

MEETING MINUTES

11/18/2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Janice Quinn; Vice-Chairperson, Mark Miller, Tori St Johns, Jim Jones, Huynh Cue Nguyen (Owl), Eva Guenther-James, Joe Butts, Christine Thomstad, Bea Gonzalez, Maura Fisher.

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Richard Divine, Bruce Sherr, Sandy Neja, Carole Schaudt.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT: Rachel Gileno; Adult Services Administrator, Mary Carpio; Secretary to Rachel Gileno, Denise Morgan; Secretary to Kelly Grotsky, Shawn Harris; Senior Parent Partner; Parent Support & Training Program – Desert Region, Jay Rembold; Senior Peer Support Specialist, RUHS – BH, Refugio Vivanco; Senior Peer Support Specialist, TAU Drop-in Center, Rubit Romero; RUHS – BH, Robert Bohon Lara; Senior Peer Support Specialist, TAY Drop-in Center, Ashley Jean; Senior Peer Support Specialist at the Peer Support and Resource Center in Indio, Nate Ramirez; RUHS – BH, Older Adults.

OTHERS PRESENT: Honor Moore; 417 Recovery, Amber Jordan, Alyssa Nieto; UCPIE.

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND SELF INTRODUCTIONS:

Mark Miller called the meeting of the Riverside County Desert Behavioral Health Board to order at 12:05 PM. Self-introductions of all who were in attendance in person or by teleconference followed.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Shawn Harris said the Children's Program at the Myers site had their first art show which featured 158 entries and 64 pieces were sold for a total of \$436.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Limit 3 minutes per speaker):

None.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Mark Miller asked if there were any additions, corrections, or deletions to the board minutes of the October 14, 2025 meeting. There were no additions, corrections or deletions that needed to be made. Tori St Johns made a motion to accept the minutes, Jim Jones seconded the motion, and it passed by a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

417 Recovery:

Honor Moore, the Director of Community Outreach at 417 Recovery, gave a presentation utilizing some PowerPoint slides. She said it is a comprehensive, clinically based treatment for adolescents aged 12-17. 417 Recovery is an adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) specialized care for clients struggling with mental health, substance use disorders (SUD), or behavioral issues. The program serves families in Palm Desert, Murrieta, and Mission Viejo, CA.

Holiday Food Baskets, Snowflakes/Adopted Holiday Family:

Shawn Harris said Snowflake distributions will start next week. Dr Janice Quinn presented Shawn with \$1100.00 to be split between the two adopted families. Several board members dropped off their gifts for the families. The remaining gifts can be dropped with Mary Carpio anytime in the first week of December.

2026 Executive Officers Slate, Open to the Floor for Changes, Vote:

Joe Butts said the committee polled the membership to gauge interest in members becoming part of the Executive Board. Richard Divine said he would be unable to continue his role as Chairperson of the Board and based upon the feedback received, the committee recommended Tori St Johns as the new Chairperson, Dr. Janice Quinn as the Vice-Chairperson and Mark Miller as the Secretary. Dr. Quinn opened the floor to any prospective new nominees and none were received. Tori St Johns, Dr. Quinn and Mark Miller left the room while the final vote was tabulated. In the end, Tori St Johns was elected as the new Chairperson for 2026, Dr. Quinn the Vice-Chairperson, and Mark Miller the Secretary. Congratulations were given to the new Board for 2026.

2026 Standing Committees Desert Board Representative Positions Open for Change or Renewal:

Joe Butts said he was willing to take over the Desert Representative for the Veterans Committee. Eva Guenther-James said she is currently unable to fulfill her role as the Criminal Justice Committee liaison due to scheduling conflicts with other activities she is participating in. Joe Butts offered to take on responsibility for this also. Tori will assume responsibility for the Main Behavioral Health Commission Report as the new Chairperson. Joe Butts was removed as co-representative of the Adults Committee given his new assignments. Eva Guenther-James will take over the Housing Committee representative.

Other New Business:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

NAMI Walks Coachella Valley November 15 Report:

Christine Thomstad reported they had 181 participants in the Walk and raised about \$35,000.

Window Walk Gallery at The River Update:

Dr. Quinn said the Gallery is doing very well and she received more art to display, most of which came from Windy Springs.

Other Old Business:

None.

MONTHLY UPDATE AND REPORT:

Substance Abuse Program Update:

Tabled until the January 13, 2026 meeting.

Peer Support and Resource Center:

Ashley Jean reported they hold various support groups during the day, and anyone is invited to attend.

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Program Update:

Rob Bohon-Lara reported on activities at the TAY Center. For more information, refer to the attached calendar of events.

CHILDRENS SERVICES MANAGER COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno covered this for Kelly Grotsky. Rachel said TAY Desert Flow was awarded a \$453,433 2-year grant to provide Housing Navigation Services and Support for youth ages 18-24 who are experiencing homelessness. She said any youth between 18-24, who meets the definition for homelessness, can qualify. She added that priority will be given to youth in the Coachella Valley and the goal is to serve 80 youth per year. Youth do not have to be linked to Behavioral Health services or a Behavioral Health program. Rachel said they are in the process of hiring a housing navigator. She said this will be a Peer Support Specialist position and the ideal candidate will have lived experience of previous challenges with housing/homelessness. There have been discussions about utilizing the services of this position at Harmony Haven also. Rachel said ECM Team will be up and running very soon.

ADULT SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

Rachel Gileno reported a new full-time Clinical Therapist (CT) started in Blythe. She also reported the Whole Person Health Score rollout was completed in the desert area. This new tool is now being utilized with all new members who establish care in the desert clinics and will assist with identifying social determinants of health and improving engagement in and connection to the resources needed to address the whole person.

Rachel said desert region RivCoOne initiatives this year included Strengthening Blythe Communities, which was a series of Rapid Improvement Events (RIE) to address the community's concerns with linkage and access to care. Based on the success of this endeavor a new series of Rapid Improvement Events has been scheduled to occur in the Banning area. It will be titled the Pass Community Model and encompasses Whitewater to Calimesa. This area has one of the lowest Healthy Places Index scores in Riverside County. The first RIE was held in Banning last month and the next series of RIE will be held next year to address disparities and increase linkage and access to care.

Rachel said she is in the process of hiring a new Oasis Case Management Supervisor and that person will be starting in December.

Older Adults Administrator's Comments:

Nate Ramirez reported Tony Ortega's office assistant retired last month and he is in the process of hiring a new one.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Children's Committee Report:

Tori St Johns provided a copy of the Committee's activities from July 2024 thru June 2025, a copy of which is attached to the minutes. She also thanked TAY for coming to the Pride Parade Event in November.

Adults Committee Report:

Jim Jones said he had no report to give.

Mature Adults Committee Report:

No report to give.

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Housing Committee Report:

Tabled until January 13, 2026 meeting.

Legislative Report:

Mark Miller said he had no report to give.

Membership Report:

Dr. Janice Quinn said Amber Jordan has applied to be a member of our board in a "peer" category. Dr. Quinn asked for comments from the board in general on this and there were several positive comments about Amber and no negative ones. Maura Fisher made a motion to accept Amber Jordan as a prospective member, pending completion of the application and Joe Butts seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Behavioral Health Commission (BHC) Report:

No report to give.

Criminal Justice Committee Report:

No report to give.

Veteran's Committee Report:

Tabled until the January 13, 2026 meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Maura Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Joe Butts seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 PM.

The next formal meeting of the Riverside County Desert Board of Behavioral Health will be **Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at the Oasis Adult Conference Room at 12:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Mark Miller, Desert Board Secretary