**GEAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH**

**AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

**Ann Bagley 13244 Ravenna Road**

**Chairman of the Board Chardon, Ohio 44024**

**James C. Adams Phone: (440) 285-2282**

**Chief Executive Officer Fax: (440) 285-9617**

**Board Minutes January 20, 2021**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ann Bagley (Chair), Alberta Chokshi (Planning and Policies), Walter Claypool (Planning and Policies), Martin Fay (Agency Relations), Carolee Lesyk (Finance/Agency Relations), Jennifer Malainy (Agency Relations), Linda Miller (Agency Relations/Finance/Planning and Policies), Gregory O’Brien (Planning and Policies), Steven Oluic (Agency Relations), Michael Petruziello (Finance), Mary Ruth Shumway (Agency Relations), Leila Vidmar (Planning and Policies)

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jimmy Lee Holden (Finance – Excused), Thomas Niewulis (Finance – Not Excused)

**GUESTS:** There was no attendance taken of other meeting participants

**STAFF PRESENT:** Jim Adams, Savannah Florkowski, Amie Martin-D’Arienzo, Jim Mausser, Teresa Slater

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Ms. Bagley called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Ms. Slater called the roll for attendance purposes. Present: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Martin Fay, Carolee Lesyk, Jennifer Malainy, Linda Miller, Gregory O’Brien, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway. Walter Claypool, Steven Oluic, and Leila Vidmar joined the meeting after Roll Call was taken.

1. **APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 18, 2020**

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. Discussion: Ms. Chokshi asked whether the Planning and Policies report was for the prior Planning and Policies meeting or of the Executive Session from the last Board meeting. Ms. Bagley said the Minutes are accurate as to what was said, but they may need to be corrected. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-9; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **Presentation by Vicki Clark, CEO of Ravenwood Health**

Ms. Clark provided some background information regarding Ravenwood Health, talked about the agency’s programs and services, including a brief description of each category, and the different things they have been doing to engage with clients during the pandemic.

Mr. O’Brien asked what different types of housing Ravenwood provides. Ms. Clark said some of the beds at the Transitional Living Center are for crisis purposes. She would eventually like to make the whole TLC a crisis facility and have a separate step down facility that may be staffed but not 24/7, where medication is monitored, and independent living skills are taught. There is a desperate need for independent living places in Geauga. Most residents of the apartment complex stay for a period of time and then are ready to move on to a more independent setting. It is very hard to find landlords in Geauga who are willing to work with the agency and that are not cost prohibitive.

Dr. Lesyk commented that Ravenwood is a not for profit agency and asked if they realize any type of profit from year to year. Ms. Clark said in 2019 they had a $300,000 surplus. Last year it was about $10,000.00. The agency has a $9.3 Million budget so they are usually close to breaking even with revenue and expenses.

Ms. Shumway had a question about medically assisted treatment. It recently came to her attention that one of the clients from the court was being given Suboxone. He had a major car accident with kids in the vehicle and was charged with OVI (operating a vehicle while under the influence). If he had been given Vivitrol instead of Suboxone he wouldn’t have been charged since a person is allowed to drive while on Vivitrol. She asked if there is a movement in the county to give all clients Vivitrol instead of Suboxone so that would not happen to someone else. Ms. Clark said Ravenwood prescribes both. This is the first time she heard this story and will share the information with her doctors. It is the doctor’s choice of which medication to use. Vivitrol is amazing but it does not work for everyone. Ms. Clark wondered if the client was abusing the Suboxone because the amounts given for treatment are very small. Ms. Shumway said the client tested just below the limit and was probably driving too late and working too long and a little tired at the same time.

Mr. Petruziello asked if Ms. Clark has spoken with Mr. Rice about the housing facilities that may be available at Metzenbaum. Ms. Clark said she did look at this option at one point and it would be great if something could be done. There was some concern a few years ago about certain client behaviors that would make others living nearby uncomfortable. Mr. Petruziello said that we should be utilizing those facilities and will speak with someone at Metzenbaum and Chesterland community leaders to get something going.

Ms. Vidmar asked if agencies are seeing an increase in alcohol and drug treatment due to the pandemic. Ms. Clark there have been increased issues around opiates, methamphetamines and cocaine, but the increased need for treatment for alcohol abuse has been stunning. Ms. Paul said people were not presenting with issues at the beginning of the pandemic because everything was shut down, but that changed quickly within a few months. Ms. Vidmar commented that alcohol sales last April were up by 250%. Ms. Bagley said that drug use can’t be tracked as easily as alcohol use, but feels that is probably increased as well.

Mr. Adams asked Ms. Clark to talk about the business end of the agency, such as what does reimbursement look like over time and who their funders are. Ms. Clark said they receive funding from Medicaid/Medicare, private insurance and the Board. In the past, Board funding represented 50/70% of their income. The Board now represents approximately one-third of their revenue, and the balance from Medicare, Medicaid, private pay, insurance and grants. They are starting to work with private industry in an effort to diversify and access different funding streams. Ms. Clark said Ravenwood is in a solid financial position right now.

Ms. Bagley asked if the schools are purchasing any of their services and who is paying for that. Ms. Clark said some are and they receive reimbursement from various sources, including the school itself.

Mr. Claypool said when looking at outcomes for the services our agencies provide, he asked if we are getting better by treating the root cause of a problem or are we just treating the symptoms and have an ever growing dilemma. Ms. Clark responded that when she and Mr. Claypool were growing up, people were being put behind locked doors in psychiatric hospitals, and they are now being treated in their own community. There are individuals who are still ending up in jails and prisons, and that needs to be addressed. Mr. Claypool asked if we are doing better or if maybe locking someone up in a facility was the better thing to do. There is more drug abuse and alcoholism now and taxpayers are two-thirds of all their funding sources. If we are taking peoples’ tax dollars, we need to know that what we are doing is good and reducing problems. Mr. Claypool said the Board needs to look at the outcomes for the services being paid for and determine if we are doing the right things in the right ways.

Ms. Clark said agencies can’t fix the root cause of everything. That is a bigger societal issue, but they can address situational issues. Ravenwood does measure a lot of outcomes that show people are getting better. Schizophrenia and many other diseases that affect mental health are brain diseases brought on by an organic change in the brain. Mr. Claypool said the Board needs to reverse some of its decisions regarding outcomes for problems that should be viewed as societal issues and that do not need to be addressed through the mental health system. One of the ways to address some of these issues is to start teaching good parenting skills. We will never solve a lot of these problems until we start doing that.

Mr. Petruziello said he is on the Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority Board and within the last few months they have called in an outside group to consult with employees and help them deal with the stress of COVID. He asked if Ravenwood is offering any programs like that. Ms. Clark said initially they reached out and offered many different supports but people were not interested – employers, health care workers, anyone in the community. They even advertised and people did not want to come to group settings. Ms. Paul provided a variety of presentations to schools and Geauga Growth Partnership that consisted of informational trainings about coping skills. Ms. Clark said they would be open to providing this training if anyone is interested. The first hour is free and then the cost is $75.00 an hour after that. Mr. Petruziello asked the agency to do more outreach because local entities are going to outside sources and using a lot of tax dollars. Many individuals are not mentally ill, but are stressed out about COVID. He commented that we need to learn how to deal with some of these fears.

1. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Ms. Bagley had nothing new to report.

1. **CEO REPORT**

Mr. Adams introduced everyone to the Board’s newest employee, Savannah Florkowski. She is already working on several projects and is a great addition to the staff. He feels the Board will be pleased with her work and her talent.

1. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
   1. **Agency Relations**

Ms. Miller had no update this evening.

* 1. **Finance**

Mr. Niewulis did not attend the meeting so there was no update for the Finance committee.

* 1. **Planning and Policies**

Ms. Vidmar said at last month’s Board meeting, she used the word “decision” when giving her report and that was not correct. Ms. Miller asked if that discussion was in Executive Session. Ms. Vidmar replied yes it was, but when she gave her oral report she used the word decision and no decision was actually made by the whole Board. Ms. Miller felt that was a lot of detail when reporting about an Executive Session.

Ms. Chokshi asked if Ms. Vidmar was reporting on the October Planning and Policies meeting, the Board meeting, or a combination of both. Ms. Vidmar said her report was from the Executive Session held during the October Board meeting. Ms. Chokshi commented that there should have been a separate report from each meeting. Ms. Vidmar said she chose to report on the Executive Session of the Board meeting since that discussion took place with the entire Board. Ms. Bagley said that part of her concern about what was reported is that the Board did not make a decision or take any kind of a vote.

Mr. O’Brien stated he does not want to delve into specifics of what was discussed during Executive Session, but feels an overview of what was discussed in general should be communicated to Mr. Adams and the staff so they are not trying to figure out what is going on. He said everyone was in somewhat of a consensus in communicating something outside of Executive Session regarding what was discussed. Mr. Claypool recalls there was some communication made during regular session that was consistent with the decisions made during Execution Session. Mr. O’Brien said he feels the entire Board should review current compensation of the staff and decide collectively about any incentives or changes. Ms. Bagley said it is her understanding that Planning and Policies will be doing that soon. Ms. Vidmar said she has reached out to the committee about scheduling a date to meet in the near future.

* 1. **Housing**

Mr. O’Brien reported that we are a little behind schedule, but that Mr. Adams is gathering the necessary information and will present his findings and recommendations at the February Board meeting. Mr. Adams said he has received information from Ravenwood Health and Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers about what residential facilities they have, what services are provided, the licensure needed, what populations they serve, and what they are planning in the next 3 to 5 years. He will also be receiving the same information about Red Tulip. He does have a summary of private facilities in Geauga, including adults care facilities, with licensed beds that can provide nursing care, and some private for-profit practitioners who provide housing. He will put all of this information together so the committee can move forward. He suggested including Ravenwood and Lake-Geauga in the next housing meeting. The committee can review what is out there and determine if any gaps exist. He has asked the Commissioners about where they are regarding the Metzenbaum facilities and will follow up again. He did speak with Mr. Rice briefly at the beginning of the year and has not heard anything new from the county.

Dr. Oluic is a little dismayed about how this is proceeding. He has talked with Ms. Clark and others about housing. He tried to engage a discussion via email, but he feels there is not a sense of urgency about this issue since no one responded to any of his emails. Dr. Oluic said there are a lot of things that can be done without everyone having to come together. Metzenbaum has multiple facilities that are used for multiple reasons. One of the houses is ready to be used now. There is a desperate need for housing for young men and women. He is working with Gerry Morgan, the County Administrator, to reach some decision about Metzenbaum that will include any issues with the public infrastructure, insurance coverage, maintenance responsibilities, or whether to sell or lease the property. Nothing will get solved if this is addressed one month at a time.

1. **BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS**
   1. **Resolution 21-01-1 Acknowledgement of County Budget for Calendar Year 2021**

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-12; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

* 1. **Resolution 21-01-2 Allocation of 2021 State Opioid Response Funds**

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Dr. Oluic seconded the motion. Discussion: Ms. Shumway asked what is different from the prior SOR allocation and what improvements are being made. Mr. Adams said that Catholic Charities will now receive funds to provide group counseling services. Ravenwood, Lake-Geauga, Family Pride and Red Tulip were also included and received funds from SOR 1.0. The details of what services each agency will be providing are outlined in the 127 page grant application. Mr. Adams said he can send a comparison if the Board would like to see that.

Mr. Claypool asked who makes the allocation decisions. Mr. Adams said agencies submit their applications which are consolidated by county and sent to the state. The requests are then consolidated at the state level and submitted to the federal level for review and approval. Ohio submitted approximately $70,000,000 in funding requests for mental health and recovery services. This is the same process that was used for SOR 1.0. Mr. Claypool asked if the Board can reallocate any of the $1.4 Million. Mr. Adams responded that they cannot. Mr. Claypool said there is other housing that could use some of that money. Mr. Adams said the funding to Red Tulip will help with the cost to maintain staff and other expenses at their residential recovery house.

Mr. Claypool talked about other facilities and asked whether or not the Board has the flexibility to choose which facilities use the funds. Mr. Adams said the funds will be used for residential services that the Board requested. All of the related detail for each allocation is included in the grant application. Dr. Oluic commented that the information from the ad hoc committee will help determine where funds should go in the next round of funding. Mr. Claypool said it looks like the Board is favoring Red Tulip and that we should look at other facilities also.

Mr. Petruziello asked how many agencies provide housing and why we are not expanding those programs instead. He is not against the allocation to Red Tulip but is not sure why the Board is funding an agency that serves a niche population. Mr. Adams replied that Red Tulip was built with donated funding. They were included in the housing inventory that was sent to Ravenwood Health and Lake Geauga Recovery Centers to help the Board determine what is needed in the community. Mr. Petruziello said those other entities are already established and have their administrative costs built into their budgets. He asked why the Board is now funding Red Tulip because it seems as if they are siphoning off funds that should be going to housing but will be used for administrative purposes. The Board should be offering more services through those other agencies and less from Red Tulip. Ms. Shumway said that each facility is specific to a particular type of housing and Red Tulip serves women. She has a mom with three children who are now at Red Tulip. Mr. Petruziello said that is what causes bureaucracies to get bigger and bigger because one person has a special need. He then asked why the other agencies are not offering services to meet those special needs since they already have the infrastructure in place. Mr. Claypool said Red Tulip had a business plan that did not include receiving SOR 2.0 funds and we are now giving them welfare instead of forcing them to be lean and mean and self-sufficient. They should not be living off the back of taxpayers. Mr. Adams said that Mr. Petruziello and Mr. Claypool are making the case that all of the Board’s money should then be put toward Ravenwood to avoid additional administrative costs. Mr. Claypool responded that would depend on how effective they are. Ms. Miller called the question. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-12; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

* 1. **Financial Reports**

Mr. Mausser said the November and December Financial Reports were included for the Board to review, Through December, 41.4% of the Board’s administrative budget has been expended. There were no expenses from the Community Education Budget. The County Calendar Year expenditures for 2020 totaled $6,763,367.43. The Auditor’s Unencumbered Fund Balance as of December 31, 2020 was $3,437,865.91. The Cash Balances by Source of Funds Reports are all in order. We should soon be receiving third quarter payments from the state.

* 1. **Approval of Voucher Recaps**

Dr. Lesyk moved to approve Schedule No. 653 in the amount of $450,268.03 and Schedule No. 654 in the amount of $510,083.27. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-12; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business discussed.

1. **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Miller said it is her understanding that Ms. Clark will be talking to the Board next month regarding outcomes for Ravenwood Health programs. This will coincide well with the upcoming RFP process.

Mr. Claypool said he is concerned about the Board’s meeting structure. He does not want to continue meeting via Zoom and feels that venue is not as effective as meeting face to face. He then moved that upcoming meetings be held face to face and via Zoom so that both options are available. Ms. Chokshi said there was some discussion about who can make that decision and suggested talking about it further at the next Planning and Policies meeting. Mr. Petruziello then seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Claypool said the Board members should have the right to make this decision apart from what is stated in the Bylaws. Dr. Lesyk responded that the Board would then be ignoring the Geauga County Health Commissioner’s guidelines and recommendations of when to meet face to face again. Mr. Claypool said the Health Commissioner has no authority to tell the Board how it should meet. Dr. Oluic said the Commissioners have been meeting face to face. Ms. Bagley replied that one of the rules of the Board is that everyone has to be masked. Mr. Claypool asked when the Board had that discussion and asked for Mr. O’Brien’s opinion.

Ms. Bagley said she spoke with Susan Wieland, the Board’s representative from the Prosecutor’s Office, about this issue, who approved of the Board continuing to meet via Zoom. Ms. Bagley clarified that Health Commissioner Tom Quade pointed to the state advisory system as a guide for meeting face to face. Mr. O’Brien said he is not aware of anything that precludes meeting in person except for the limitations set by the Governor. He would like to see something from the Commissioners about this issue. He likes the efficiency of meeting via Zoom and not forcing staff or others to meet face to face. He asked why Ms. Bagley is against allowing Board members to meet. Ms. Bagley said she is aware of health/family situations of staff, but has no problem if Board members get together somewhere, but she does not want staff to be put at an increased risk of getting COVID. Mr. Claypool said that is just one person’s opinion and not necessarily that of the other Board members. He is a township trustee and they have been meeting together since this began. Some people wear masks and some don’t. Ms. Bagley replied this is not an issue of what others are doing, but is a matter of the wellbeing of the staff and Board.

Mr. Petruziello clarified that 600 was the number of positive cases in Geauga County and not the number of people who were hospitalized. Mr. O’Brien asked Ms. Bagley how the staff would be put at risk if they participate in the meeting via Zoom and anyone who would like to meet in person could gather at the Board offices, which can be opened, sanitized and closed by Board members. Ms. Bagley is fine with that as long as staff would not need to be there.

Mr. Claypool said there is risk all around us. For those who choose to meet face to face, he would like to have that option. Ms. Bagley asked if that can happen without involving the staff. Mr. Adams replied yes it could happen, and the details can be worked out closer to the meeting date.

Ms. Bagley asked as a point of order, if this is sent to committee to decide, would Mr. Claypool’s motion then be tabled and the committee vote how to proceed. Mr. O’Brien explained what would happen in that event. There is a motion and a second on the floor to allow Board members to have the option of meeting in person at the Board offices or via Zoom. Ms. Bagley asked if the motion can be amended to state that the face to face meeting will not involve staff. Dr. Oluic responded that the staff should be able to make the decision of whether to attend in person or through Zoom for themselves. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-11; NAYS-1; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Lesyk moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

**Respectfully submitted by:**

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**Ms. Teresa Slater**

**Secretary/Receptionist**

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**Ms. Ann Bagley**

**Chairman of the Board**

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**Ms. Leila Vidmar**

**Secretary of the Board**