**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**

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**Board Minutes October 21, 2020**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ann Bagley (Chair), Alberta Chokshi (Planning and Policies), Walter Claypool (Planning and Policies), Martin Fay (Agency Relations), 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:** None

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

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

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

Ms. Bagley called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. Ms. Vidmar called the roll for attendance purposes. Present: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, Martin Fay, 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 SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**

Dr. Lesyk moved to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Ms. Vidmar commented that there was nothing included in the Minutes about the discussion with the NAMI President. Ms. Bagley said that was done at the joint committee meeting, not at the Board meeting. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-12; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-2. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Ms. Bagley reminded the committee chairs that if they want to schedule a meeting to check with Ms. Slater regarding potential meeting dates and to make sure that the right staff will be available to participate.

Ms. Bagley has asked Mr. O’Brien to report on the ad hoc housing committee during Committee Reports portion of the meeting. She would also like an update regarding NAMI.

1. **CEO REPORT**

Mr. Adams said he has been in contact with Mr. Dave Banas from NAMI. They are meeting this evening with the Duncan family. Their new director started on the 19th and will be in the office beginning November 2nd.

Mr. Adams reminded everyone that we are down one staff member since Ms. Cohn retired. The position was advertised and the staff has been reviewing the resumes that were received. There are several good candidates and he will be setting up Zoom meetings with them.

Mr. Adams said in the past, the November/December meetings have been combined. If a joint meeting is held in November, it would be on the 18th, which is two days before the SOR 2.0 application is due. The SOR information will also be incorporated into the two year Community Plan. He plans on having both these documents available for review at the November meeting.

Ms. Miller asked about language in the State Opioid Response Funds resolution stating that the funds need to be expended within 60 days to expend the funds, but the budget period is extended to September 29, 2021. Mr. Adams said his understanding is that agencies need to encumber the funds within 60 days, but they can be expended through September 2021. That is up to interpretation and Boards are waiting for clarification from the state about this issue.

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

Ms. Miller had no update this evening.

* 1. **Finance**

Mr. Niewulis commented that the last Finance meeting was cancelled until the committee can get together in person to discuss the agenda items and the documents that were sent. He said it is incumbent upon the Finance committee to determine what the real needs of the agencies are and how those needs could be addressed using future grants that may become available. He said Geauga County recently consumed $3 million dollars in Covid-19 grants that were spent in a ridiculous manner. He said we all know from experience that there must be a justifiable need for funds given to bureaucracies and non-profits agencies.

* 1. **Ad Hoc Housing Committee**

Mr. O’Brien reported that the ad hoc committee met with Mr. Don Rice, who is the Director of Metzenbaum, on October 8th. The general discussion revolved around the premise that the agency will be transitioning out of their residential facilities over the next few years and will have no further need for those homes. The Board was approached to ascertain if we would like to acquire the use of at least two of those homes, either through lease and/or ownership. It is unclear what the County has in mind for those properties going forward. The staff will conduct a housing needs assessment no later than January 2021. The findings will be presented to the Board, who will then decide whether or not to pursue this opportunity further.

Mr. Claypool would like the Board to consider putting a residential treatment facility in one of the homes, similar to what Lake Geauga Recovery Centers has in Lake County, to serve the needs of Geauga residents.

* 1. **Planning and Policies**

Ms. Vidmar reported that the committee met on October 13th and reviewed information regarding Mr. Adams’ compensation. She would like the Board to go into Executive Session for that purpose. Ms. Bagley suggested that the Board do this at the end of the meeting after the remaining regular business items have been completed.

1. **BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS**
	1. **RESOLUTION 20-10-1 REIMBURSEMENT TO GEAUGA SAFETY CENTER**

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Claypool commented that these funds are set aside specifically to be used to reimburse the Geauga Safety Center for certain expenses. Mr. Adams said these funds are a line item in the State’s budget. Mr. Claypool asked what the Board’s involvement is since their use has already been established. Mr. Adams said in the past, County Commissioners were paying for these costs, which are unpredictable and difficult to budget for. There was consensus from Commissioners to have this allocation put in the state budget as a particular line item so that there would be some flexibility with the funds and so that counties would no longer be responsible for these expenses. Mr. Claypool asked how the Board is involved in the administration. Mr. Adams said the legislature set up a process to reimburse jails every six months for psychotropic medications prescribed to inmates. These prescriptions are filled by Central Pharmacy, which provides medication for prisons, psychiatric hospitals, and other state agencies.

Mr. Claypool then asked why the Board is involved and why the reimbursement is not done directly. Mr. Adams said that is the way the law was written. The Board also has a medication subsidy line item on its System of Care Resolution that can be accessed when needed. Most of the individuals receiving medication when incarcerated will become part of the mental health and recovery continuum of care once they are released. Mr. Claypool responded that the Resolution states that the Board administers these dollars but it doesn’t seem that they have any authority on how these funds are spent. He will speak to Representative Diane Grendell about changing this law.

Mr. Adams said that Board staff does not approve the drugs used at the jail since we do not have a psychiatrist on staff. Some boards do and they would make sure inmates have the needed medications when they are released and are referred to an agency for further treatment. We also do not review the medications that are administered in the jail. Mr. Claypool restated that the Board does not administer anything. Dr. Oluic feels the Board should at least be aware of the medications used. Mr. Adams reiterated that the law states the funds come to the Board, who then issues a check for medications administered after the jail submits a request for reimbursement to the state.

Ms. Bagley asked if there is any kind of bridge for people in jail who need mental health services and a referral to an agency when released. Mr. Adams said three agencies are providing different programs in the jail, so there is continuity when a person is released.

Mr. Claypool again stated that there is no value in having the Board involved and this is an example of typical inefficient government. The Board should just receive some type of report. The Board should not act like we are administering anything as this is a waste of the Board’s time. He feels the Board should reach out to our legislatures and get this process changed. Ms. Miller commented that everyone may feel differently about this. Dr. Oluic asked what Mr. Claypool wants to do. He responded that the legislature should stop wasting the Board’s time and cut the check directly. If government is ineffective, the legislature should be told that. Ms. Bagley said some of the value in having the Board involved is in making the connection for inmates with local service providers and by providing money for this purpose. Mr. Claypool replied that the Board is not providing any value to this process since they do not have any say in how the funds are spent. Dr. Lesyk said the Board coordinates mental health services in Geauga, including medication. Ms. Chokshi said some of these individuals are already being served by agencies, including the determination of what medications are needed, before they are incarcerated. The Board has a role in that process through oversight and allocations to the agencies.

Mr. Petruziello asked how the Board knows that those services are actually being rendered or if there is any fraud going on because we have no mechanism to follow up with those individuals. Mr. Adams said in regard to medication given in the jail, we would want to look at the data over time to see what is being prescribed, what the cost is, and if there may be a different or cheaper medication that would not negatively affect an individual’s outcomes. Mr. Claypool asked who is tracking and monitoring those medications now. Mr. Adams said that is done through Central Pharmacy. Mr. Claypool clarified again that the Board is not part of that process.

Mr. Niewulis said the Board needs the reporting capability to understand what medications are being distributed and the cost. To Mr. Claypool’s point, the Board has no direct determination in how these funds are spent. They need to get the report to analyze how this fits into the rest of the services provided and how the agencies are engaged with this. He said that Mr. Claypool is trying to make the point that there are a number of pass through allocations received which the Board does not have any effect on because they are derived from a different entity or source. He said it is critical that the Board understand this type of funding within the context of county agencies and service delivery. Both he and Mr. Petruziello have been stating that the Board needs to look at whether from a statistical standpoint it is getting the best bang for its buck. He referred to the legislature in codifying the structure of these allocations and the reporting mechanism that is necessary for boards to implement. The Board needs to observe and review what the agencies are doing to see if they need more funds or should take a different approach for some services. Dr. Oluic suggested that staff ask the jail for a report that contains data on the number of inmates in the jail who have a mental illness and what medication is prescribed. Mr. Claypool said he would like to put together a subcommittee to review the pass through funds received where the Board serves no purpose and stop wasting time on things the Board has no say in. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-9; NAYS-5; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

* 1. **RESOLUTION 20-10-2 PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING GRANT AWARD**

Mr. Niewulis moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Adams said this grant has been applied for over the last several years and the purpose is to supplement rent for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. The money is also used by Ravenwood Health to manage various housing properties, including the apartments, which has a full time staff person. Mr. Petruziello asked if the money pays for everything involved with property management, such as maintenance and snowplowing. Mr. Adams said yes, along with money received from another grant. He said it may be helpful for staff to create some type of spreadsheet showing the different housing allocations and what the funds can be used for.

Mr. Claypool asked what the criteria is for housing and if the residents are at the apartments on a temporary basis. Mr. Adams said the apartments were built as a permanent living place so that individuals could age in place if they choose to. A few of the apartments can be easily modified to make them handicap accessible. The average length of stay for residents who live there is about two years and then they move into their own place. Mr. Niewulis asked if the residences are fully occupied. Ms. Martin-D’Arienzo replied that she does track this and they are always at 100% capacity or slightly above. Mr. Petruziello asked if the residents pay any rent. Mr. Adams said the federal requirement is that residents must pay 30% of their income for living expenses. Mr. Adams said the Board has a landlord/tenant relationship with residents and are subject to certain regulations and requirements. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

* 1. **RESOLUTION 20-10-3 ALLOCATION OF 2021 STATE OPIOID RESPONSE FUNDS**

Ms. Shumway said she spoke with a NAMI board member who told her the agency would not be applying for SOR funding. Mr. Adams replied that he met with their board last Wednesday and this was discussed. They commented that the agency was not able to meet some of the requirements of SOR funding, such as outcomes. Regarding SOR 2.0 funding, it is possible agencies who couldn’t meet standards may not get funded. A lot of agencies had difficulty meeting the requirements of SOR 1.0 and have decided not to apply for SOR 2.0 funding. Mr. Adams asked NAMI to keep this option open because they may play a vital role for agencies that apply for and are awarded 2.0 funding because of the support services they provide. This Resolution allocates additional SOR 1.0 funds that were already awarded to current agencies.

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. Discussion: In light of the previous information, Mr. Niewulis asked what the justification is for including NAMI in this Resolution. Mr. Adams said the Resolution is worded in such a way that it will allow the Board to move money from one agency to another and to pay for expenses incurred. Any changes to the original budget must be approved by the state. Mr. Niewulis likes that the Board has the ability to affect where the money is going.

Mr. Petruziello asked if NAMI doesn’t want to participate because they don’t want to follow some of the requirements. Mr. Adams replied that was not his impression, but NAMI feels it was too cumbersome to justify drawing down these funds. He has spoken with the new Director about how they could be included in SOR 2.0 funding. Mr. Petruziello asked how we know that the agencies are following what they are supposed to do. Mr. Adams said the state is required to collect specific outcomes measures. This has been sourced to a third party organization that is collecting this data at the state level and then reporting this information to Boards. Some agencies are doing great compared to other agencies around the state. He was on a conference call yesterday that talked about agencies that are doing very well and Ravenwood Health was included in that discussion. Mr. Adams said some of the reporting requirements were already sent to Board members by staff.

Mr. Claypool asked who determined the allocation amounts. Mr. Adams said at the beginning of the process, agencies send a budget which included the services they were proposing to provide. The amounts in this Resolution represent a percentage of each agency’s original allocation that was approved several months ago. Mr. Niewulis said these allocations were discussed extensively and asked Ms. Slater to send the Minutes and Resolutions where SOR 1.0 was discussed. This information will also bring members up to speed going into SOR 2.0 application and funding.

Mr. Claypool asked if the money allocated in this Resolution could be spread out to other agencies. Mr. Adams replied not without the state’s approval. There is language that does allow the Board to reallocate funds if necessary. Mr. Claypool commented that the Board serves no purpose in this process since the amounts have already been predetermined and are a foregone conclusion. Mr. Adams said the money cannot be spent unless the Board votes to approve the Resolution. Mr. Niewulis understands the point Mr. Claypool is trying to make and agrees to an extent. He said the money came from the federal government to the state and the control mechanisms are out of the Board’s hands. The Board did approve the original allocation amounts and the agencies. The state would have to approve any allocation redistribution if the Board wants to do something different. Technically, these are not pass through funds since the Board approved the original SPR 1.0 allocations to each of the agencies.

Mr. Claypool asked what would happen if the Board votes no. Mr. Adams replied that any expenses incurred by the agencies in September and October would not be paid. The agencies must submit bills for services to drawn down the funds. They don’t just get the allocated amount. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

* 1. **Financial Reports**

Mr. Mausser was not able to attend the meeting tonight. Mr. Adams read a September Board Financial Report recap provided by Mr. Mausser.

* 1. **Approval of Voucher Recap**

Dr. Lesyk moved to approve Voucher No. 651 in the amount of $801,883.99. Ms. Malainy seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

1. **OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Slater asked the Board members to review the SFY2021 Board Roster and Committee Assignment lists for any corrections.

1. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Petruziello would like to see statistics regarding mental health and recovery services starting in March through September and compare those numbers with last year over the same time period to determine if there has been an increase in services as a result of Covid. According to the Health District, there have been 88 positives and 9 hospitalizations through this month in Geauga. He would like to quantify what the impact the lock down is having on the mental health system. He would also like to know the number of new clients and if symptoms have escalated for individuals currently in the system. Mr. Petruziello said the Board needs to see this data and then work with the Health District to come up with some system to the relieve pain we are all suffering, especially kids. Mr. Adams said staff could review claims to see how many new clients there were. Ms. Martin-D’Arienzo has been reviewing crisis services month by month. He thinks service provision was down in the early months because of isolation and the lock down, but that does not mean that the need dropped. There was no mechanism to address the need but now a lot of services can be provided through telehealth. Mr. Petruziello asked if there are any cost savings as a result of telehealth being implemented. He wants to review this information and make sure people are getting the care they need.

Mr. Adams said his biggest concern is the schools because they are having more and more positive cases. Mr. Petruziello asked if there were any reports or fiscal data that can be reviewed. Mr. Claypool commented that sometimes the cure is worse than the disease. He said that Covid-19 is very limited in Geauga and has only impacted a small number of people. The impact of shutting businesses down and requiring masks should all be quantified and the Health District should look at the overall picture of Covid’s impact, including any increases in drug abuse and recidivism. Mr. Claypool said there are mental health facilities that are charging the same or higher amounts for telehealth visits than for face to face visits. The Board should review whether there is a billing cap on this type of service and how our agencies are conducting this new way of doing business. Mr. Adams said the state is considering extending telehealth rules for some services for at least another year or permanently. Even though telehealth was approved there were no rates in place and that process took quite some time. Our agencies are mostly billing Medicaid or accessing specialized funding sources for some of their extra expenses.

Mr. Niewulis said some telemedicine services may be able to be reimbursed through SOR and other grant funds, what does that mean to our agencies regarding the provision of services in the future, and if those services are sustainable financially. He believes strongly in telemedicine and feels that not all clients will return to face to face. It will depend on what they are more comfortable with. Mr. Petruziello is concerned about how telemedicine services are being billed. He said there should be some mechanism in our system so that fraudulent billing does not happen to us or any of our agencies.

Mr. Adams said a lot of the money was for things agencies couldn’t bill for, and SOR funding helped fill in the shortfall. SOR 1.0 can only be used for opioid use and supportive services. A small percentage of the funds helped build the infrastructure for mobile crisis services and telehealth. In SOR 2.0, a portion of the funding can pay for stimulant, tobacco and opioid services.

Ms. Bagley is concerned that as a result of Covid, there are specific populations of individuals who are not asking for help, and are not being recognized, and as a result are not receiving needed services. Mr. Niewulis said that is probably correct but he is not sure how to determine that. He suggested that the Board could provide some type of general service announcements about drugs and mental health and partner with other local agencies to get these messages to the public.

Dr. Oluic would like Ravenwood Health to give a formal presentation to the Board that includes what they do, how they do it, and the agencies they interact with. Ravenwood receives a lot of money from the Board and he feels the Board does not have enough information about what the agency does. Several members have some very specific questions about their services.

Mr. O’Brien moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing compensation of an employee. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-12; NAYS-2; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.** The Board then went into Executive Session at 7:20 PM. The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:15 PM and the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 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**