**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 November 18, 2020**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ann Bagley (Chair), Alberta Chokshi (Planning and Policies), Walter Claypool (Planning and Policies), Jimmy Lee Holden (Finance), Carolee Lesyk (Finance/Agency Relations), Jennifer Malainy (Agency Relations), Linda Miller (Agency Relations/Finance/Planning and Policies), Thomas Niewulis (Finance), 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:** Martin Fay (Agency Relations – Excused)

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

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

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

Ms. Bagley called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. Ms. Vidmar called the roll for attendance purposes. Present: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, James Lee Holden, Carolee Lesyk, Jennifer Malainy, Linda Miller, Thomas Niewulis, Gregory O’Brien, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway, Leila Vidmar

1. **APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 21, 2020**

Dr. Lesyk moved to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-13; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Ms. Bagley requested an update from Mr. Banas (NAMI Geauga Chair) and Ms. Carter (NAMI Geauga Executive Director), about the Duncan family. Mr. Banas reported that the NAMI Geauga board and their Director met with the Duncans a few weeks ago. He felt it was an extraordinarily positive meeting. Everyone engaged in an open discussion about what had transpired over the last 16 months and where it was headed. Everyone was committed to moving forward together. The main result of the client rights issues was the creation and implementation of a set of policies and protocols that will be applied to everyone who interacts with the agency.

1. **CEO REPORT**

Mr. Adams did not have anything more to report than what was already included in his written report. He then asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Niewulis said there is still a lot of confusion about the SOR 2.0 application as to accountability and how to assess that the agencies are using their funds in a responsible manner. It seems as if on the financial side, we are trusting agencies to do the right thing to insure accountability of the money they receive. Mr. Adams responded that since SOR 1.0 was a brand new federal award, there was a requirement that an outside agency must evaluate the services provided. The state does not have a good data set yet and boards are taking a wait and see approach. This is the first time that an independent contractor was required to perform the evaluations and review all the data. This is a massive undertaking and he feels it will take the full two years to get a handle on the data that was collected. One of the biggest problems was the requirement that the initial assessment of a client by an agency had to be done through the federal government’s data collection system. This is an initial assessment that must be completed for clients receiving federally funded drug and alcohol programs through SORs. Mr. Niewulis said the finance committee should review the needs analysis of the agencies who want to participate in this grant funding.

Ms. Vidmar asked for an update on Ms. Cohn‘s replacement. Mr. Adams said he has conducted some phone interviews and now the staff will be participating in Zoom interviews.

Ms. Miller asked if each agency that sees someone under the SOR program will need to complete this assessment. Mr. Adams said that is correct. Due to the complexity of the assessment, not many staff are trained to do this in Geauga and sometimes the people who do receive the training change employers.

Mr. Claypool asked what the second page in Mr. Adams’ written report means. He commented that it seems as if we are just pumping up bureaucracy. We don’t know who is rating the programs or what the outcomes should be. If this is not solving what the Board is trying to accomplish and the Board cannot ascertain it is doing anything beneficial, then we should tell the state no to these funds.

Mr. Adams said SOR 1.0 funds represented an allocation created by congress to fight the opioid issue across the country. Each state was granted a certain amount of funding. SOR 2.0 is the continuation of that allocation. A lot of the SOR 1.0 funds were used to start programs. It became apparent very quickly that this funding wasn’t as effective as it could be since it was limited to only opioid addiction. The approved use of SOR 2.0 funds was extended to include other categories of addiction, such as stimulants and tobacco. These funds will now be available to a wider population. Clients that use any type of stimulant will qualify for all treatment services, including housing, counseling, and residential services.

Mr. Claypool responded that he has a problem with the whole expanding mindset. We are making programs bigger and bigger but he is not hearing that things are getting better or that we are improving anything. He feels we are wasting taxpayer money and the funds being allocated should be taken from other programs. He asked how we know things will get better. There is no accountability or metrics that this is going to improve anything. We need to stop throwing money at things that are not the problem. This Board has the responsibility to be accountable and should take a real look at what the issues are.

Ms. Shumway asked if the Board can have agencies offer Depo Provera injections when providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) so that there are not as many drug addicted babies born. Mr. Adams said that is a whole different medical area that boards have no purview over nor is that type of service part of the mental health and recovery system of care. He said the agencies have done a good job with integrating health care into behavioral health care.

Mr. Adams stated that Mr. Claypool’s comment about whether we know what works has merit. There are professional staff members who study that issue their whole college career. We do know that MAT and all the services connected with that program work. He can send links to the Board members about what forms of treatment work. Ohio is ahead of a lot of other states for expanding MAT and all the wraparound services that go with that program. We do know that the first intervention with individuals who have substance abuse issues is usually not going to work. SOR funds are geared for the drug and alcohol programs the Board currently supports.

Ms. Chokshi asked since we are getting more funds, will the state review how these programs work and do an evaluation. Mr. Adams said regarding the particular services provided with SOR funds, there is a lot of history and research showing that they work, which is why the federal government and state are funding them. Ohio was one of the first states in the country to get SOR dollars. His report and some of the other information sent out show what programs are supported with SOR funds. These are the programs that work best and are researched based.

Mr. Niewulis said one of his concerns is that a lot of SOR 1.0 funds were used to start programs and enhance services. He questioned if the Board can sustain this funding for these programs going forward. He is hoping that when the agencies submit their budgets for additional funding under SOR 2.0, they are looking at what is needed and not just submitting a bloated budget based on what was done with SOR 1.0. There may be other counties that could use these dollars more based on their demographics and what is going on with the opiate crisis. He has a gut feeling that there could be a couple agencies that may inflate what they need in respect to the demographics we have. The Board’s job is to assess what those agencies really need as we go for that grant.

Mr. Adams said the Board is not the only entity who evaluates the financial piece. These budgets go to the state first who can then make agencies change their budgets. We are not the final authority regarding budgets. Mr. Niewulis replied that is a good clarification of how the budgets work. Mr. Adams said the state has come back many times about budget issues and saying what can and can’t be done. Ms. Shumway asked if an agency receives SOR funds, can the money be used for another purpose. Mr. Adams said the state is very strict about categorizing budgets, including salaries. The agencies must document the number of staff hours into the specific program or portion of program. He has never seen budgets so tight before.

Ms. Miller said the programs the state is requiring are evidence based. Mr. Claypool asked what that means. Mr. Adams replied that evidence based means the services have been researched through multiple layers of study at universities and research facilities and published in peer reviewed publications. The vast majority of programs are reviewed over and over again. Mr. Claypool asked if this is the same evidence based program that created Metzenbaum and that approach. Mr. Adams replied that Metzenbaum was not evidence based. They were releasing people from institutions to save themselves money back in the 1960's. Ms. Bagley said evidence based programs are the gold standard. Mr. Claypool replied that he doesn’t have a lot of confidence in the evidence based approach and he is not going to let it go. He is not sure what is meant by increasing housing and what type of housing that means. Recovery programs do not necessarily include general housing. He will be looking for some evidence based metrics to show that we are accomplishing something here. If we are increasing the number of housing options, this means that things are getting worse.

Mr. Adams said the other way to look at this is that the goal of the program is to increase those numbers by increasing the penetration rate. This just means more people who need services are getting treatment and being served. Mr. Claypool replied the Board should then have a ten year plan and should expect a decline and decrease in services needed and not keep things status quo forever. The Board will continue to throw money away if we don’t ask if these programs are effective. Mr. Petruziello commented that we have these facilities to house people in rehab and we keep on expanding the programs. He asked when will it go down and start to be reduced and not increased. Mr. Claypool said there are two programs that spent double the money and this is something he will be watching. He does not have a lot of confidence in our federal government and feels they are irresponsible.

Ms. Bagley asked if accountability is built into these programs. Mr. Adams replied that the agencies who are receiving this funding participate in monthly calls with the state where the outcomes data and budget issues are reviewed. The state will talk to Board staff privately if they see an agency is having problems or issues performing tasks. This is one of the most intricate state and federal programs he has seen.

Ms. Shumway asked how we are filling the gaps regarding step down facilities for women, men and families who suffer from addiction. Mr. Adams said the Board has been talking about increasing drug and alcohol and mental housing with Metzenbaum. One of the issues being looked at is increasing recovery housing in general, and specifically looking at housing for women with children who have finished the recovery process. A lot of time and energy is being spent reuniting those families. Some of the children have been traumatized for such a long period of time that reintegrating families is a horribly difficult task. Some kids will never be able to reintegrate with parents and that creates a bigger cost for the rest of society. One target would be for women with children ages five and up and Lake-Geauga’s Neveah Ridge facility would be an extension of that. Keeping families together is the goal of some of the housing proposals.

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

Ms. Miller had no update this evening.

* 1. **Finance**

Mr. Niewulis referenced the information that was previously sent. The Board will have a lot more information on these programs as they work through the budgeting process in the spring with the agencies. He will send an email out to the committee about meeting sometime in January to review these materials and get everyone up to speed on SOR funding and programs prior to the budget process.

* 1. **Planning and Policies**

Ms. Vidmar reported that the committee went into Executive Session during their last meeting. The outcome of the meeting is that the decision was made for no contract and no raise for this year. The committee did discuss adding a few components to the goals and objectives. She and Ms. Bagley met with Mr. Adams about this as mentioned in his written report. She will contact the committee in the next few weeks regarding measurable goals and then bring this back to the whole Board.

* 1. **Ad Hoc Housing Committee**

Mr. O’Brien said the committee met with Mr. Don Rice about the Metzenbaum facilities. Mr. Adams will be conducting a housing needs study and will report his findings to the Board in January.

1. **BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS**
   1. **Resolution 20-11-01 Approval of Community Plan for 2021-2022**

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Petruziello asked if this plan was put together by our Board and commented that this is the first time he has seen it. Mr. Adams replied that the plan was put together by staff and is based on the community plan submitted for 2019-2020. He added things that the Board has discussed in the past. Since this is just an update from that plan, about 80-90% will not change. Ms. Bagley asked if the update is based on what the Board has been requesting. Mr. Adams said that is correct. He also included information about SOR funds and programs for the current biennium.

Mr. Claypool said this is also his first time seeing this plan. He is concerned about the goals and objectives for the staff, not the state. He has some questions and concerns that may be challenging to address since the Board will be voting on it tonight. He said a survey of 130 people doesn’t represent the population and said meeting community needs is a challenge. He asked if this plan can be modified if it is passed tonight and then revisited.

Mr. Adams said as seen with Metzenbaum, what we do here is very fluid. This is just a plan. Sometimes they work and sometimes other things happen. This represents an ongoing evolution and technically acts as the Board’s application for funding, but the state does not use it that way. The Board must show that a needs assessment has been done. The ROSC assessment was completed a few years ago. Most needs assessments have a shelf life of 3-4 years. He has talked about updating ROSC with evidenced based programs depending on the needs in the community.

Mr. Claypool said he has read the plan through quickly. He doesn’t have any problem approving the plan if the Board can come back and review, change or update it. He would like the Board to have the opportunity to go through the plan and discuss it further. He feels there is room for improvement in the section about homelessness and other areas. He commented that it is ridiculous that the state wants feedback broken down by race and ethnicity. All people should be treated equally and it upsets him that information is being broken down into categories and feels that just divides us further.

Ms. Shumway asked who is providing programs for women who are pregnant and have substance abuse. Mr. Adams said the Board is funding the Neveah Ridge program of Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers that addresses this issue. Ms. Shumway said there is no direct working relationship with juvenile court about this and suggested that would be something which could be improved upon. Ms. Vidmar asked where the data came from. Mr. Adams replied that it depends on what data was needed and where it was gathered from. Some of the information came from the Community Health Improvement Plan put together by the Geauga Health District and some of the information came from agency proposals. A lot of information is consolidated to get to this plan. It is helpful to have all of this data in one place.

Mr. Claypool asked if the Board is just checking a box and can come back to this. Mr. Adams said that is a good way to put it. It can always evolve into something different. He tries to make it relevant and not just going through this process as an exercise. Mr. Claypool said it is a nice discussion document and there are certainly areas the Board will want to talk about. He commented on the data that 30% of clients are not satisfied with their employment. He feels that is pretty common and is probably not a mental health issue. Mr. Claypool said a lot of work was put into this plan and he would like to use this document to see how we can serve the community better.

**ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-11; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-2. MOTION APPROVED.** Mr. Claypool said that typically a person would abstain from voting only when there is a conflict of interest.

* 1. **Review of SOR 2.0 Application**

Mr. Adams said most of the information in the Community Plan regarding the strategy for MAT housing will be a big part of the application. He will send a copy to the Board once he puts all of the narratives together.

* 1. **Financial Reports**

Mr. Mausser reported that 27.5% of the Board’s fiscal year budget was expended through October 31st. There were no expenses from the Community Education Budget. The County’s Calendar Year Budget shows that $5,803,016.13 has been expended. The Auditor’s Fund Balance as of October 31st was $3,487,759.68. The Cash Balances by Source of Funds all look good. He has rolled over any carryover funds into these reports, which consisted of mostly levy funds.

* 1. **Approval of Voucher Recaps**

Ms. Miller moved to approve Schedule No. 652 in the amount of $689,792.71. Ms. Malainy seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-13; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

Mr. O’Brien moved to approve Schedule No. 127 in the amount of $41,550.00. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-13; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business discussed.

1. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no New Business discussed.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Lesyk moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 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**