

Behavioral Health Planning Council

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

9:00 AM–10:00 AM CT (meeting adjourned early)

Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Tania Zerr (Chairperson), Andrea Hochhalter, Kurt Snyder

Members Absent: Rich Smith and Melanie Gaebe

Also present: Monica Haugen (DHHS liaison) and Janell Regimbal (BHPC facilitator)

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairperson **Zerr** called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. Roll call confirmed a quorum.

Agenda Approval

Motion by Andrea Hochhalter, second by Kurt Snyder to approve the January 21, 2026 agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Past Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2026

Motion by Kurt Snyder, second by Andrea Hochhalter to approve the January 12, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

BHPC Advocacy Issues: Continuation of Discussion and Finalization of Priority Document

The Executive Committee convened for the primary purpose of reviewing and finalizing BHPC's 2026 priorities document, including confirming content, ensuring clarity for external audiences (legislators and executive branch stakeholders), and establishing a plan for dissemination during the special session timeframe.

Regimbal explained that, based on prior Executive Committee feedback, she revised the priority document to incorporate a brief introductory section describing BHPC (purpose, membership composition, and current vision language). The intent was to ensure recipients who are unfamiliar with BHPC would understand the Council's role and credibility before reading the priorities.

Chair Zerr thanked Monica Haugen for providing rapid, detailed content that helped the Committee view priorities through a “different lens,” particularly with clearer insight into statewide implementation status and system gaps identified by professionals. Monica

confirmed she could provide additional context as needed, while aiming to remain a supportive observer unless called upon. She provided clarification related to recovery housing, emphasizing it is currently a state-funded line item primarily designated for substance use recovery. She supported the Committee's aspiration to broaden recovery housing options for individuals with mental health needs and co-occurring conditions but cautioned that near-term expansion may be challenging given fiscal constraints and executive direction to avoid creating new programs/FTEs. The Committee affirmed recovery housing remains a documented gap and agreed the document appropriately reflects the need while acknowledging constraints.

There was a question whether the bullet list of priorities was intended to be ranked. Janell confirmed it was not ranked but noted the Committee could choose to number or reorder items if desired. It was agreed that formal ranking would be difficult and not necessarily advisable.

Members discussed how to reference the IMD waiver item in a way that prevents misunderstanding, to ensure it is clearly something opposed. The Committee identified several refinements to improve readability and presentation while preserving the concise format:

The Committee discussed how to distribute the finalized priorities document given the urgency of the special session. Members agreed the document should be distributed broadly to increase awareness and build advocacy leverage with the consensus to send to all North Dakota Senate and House members and relevant executive branch cabinet members.

Chair Zerr stated she is willing to send the email but would need the compiled distribution list, leveraging the prior distribution list if available.

Follow-up advocacy issue: Cross-disability waiver consultation opportunity

Janell provided an update related to follow-up on the cross-disability waiver and BHPC's intended engagement. She reported communication indicating that BHPC input might be scheduled for either a February or April advisory meeting. Because April is far out and availability may change, the Committee emphasized the need to stay flexible. Janell also shared that BHPC was offered an opportunity to meet directly with Alvarez & Marsal (consulting group working on waiver planning) to discuss BHPC concerns and ideas. The Executive Committee agreed to schedule a conversation with Alvarez & Marsal, ideally by including them on an Executive Committee meeting agenda rather than adding an additional standalone meeting. The week of February 15 will be targeted, with a meeting doodle forthcoming to establish date.

Adjournment at 9:35 AM Chair Zerr adjourned the meeting.