran Village, Florence, SC
 - Survey was passed on August 5, 2022
 - Pending written recognition by the Under Secretary for Health in Veteran Affairs

Mr. Morris recognized Mr. Brandon Gaffney, Assistant Deputy Director, Administrative Services, for an update on the veterans nursing homes. There was discussion on the process to construct and begin operations of a veterans nursing home.

Mr. Gaffney presented a report in regard to a letter from the Governor to Mr. Grant Gillespie, Executive Director of the State Fiscal Accountability Authority, dated August 16, 2022, addressing the current dispute between DMH and HMR Veterans Services (HMR) over items of concern that remain unresolved at the Veterans Village in Florence, and the Palmetto Patriots Home in Gaffney. A copy of the report had been provided to the Commission. In his letter, Governor McMaster requested the Office of State Engineer (OSE) conduct a thorough review of the situation and to provide the conclusions in writing at the earliest opportunity. The dispute between HMR and DMH centers around responsibility for issues such as the HVAC line leak, unsecured junction boxes, unsealed wall penetrations, sprinkler head covers not flush against the ceiling, insulated piping damage, insulation, the lightning prevention system, walls above the drop ceiling and, most notably, the generators. Mr. Gaffney reported that as of this moment in time the general contractors addressed all of the items with both facilities. Both facilities have patients but are not at full capacity.

Mr. Gaffney reported on current veterans nursing home projects in development:

- Sumter – Contractor is Leitner Construction. The Date of Commencement was April 4, 2022 with a contract time of 730 days for completion.
- Horry – Still in search of a site for the building.
- Orangeburg – Architectural Engineers' interviews tentatively scheduled on September 22 and 23, 2022.
- Fewell (Tucker Campus in Columbia) – Contractor is Gillam & Associates. The Date of Commencement was March 14, 2022 with a contract time of 400 days for completion. Substantial completion currently is April 18, 2023. Constructors have demolished all the interior walls and exterior storefront windows, and trenching is underway for new sewer lines. Framing and overhead piping has begun and soon the sheet metal panels will be installed.

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Mr. Gaffney said the Build America Buy America Act, enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021, established a procurement preference for all Federal financial assistance obligated for infrastructure projects after May 14, 2022. He said this may affect the costs of the facilities going forward.

Mr. Gaffney will provide Chairman Pearce bulleted points on the information provided above.

MONTHLY/QUARTERLY INFORMATION REPORTS

Ms. Elizabeth Hutto, General Counsel, presented the items listed under Monthly/Quarterly Informational Reports, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

Ms. Hutto reported for the month of August 2022 a total of four pending investigations for the Office of Public Safety. Three cases were investigated. Two cases were deemed unfounded and one case was founded. In July there was an incident in Lodge C of the Hall Institute. A minor patient assaulted two staff members. Both staff members required transport to local emergency department. The investigator interviewed witnesses and viewed the video. The video showed the patient striking the staff with a ball point pen about her face and eye. The patient then slammed a different staff member's hand in a door. The evidence from the investigation show that the allegation of assault and battery was founded. It was referred to the Family Court for review.

Ms. Hutto reported that as of yesterday, September 8, 2022, there are 24 pending SLED investigations. Three cases were assigned to SLED, of which the oldest is from September 2021; thirteen cases were assigned to Long-term Care Ombudsman Office, of which the oldest is from June 2022. Ms. Hutto noted that last month the oldest case was from 2021. Five cases were assigned to local law enforcement and three were assigned to the DMH patient advocate.

Ms. Hutto highlighted the following for the month of July 2022 from the Patient Advocacy Report:

- 51 calls to patient advocacy in July; a total of 576 year to date.
- 66 complaints were resolved in July; a total of 528 complaints have been resolved year to date.
- The number of complaints by category resolved is 82 (*complaints are broken out by category, a single patient complaint may have more than one category*). Ms. Hutto reported on one complaint under category 1) Abuse & Neglect, d. Verbal Abuse of Violations of Dignity. Complaints captured in this category are allegations of a staff matter, staff attitude that is rude, specific complaints or threats or an implied threat, inappropriate or disrespectful statements, and inappropriate or disrespectful actions. She reported one allegation that was founded in which a patient spoke to a patient advocate and complained that a staff member was rude with smart comments to the patient. The patient's treatment team along with the offending staff member and the patient met and discussed the complaint. The staff member apologized, the patient accepted the apology, and the patient was satisfied.

DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

HR Report

Ms. Eleanor Odom-Martin, Chief of Staff, presented the HR report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from the report:

- From July 2021 through August 2022, the Department had a total of 1,017 FTE hires, and 1,206 departures. Recruiting efforts continue through advertising through social media, television media and billboards. The Department is marketing the Agency in the Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville areas. The next job fair will be held at Harris Psychiatric Hospital and will cover the mental health centers in the upstate as well.
- The FY24 budget request includes funding to support moving the salaries of staff within the state bands 1-5 to the state salary average. There are approximately 67 classifications within the Agency for state bands 1-5. Ms. Odom-Martin said that it is becoming more difficult to fill the vacant positions in those bands. HR is reviewing

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the South Carolina Hospital Association's (SCHA) recent salary analysis and may consider modifying the budget request to move the salaries of staff within the state bands 1-5 to market value.

- Mr. David Diana, Marketing Director, continues to work with HR to identify what has been the most effective recruitment approach.

Community Mental Health Services

Ms. Deborah Blalock, Deputy Director, Community Mental Health Services, presented the Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) report. Following are highlights from the report:

- Ms. Blalock reported a total of 515 vacancies posted and unposted as of this morning. She said the starting salary for a Masters Prepared Clinician is \$17.57 per hour. Until those salaries get raised the Department will continue to lose more staff than hire.
- Ms. Blalock reported the 2022 Community Mental Health Services Patient Satisfaction Survey is complete and copies will be provided to the Commission for the October business meeting.
- The SC Hopes call center has received 7,005 callers since inception on June 1, 2020 and connected them to resources across our state.
- Anticipate receiving next week the cost estimates for renovations required to meet DHEC's licensure requirements for the Midlands Crisis Stabilization Unit. There was discussion about the services patients receive at a Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU).
- Ms. Blalock presented the CMHS Trends and Transparency Monthly Indicators (TMI) spreadsheets, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. She noted under patient care hours the accumulative column was removed; average patient care hours will be reported.
- Dr. Levy asked about the projected county appropriations. Ms. Blalock said that it is left up to each county to determine if they want to provide funding to a mental health center. Over \$3.5 million in county appropriations is projected in FY23. Ms. Blalock said that seven of the mental health centers increased their projected county appropriations for FY23. Chairman Pearce talked about DMH engaging with the Association of Counties, specifically at their annual meeting, and give presentations on the services DMH provides in the communities.

Chairman Pearce said that he has been asked a lot of questions about DMH, but not one time has anybody told him that DMH is providing less than quality care. He said that is commendable and that staff in Community Services and Inpatient services need to know that.

Division of Inpatient Services (DIS)

Dr. Bellamy presented the Division of Inpatient Services report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission. Following are highlights from her report:

- The Division of Inpatient Services Performance Improvement Department at C.M. Tucker, Jr., Nursing Care Center – Roddey and Stone Pavilions, is the feature program for August 2022. The Performance Improvement Team: Director Michele Dreher, DNP, MN, RN; Sharon Rice-Brown, L.S.W.; Stella Onukwugha, DSN, RN; Stephen Mathis, BS- Program Coordinator; Neshia Caesar; and Elizabeth Dowdee, BSN, RN. They have the responsibility and oversight of:
 - Regulatory Compliance & Quality Assurance
 - Performance Improvement
 - Fire & Life Safety Standards
 - LTC Strategic Plan Oversight & Development
 - Facility Directives Long-term Care Grants
 - Development and Management
- Dr. Bellamy said nursing homes are very heavily regulated. She commended the Performance Improvement Department for their good work.
- Mr. Charles "Keith" Jackson was selected to fill the position of Chief Operating Officer for SCDMH's inpatient hospitals. He began his responsibilities with the Department on August 17, 2022.

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- The overall average daily census (ADC) has remained relatively stable for the past five months. All facilities are admitting patients. Since January 2022 available beds have increased by ten at G. Werber Bryan Psychiatric Hospital; 12 at Patrick Harris Psychiatric Hospital; and 7 at William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute.
- On August 5, 2022, Veterans Victory House in Florence passed the VA recognition survey.
- Dr. Levy referred to the inpatient dashboard reports and asked what is the strategy to opening things up and getting patients admitted. The report reflects the beginning of the new fiscal year July 1 – 31, 2022 and does not include monthly comparisons. There was discussion. Admissions continue to be impacted by the necessary quarantines and isolations, but all facilities are admitting patients. Dr. Bellamy said that DIS continues to work with the staff and regulatory partners, DHEC in particular, to address the requirements in terms of admissions. Because DIS has congregant settings, they are looked at with regards to the infections control practices similarly as the nursing home environment. Bryan Hospital is accepting COVID rapid antigen testing for admissions whenever COVID PCR testing cannot be obtained before admission. Patients will again be rapid tested upon arrival and a swab for PCR testing is sent to DHEC. New patients are placed in observation until a negative PCR result is obtained. Harris Hospital still requires PCR testing due to the variation in the number of positive COVID cases. Dr. Levy said that discharges are rare. Dr. Bellamy explained that DIS works closely with the Office of Transition Programs with discharges in the movement out of the facilities. Dr. Levy said there were 40 admissions and 31 discharges since January, and there is pressure coming from the communities that we need to get people in. He said that he would like to hear more about how we are making changes to opening things up. Dr. Rogers said there are a number of community residential care home operators who are in retirement mode, so the number of available beds is actually decreasing. There has been discussion about how as a Department do we begin to operate some of the CRCFs that exist in the community. He said when the State Hospital closed, a lot of the chronic patients went to Bryan, so the actual number of acute beds is less than you would imagine because of the number of patients that have multiple year stays. Dr. Rudd said that more than half of the beds in Lodge H are chronic patient beds and there are approximately eight or less acute beds. She reported an Admissions Committee has been established to begin working with the inpatient team and community team to look at patients who meet nursing home level of care. The Admissions Committee will also be reviewing the waitlist. Dr. Levy said it would be great to receive a report on what the Admissions Committee is doing. Dr. Bank commented on the transitions program. He reported about 250 patients discharged over the last three years. He said that expansion of the transitions program could help with Bryan Civil in moving patients along to a placement in a mental health center. There was discussion.
- As of today, there are 112 individuals on the Forensic “Ready for Admission” waitlist.
- The Jail-Based Competency Restoration pilot program, housing 25 defendants at a time to receive specialized competency restoration treatment, will admit its second cohort of 25 starting on August 25, 2022.
- A second cohort of the jail-based day program for competency restoration is pending due to turnover in psychiatry staffing at the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center.
- Training efforts are ongoing to prepare staff to provide outpatient and jail-based competency restoration services. Spartanburg Mental Health Center, Aiken-Barnwell Mental Health Center, and Columbia Area Mental Health Center have all committed additional resources to training for these purposes.

Approval of Minutes of the Governing Body for Inpatient Facilities of July 13, 2022

Dr. Bellamy presented the July 13, 2022 quarterly Inpatient Facilities Governing Body minutes, copies of which had been provided to the Commission.

By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved the Inpatient Facilities Governing Body minutes from the July 13, 2022 meeting.

All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.

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Administrative Services & Financial Status Update

Mr. Paul Morris, Deputy Director, Administrative Services, and CFO presented the monthly financial report, copies of which had been provided to the Commission, and Administrative Services report.

Financial Status Update

- As of July 31, 2022, the first month of the new fiscal year, the Department is projected to end FY23 with a balance of \$4 million.

Administrative Services

- Mr. Morris gave an update on the Electronic Health Record (EHR) Exploration Project. DMH is currently in the quiet period in the requests for proposal (RFP) process.

Mr. Morris expressed appreciation to Dr. Rogers for his support and guidance as State Director.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Rogers said today is his last Commission meeting. He said that he has truly enjoyed this season of his life at DMH. He said that his time at William S. Hall Institute as a medical resident trained him to think about community mental health and helped him develop his career. It was at the beginning of COVID-19 when he left Texas to begin his responsibilities as DMH State Director. He expressed appreciation to staff for their support, guidance and leadership. He talked about some of the Agency's accomplishments and changes over the past 2 ½ years.

- During COVID-19 the Agency experienced minimal disruption. Mental health centers served all but less than 0.5% patients in the community. DMH was below the national average for infection rates and deaths in the nursing homes and inpatient facilities. Compliant with federal mask and vaccine mandates.
- The pandemic prevented in person meetings the first 14 months of Dr. Rogers' tenure. He had a number of meetings with legislators upon their return to the Statehouse: met with 25 out of 46 South Carolina state senators and 53 out of 124 South Carolina state legislators.
- Dr. Rogers said he was proud to co-chair the Suicide Prevention Coalition along with Senator Katrina Shealy.
- Dr. Rogers said he was proud of the work the Department accomplished with the other child serving agencies: DAODAS, Sarah Goldsby, Director; DSS, Michael Leach, Director; The Department of Children's Advocacy, Amanda Whittle, Director; DJJ, Eden Hendricks, Director; DDSN, Michelle Fry, Director; and SC HHS, Robert Kerr, Director.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among DMH, HHS, DJJ, and DCA for the provision of a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF). DMH is the leading agency in the project.
- Expanding placement options at Hall Institute, Lodge D, for DJJ youth. Provided contract psychiatrists from DMH to help cover DJJ. The Agency goal is that no youth with serious mental illness (SMI) will remain behind the fence.
- Expanding integrated care in many of the mental health centers. Dr. Eve Fields and Brandon Gaffney received a federal grant to work with pediatricians in Barnwell and Orangeburg Counties.
- DMH was awarded the GoMobile Grant and will be working with the Clemson University School of Nursing to expand nurse-led mobile units in Orangeburg County.
- Dr. Rogers served on the following: NASMHPD Board of Directors as the Regional Representative for the Southern Region; National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute (NRI); National Judicial Taskforce on Criminal Justice.
- Along with Allison Farrell and Sherriff Leon Lott, gave a presentation at the Sozosei Foundation Summit to Decriminalize Mental Illness.
- Participated as expert panelist for the Pew Charitable Trusts on emerging models in healthcare on the interface of mental health and public safety.

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- Participated as expert panelist for the National Council on Integrating Physical and Behavioral health.
- Co-authored a paper with Ms. Louise Johnson on “The Effects of COVID-19 on Children, Youth and Families.” The paper was highlighted at the NASMHPD Annual 2021 Meeting.
- Gave seven national and state presentations highlight DMH programs and work over the past year.
- Commissioned an employee engagement survey with the College of Charleston.
- Hired a Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer.
- Hired a Chief Financial Officer.
- Led a rebranding effort for the Agency’s new logo.
- Hired a Marketing Director who has developed video clips, commercials, and podcasts to promote DMH.
- Identified funding and obtaining EHR and financial software to increase efficiency in billing, medical records, and throughout the Agency.
- Expanded bed purchases.
- Community outreach included 15 churches and 12 other community organizations to provide community support post pandemic.
- Met with leaders at South Carolina Association of Counties, South Carolina Sheriffs’ Association, and South Carolina Jail Administrator Association to discuss mental health and jails.
- Developed salary initiatives over the past year to improve salaries across the Agency.

Dr. Rogers thanked Chairman Pearce and the Commission for their support as well as the Senior Leadership Team and all of DMH. He said it has been an honor and a privilege.

Special Recognition

On behalf of the Commission, Chairman Pearce presented a resolution from the Commission to Dr. Rogers for his service as State Director. Dr. Rogers’ resolution read as follows:

Whereas: The South Carolina Mental Health Commission recognizes the service of Kenneth M. Rogers, MD, to the South Carolina Department of Mental Health; and

Whereas: Dr. Rogers began his service with SCDMH in the 1990s, when he completed both his General Psychiatry residency and a Child Psychiatry fellowship at its William S. Hall Psychiatric Institute; and

Whereas: Dr. Rogers returned to the SCDMH as State Director as the COVID-19 pandemic began its sweep across the country, guiding the Agency in its response and adaptation to the pandemic and the many related challenges it brought; and

Whereas: Dr. Rogers supported staff during a time of nationwide uncertainty and anxiety, reassuring them through continued statewide communication via virtual town hall meetings, listening sessions, and personal visits to all mental health centers and facilities; and

Whereas: Dr. Rogers’ tenure as State Director has included many notable achievements, including using the proceeds of the sale of the Bull Street property to increase access to integrated, community-based housing for patients, continuing and sustaining focus on successfully moving patients to the least restrictive setting, and creation of an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and

Whereas: Dr. Rogers has served the citizens of South Carolina with distinction, having been selected by the member executives from the 12 Southern States as the Southern Region representative to the board of directors of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors in 2021 and testifying before the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging on Mental Health Care for Older Adults in May of this year; and

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**Now,
therefore:**

September 9, 2022

We express our profound appreciation to Dr. Rogers for his vital service to the mentally ill and the South Carolina Department of Mental Health; offer him our sincere gratitude and best wishes; and order that a copy of this Resolution is made a part of the Commission's permanent records.

OTHER BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

At 12:53 p.m., by motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the Business Meeting and entered into Executive Session to discuss personnel, contractual and legal matters. Upon convening in open session at 1:35 p.m., Chairman Pearce noted that only information was received; no votes or actions were taken.

By motion duly made and seconded, the Commission approved a recommendation that the Acting State Director, once he is in place, enters into an interagency agreement between the South Carolina Department of Administration (SCDOA) and South Carolina Department of Mental Health in order for SCDOA to provide assistance during the transition period.

Chairman Pearce said that he will meet with the Acting State Director and Senior Management to go over an outline of what is being proposed for their input.

All voted in favor to the above motion; the motion carried.

At 1:35 p.m. by motion duly made and seconded, the Commission adjourned the business meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Commission Members

L. Gregory Pearce, Jr., Chair
Dr. Elliott Levy, Vice Chair
Dr. Alison Evans (*virtually*)

Dr. Carl Jones
Mr. Bobby Mann
Dr. Crystal Maxwell

Visitors/Staff

Deborah Blalock
Elizabeth Hutto
Chaplain Daniel Loffredo
Wanda McMichael
Paul Morris
Eleanor Odom-Martin
Valarie Perkins
Dr. Kenneth Rogers
Brett Williams

present virtually via Zoom

Janet Bell
Dr. Versie Bellamy
Jackie Brown
Mirtha Brown
Algie Bryant
Pete Camelo
Rebecca Carney
Rochelle Caton
Leigh Ann Chmura
Gail Cordial
Teresa DeLoach
Matt Dorman

present virtually via Zoom

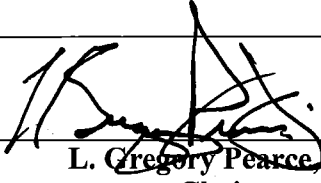
Russell Evatt
Beth Franco
Dr. Kelly Gothard
Jeffery Ham
Dr. Patricia Handley
Ashlei Hart
Darla Helms
Dr. Maryjane Hicks
Charles Jackson
Charice Jones
Tracy LaPointe
Bill Lindsay

present virtually via Zoom

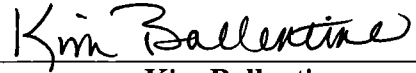
Denise Morgan
Dr. Lynelle Reavis
Vicki Redding
Tracy Richardson
Jennifer Roberts
Dr. Kimberly Rudd
Jessica Suber
Eric Turner
Susan von Schenk
Sheena Willis
Kevin Woods

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APPROVALS



L. Gregory Pearce Jr.
Chair



Kim Ballentine
Recording Secretary