

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION
AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE DISABLEMENT
MINUTES

MEETING DATE: February 11th, 2025
Zoom/ Santa Fe Field Office

Members Present: Marni Goodrich, Buffy Jackson, Courtenay Eichhorst, Annie Scoggins,
Sara Ranney, and Director Heather Jordan, as ex-officio.

Members Absent: Darrell Deaguero

1. **Call to Order and Introductions:** 2:42 p.m. Meeting held at the Santa Fe Field Office. Chair Goodrich and council members present introduced themselves. Due to the meeting being held via zoom staff member, Kellee Wiede, introduced attendees.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Courtenay Eichhorst made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Buffy Jackson. Agenda approved.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Marni Goodrich made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 19th, 2024, meeting, seconded by Courtenay Eichhorst. Minutes approved.
4. **Director Report:**
Director Heather Jordan discussed internal staffing changes. She announced that Nicole Bazzano put in her two weeks and Kellee Wiede will be the acting Executive assistant to the Director. Additionally, she announced the hiring of new staff members in the Albuquerque and field offices. The vacancy rate is about 13%. Director Jordan addressed the budget update and expresses the importance of the Advisory Council staying involved in budgetary matters. She noted the House of Appropriations approved the LFC's recommendation of a 14.9-million-dollar budget for the WCA and UEF with a one-time infusion from the General fund for 6 million dollars to go to the WCA Reserve. She informed that only 108 positions have been approved. Director Jordan discussed legislation and noted that the agency is watching House Bill 66, House Bill 11, and Senate Bill 264. She informed that the Senate Bill 264 addresses the assessment fee, and the assessment fee has not been increased since 1990. Director Jordan expressed the crucial importance of raising the assessment fee. Marni Goodrich clarifies the increase increments of the assessment fee as stated in Senate Bill 264. Director Jordan informed the operating budget is about \$14 million and historically have had \$13 million in revenue. She noted fiscal year 2026 will be a pivotal year if actions are not taken. Director Jordan explained that there will be three modest increases of the assessment fee which will provide the needed revenue. Marni Goodrich asked if the LFC mentioned anything about the sweep, Director Jordan explained that the LFC has recognized the sweep needs to end and the sweep will be reduced to a \$750 thousand dollars. Director Jordan stated the transfer will start to dwindle down over time however no schedule has been produced. Marni Goodrich asked if there was a reason the sweep is being phased out overtime. Director Jordan informed no reason was given however she was told what the sweep is used for
5. **Legislative Sub Committee Update:**
Marni Goodrich called for the Legislative Sub Committee Update. Courtenay Eichhorst noted that the board does not have a stance on the FMLA matters regarding House Bill 66. Members

discussed the efforts of the attorney fee task force. Courtenay Eichhorst expressed that Senate Bill 264 as written addresses so many matters that it will be difficult for the board to take a stance on the bill as written. The possibility of the Workers' Compensation portion being extracted was discussed. Marni Goodrich mentioned that there have been amendments to House Bill 66, the amendments have been reviewed, and the board likes the amendments. Marni Goodrich noted the increase increments for the attorney fees and in 2029 the Advisory Council can make a recommendation on the fee. Annie Scoggins motions to support House Bill 66 as amended. Courtenay Eichhorst seconds the motion. The board agrees to support House Bill 66. Courtenay Eichhorst expressed that Senate Bill 264 needs to be revisited.

6. **Public Comment:**

Merilee requested that motion be repeated. Annie Scoggins informed that the motion was that the full advisory council stand in support of House Bill 66 as amended and the motion passed. Merilee asked if the amendments note how the fee is going to increase. Annie Scoggins noted the fee will increase over time. Marni Goodrich informed of the increments of the fee. Marni Goodrich confirmed the motion passed unanimously. Courtenay Eichhorst requests feedback on Senate Bill 264.

7. **Next Meeting:**

The next Advisory Council meeting will be at 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 29th, 2025, at the WCA in Albuquerque.

8. **Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m. by Chair Goodrich.