BHSPC

Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County

...where change begins

BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2026

The Board of Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. in the BHSPC Board Room at the agency located at 208 East 1st Ave., Easley, South Carolina. All attendants were in-person.

Item I. Call to Order. Tobias Vogel, Chairman, called the meeting to order, and established that a quorum of voting members was present.

Item II. Recognition of 2025 Service Award Recipients. The Board recognized the following staff members as service award recipients in 2025. Deanna Calhoun, Director of Administrative Services, for 5 years of full-time service, plus 4 years of part-time service; Jessica Gibson, Director of Prevention Services, for 10 years of service; Jennifer Talley McAlister, Director of Child and Adolescent Services for 15 years of services; Tracy Wade, Administrative Specialist in the clinical financial area, for 25 years of service and Roslyn Holcombe, Director of Human Resources, for 35 years of service.

Item III. Welcome New Board Members: Dr. Amanda Merchant and Dr. Eddie Talley. The Board welcomed Dr. Amanda Merchant and Dr. Eddie Talley, who recently were appointed as Board Members by County Council. Dr. Amanda "Mandy" Merchant is a retired pediatrician, who worked with lots of children with behavioral issues. She stated that she loves to stay busy being involved in the community and is very passionate about the prevention side of our services. Dr. Eddie Talley was a former employee of Behavioral Health Services and currently owns and operates his own private practice clinic just a few doors down from the agency. He started his private practice with one other clinician and now has 11 clinical therapists on staff in addition to the approximate 7 staff members serving patients with autism. Eddie stated that he began his clinical career with Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County and considers serving as a Board Member a way to give back to the community.

Item IV. Public Input. Lane Wood, Community Paramedic, with over 32 years of experience as a fire fighter and paramedic, has recently transitioned into a new position created by the state SCORF Grant in the RESTORE (Re Entry and Support Through Outreach, Rehabilitation and Empowerment) program. Mr. Wood commented that this is a new direction in his career, as he has historically worked as a paramedic in field serving patients struggling with addiction. He stated that his opinion of addiction has changed as he has learned more about addiction. Mr. Wood stated that the RESTORE program will be offering some new services to the community, such as Hepatitis C testing. The Board thanked Mr. Wood for his input.

Item V. Approval and Adoption.

A. January 14, 2026 Agenda. Rhonda Billingsley made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Ernie Dandeneau seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
B. November 12, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes. Ernie Dandeneau made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 12, 2025 Board Meeting as presented. Jessica Merrill seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Item VI. Financial Report. Ms. Farmer referred to Carly Davidson, Director of Financial Services, for an overview of the Financial Reports for October and November, 2025. Ms. Davidson reported that the October Financial Report reflects receipt of the SCORF funds along with the proceeds from the sale of 311 East Main Street, Pickens building. Ms. Davidson reported that there was nothing out of the ordinary on the November report. There are still some funds outstanding from the MUSC Research projects. Revenues from the provided in the Drug Testing Laboratory Program #9002 should be reflected on the next report, as services began December 1, 2025. The Financial Reports for October and November were accepted as information, pending the audit.

Board Member, Pamela Winters, indicated that the Financial Resources Committee would be scheduling a meeting soon to review the agency budgets at the mid-fiscal year point.

Item VII. Program Report. Ms. Farmer reviewed the Program Reports for November and December, 2025. The reports indicate that client numbers have increased in both months, which is unusual for December, as this is typically a slower activity month. The continued increase in client numbers could be attributed to the centralized relocation of the agency in Easley and more collaboration and working relationships among community providers. The School Counseling Program is overwhelmed with referrals and have stopped taking new referrals for some schools. One licensed Clinical Counselor in the Child and Adolescent Services area resigned in December to pursue other employment opportunities with better salary. A clinician has been hired to replace the full-time clinician and the part-time clinical position added in this area has been recently on-boarded. It will take time for these two clinicians to train and reach maximum efficiency. The adult programs areas are also reflecting increases. Declines in adult participation has been a statewide trend and it is encouraging to see these increases. Group participation, in particular, has declined in past few months, necessitating that one group be discontinued and the few clients participating offered individual appointments. Currently, we have 2 groups operating with sufficient participation. Ms. Farmer and Susanna Deming will continue to monitor the activities reported on the Program Reports. The reports were accepted as information.

Item VIII. Pickens Properties Update – Sale Contract on 303 East Main Street. Ms. Farmer reported that realtor, Tim Elder, had phoned her recently to report that the buyer for 303 East Main Street Pickens Building has encountered a slight delay and requested that the closing, scheduled for mid-January, be postponed to approximately mid-February. At Mr. Elder's suggestion, the contract will be amended to state that the $2500 earnest fee collected become non-refundable in the event the sale fails. This is the last property to be sold. Ms. Farmer will keep the Board updated on this item.

Item IX. Electronic Platform for Board Documents – Jessica Gibson. Ms. Farmer referred to Jessica Gibson, Director of Prevention Services, for training on accessing the electronic platform created for Board Members to access Board related documents. Written instructions along with sign-in credentials were distributed to all Board Members. Ms. Gibson projected the sign-on screen and walked through the sign-in procedure and gave some brief navigation instructions. This platform will allow the Board to access current and previous Board documents.

Item X. Proposed New Policies. Ms. Farmer reviewed the proposed policy changes included in the Board Member packets. Ms. Farmer explained that the probationary period is proposed to be removed, as it no longer serves a purpose and actually increases the need for leave without pay, as the probationary period prohibits a new employee from using annual leave until they have satisfied the 6-month probationary period and deemed a permanent employee. Removal of the probationary period would allow a new employee to use accrued annual leave. The six-month performance evaluation would still be completed along with consistent supervision. At the recommendation of Attorney Kelly Jolley, another proposed change would be to require all employees to pay the employee portion of health insurance premiums, regardless of the tier of coverage elected. Currently, the agency is paying the employee portion of health insurance premiums for any employee who elected employee-only coverage, but does not pay this same amount towards employees who elect an expanded tier of coverage such as employee and family. Attorney Jolley suggested that this could be perceived as unequitable among employees. After lengthy discussion, Jessica Merrill made a motion for the agency to pay the same amount of the employee's insurance premiums (which is $97.68 per month for 2026) for all current employees for the 2026 year. Mandy Merchant seconded. The motion carried unanimously. There was discussion about this issue being reconsidered by the Board later in the year, but before the insurance Open Enrollment period in October, and a decision made about the amount the employee will be responsible for paying in 2027 so employees can amend insurance coverage elections as necessary during Open Enrollment. As separate action, Jessica Merrill made a motion to require all new employees to pay the employee portion of the health insurance premiums for 2026. Tracie Freeman seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The other proposed change would increase the number of days allowed for an employee to be on military leave from 10 to 15 annually, to be consistent with state regulations. Ernie Dandeneau made a motion to accept the proposed policy changes as presented. Pamela Winters seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Item XI. Election of Treasurer. Former Board Member, Douglas Clamp, served as the Treasurer and being that he was not reappointed by County Council to serve another term as a Board Member, a new Treasurer needs to be appointed to complete his office term until June 30, 2026. Board Member, Jessica Merrill volunteered for this office and made a motion to be nominated and elected Treasurer. Pamela Winters seconded the nomination and election. The motion carried unanimously.

Item XII. Old Business.

A. Legislative Update. Angela Farmer reported that the system is still discussing the impact of the federal reclassification of marijuana. Ms. Farmer will keep the Board updated on any legislative issues impacting the agency.

B. Research Project. Angela Farmer reported that the Research department continues to struggle with recruitment for the smoking cessation project, as fewer individuals smoke cigarettes. Ms. Farmer will keep the Board updated on the research projects.

C. By-Laws Revisions. Tobias Vogel reported that the By-Laws Committee would reconvene to discuss some identified additional changes and present the revised By-Laws for consideration of approval in the next meeting. The By-Laws Committee consists of Tobias Vogel, Tracie Freeman, Jessica Merrill and Pamela Winters.

D. BHSA Board Seminar: January 30 – February 1, 2026. Angela Farmer reported that hotel reservations have been secured for all Board Members and dinner reservations made at Chestnut Hill Restaurant for Saturday evening at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs Pack House room. Registration for the seminar will be submitted closer to the event. Keep Roslyn Holcombe advised of any changes in your plans to attend. The BHSPC Youth Board along with the Orangeburg "Fire Squad" Youth Board have been asked to present at the Board Seminar on their work with various successful Youth Board prevention initiatives.

E. Drug Screen Testing Lab Update. Angela Farmer reported that services in the Drug Screen Testing Laboratory began December 1, 2025. The delay in implementation was due to an error within the CareLogic EHR program in the billing procedure set-up. Some reimbursements are now being received from insurance companies. This correction in the CareLogic program has assisted other laboratories in receiving insurance reimbursements. There were some hiccups with the Medicaid billing procedures, but those have also been worked out and Medicaid is covering these services. There are approximately 20 to 40 drug screens tested per day in the laboratory, with that number projected to increase. Ms. Farmer will keep the Board updated on the progress in this area.

Item XIII. <u>New Business.</u> None reported.

Item XIV. <u>Executive Session.</u> There was no need for Executive Session indicated.

Item XV. <u>Action from Executive Session.</u> There was no action to report.

Item XVI. <u>Adjournment.</u> There being no further business, Ernie Dandeneau made a motion to adjourn. Pamela Winters seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Roslyn Holcombe

Roslyn Holcombe
Recording Secretary

Members Present In-Person:
Tobias Vogel, Chair
Pamela Winters, Vice-Chair
Jessica Merrill, Treasurer
Rhonda Billingsley, Secretary
Ernie Dandeneau
Traci Freeman
Mandy Merchant
Liz Rampy
Eddie Talley

Members Excused:

Others Present:
Angie Farmer
Susanna Deming
Carly Davidson
Roslyn Holcombe
Lane Wood