

**GEAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

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Chairman of the Board

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Board Minutes

October 19, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Carolee Lesyk, Ryan Mekota, Linda Miller, Gregory O'Brien, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Martin Fay, Jennifer Malainy

GUESTS: Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities), Tia Lawrence (Torchlight), Aimee Gilman (Geauga League of Women Voters), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe), Melanie Blasko, Charles Tong, Dale Puruczky (Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers), Mary Wynne-Peaspanen (Signature Health), Angi Daugherty (Family Pride)

STAFF PRESENT: Leila Vidmar, Amie Martin-D'Arienzo, James Mausser, Teresa Slater

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. Ms. Chokshi called the roll for attendance purposes and the following Board members were present at that time: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Carolee Lesyk, Ryan Mekota, Linda Miller, Gregory O'Brien, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, and Mary Ruth Shumway. Walter Claypool arrived at 6:05 PM after the Approval of Board Minutes. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Minutes as written. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion.
Voice Vote: Ayes-11; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic said the main focus right now is the levy. The committee met prior to this meeting. He thanked the agencies for their support. Signs are being placed around the county. The next few weeks will be critical in getting people to vote for the levy.

Dr. Oluic reported that the Board is starting the process to hire a new Executive Director. He hopes to be able to advertise for the position before the end of the year.

Dr. Oluic said the community suffered a great tragedy yesterday when a young man committed suicide. This lends gravity to and underscores the seriousness of what the

Board does to help the community, especially when such a tragic event happens. He asked those present to observe a moment of silence if there was no objection. He reiterated that a tragedy of this nature points to the need for the Board and agencies to address and overcome any challenges happening in the community.

IV. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Vidmar referred to her written report outlining some of the activities that have taken place so far in October. Ms. Vidmar said she and Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo recently met with Interim Northeast Regional Coordinator Margaret Osborne from OhioMHAS.

Ms. Vidmar reported that the levy committee met prior to the Board meeting. She thanked Lee Miller, Linda Miller's husband, who went to Canton to pick up the yard signs. There are 100 and they are available for anyone to take and show their support. There are also several large signs available for placement. The committee decided to put half page ads in the Chagrin Valley Times and the Maple Leaf on October 27th and November 3rd. A flyer will be distributed to agencies and Board members to use however they feel is appropriate. The flyer will be put on the Board's website and Ms. Vidmar asked that agencies do the same. The flyer will also be used for postcard drops in Chesterland. Dr. Oluic and Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo spoke to several community organizations about the importance of the levy. Dr. Oluic asked that agencies talk about the levy if there are any events they will be speaking at. Ms. Vidmar emphasized that these funds are used to help the community.

Ms. Vidmar said the self-care seminar for responders was phenomenal. She served as emcee and approximately 50 people attended. The subjects were very helpful. As a result of the pandemic, it's not unheard of that trauma can affect someone anywhere from 8 months to 8 years after the trauma occurred. It was a great workshop sponsored by the Opiate HUB of the Board.

Ms. Vidmar reported that the Budget Commission review for 2023 went exceptionally well. She, Mr. Mausser and Mr. Petruziello attended.

Ms. Vidmar said she has spoken several times with Retired Justice Stratton, the Executive Director of the Stepping Up program, about providing a short presentation. Justice Stratton clarified that this initiative should be launched by the Commissioners and chaired by the Board, who will then coordinate with the justice system. She will be reaching out to the Commissioners to discuss bringing this program to Geauga county. Ms. Vidmar will then schedule a time for Justice Stratton to speak to the Board about the program.

V. ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo distributed a mailer she worked on as part of the Northeast Ohio Collaborative of Boards. There are different versions that have been created for targeted populations, such as first responders and families with children.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Agency Relations

Ms. Johnson had nothing new to report at this time. She said one of the committee's charges is to review agency consumer outcomes data semi-annually. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that this data is collected quarterly and reviewed by her. She will forward this information to Ms. Johnson.

b. Finance

Mr. Petruziello had nothing new to report.

c. Planning and Policies

Mr. Claypool attempted to have a meeting today but several members had a conflict. He would like to meet sometime next week depending on availability. It was decided that the committee will meet next Tuesday, October 25th at 4:00 PM. Discussion will revolve around the agenda he previously sent to the committee.

d. Opiate HUB

Ms. Miller said the Self-Care for Responders seminar put on by the Board's Opiate HUB was a very successful event.

e. Housing

Ms. Shumway said she started preliminary discussions with some of the agencies and groups the Board works with. The committee recently met with several community agencies about non-medical housing. Discussion included: The need for Geauga to have its own detox center was identified. She has discussed this with University Hospitals, along with the need to have a psychiatric unit for adults and kids in Geauga. Craig Swenson of Job and Family Services is moving forward with building a new youth center behind the current facility.

There is a need for a stepdown facility for the Transitional Living Center and the county jail. Currently there are 16 individuals in the jail who would be better served in a mental health facility. The committee will be looking at several options to meet those needs.

Ravenwood Health has identified 27 individuals and six families who have submitted applications for housing that are homeless in Geauga county. The committee discussed purchasing housing or trailers to use as emergency shelter and then soliciting bids for an agency to provide case management and manage the facility. Ms. Shumway said these individuals and families are connected with mental health services in Geauga.

Ms. Chokshi also attended that meeting and several different housing issues were discussed. Her thought is that the committee will need to prioritize what its findings are, since everything can't be done all at once.

Ms. Shumway said the Board's only input regarding the youth center was to provide funds, and will have no involvement as to how it is run or who runs it. Mr. Mausser clarified that the Board no longer gives funds to Ravenwood to manage and provide services at the youth center. Funding comes from the Commissioners and Job and Family Services.

Ms. Shumway feels the Board's focus should be on non-medical adult housing. The inpatient facility at the hospital is such a big issue that it will probably be at least a year before there is any movement on that front.

Mr. Claypool asked if public notice is given for the Board's subcommittee meetings. Ms. Shumway responded there was for this meeting. Mr. Claypool then asked where the authority for the Board to look at housing comes from. The youth center is funded through the Commissioners and is driven by other needs. Mental health, as defined by the Ohio Revised Code, is very specific. He is not sure housing falls in that category. Mr. Claypool said someone may have a mental health issue but that doesn't cause people to not have housing. He then said there are no "bag people" running around Geauga county. Ms. Shumway said that is not correct. Dr. Lesyk responded there are many mental health issues that can lead to someone to not have housing.

VII. LORI CRISS, DIRECTOR OF OHIO MHAS (REMOTE PRESENTATION)

Ms. Vidmar introduced Lori Criss, Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. She has been with OhioMHAS since 2019, but has worked in the field since 1992, providing community addiction and trauma treatment to homeless individuals and their children and focusing on permanent supportive housing.

Director Criss thanked the Board for inviting her to speak about what is being done at the state level in collaboration with local boards and providers. She commended the Board and staff for their work during the Board's transition period to ensure that services and supports were being provided to the community. Director Criss said she and her staff are available to help in assessing the mental health and addiction needs of the community and can also assist in planning how to best meet those needs. This includes prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

Director Criss referred to Governor DeWine's state of the state address where he dedicated a significant amount of time talking about his vision to build the system of care in Ohio that was promised decades ago but was never fully implemented or invested in. First, by moving individuals out of an institutional setting and integrating people into their local communities to help them thrive. Next, by investing in prevention, supporting parents in raising their families, creating school environments where children can learn, and supporting communities to create an environment that is healthy for everyone. Third, by focusing on the early identification of symptoms. Studies show there is an average of 11 years from when a person first shows symptoms until they get connected with services and supports. She talked about her work with homeless women and watching them spiral downward until receiving the help they needed. In an effort to alleviate many of these issues, she believes the focus should be on prevention, early identification, and supports for individuals with mental health and addiction issues. About 75% of behavioral and

addiction issues start before the age of 25. She feels that is why there needs to be such a big emphasis on K-12 prevention, early childhood development, and support for families.

OhioMHAS has also been working with boards and community partners in building a crisis system. The implementation of 988 was a state initiative designed to make help more visible and to ensure a person receives the help they need to succeed. There has been a tremendous increase in the number of calls to the system. This doesn't necessarily mean there are more challenges than last year at this time, but that more people feel they now have a place to turn to for hope, help and guidance when they are in crisis. OhioMHAS is also working to increase mobile crisis supports and crisis stabilization centers, and behavioral health urgent care centers.

Director Criss reported that boards are currently involved in the process of updating their local Community Assessment and Plan. OhioMHAS is working with boards, agencies and community partners to put a plan together as to what crisis services will look like in their community moving forward, along with an overview of the continuum of care for mental health and addiction services. This replaces an approach that looked at what had been accomplished in the past and which was submitted in a way that is not as dynamic as this new process. Setting goals and measuring progress will be integrated into the CAP and will also help ensure that the right resources and strategies are in place. This assessment will also show whether different infrastructure should be in place to meet the residential needs of individuals who are leaving an inpatient facility or jail. The CAP will also help in assessing what can be done to prevent people from being admitted to a hospital or incarcerated in the first place. This new process will also ensure that the most innovative treatment practices are in place to support wellness and recovery. Additionally, the data gathered may help to determine the root causes of some mental health and addiction issues.

Director Criss gave an example of someone with depression. Counseling works for some people, medication works for others. There are also new medical devices that can help individuals heal from brain injuries and the subsequent challenges which can lead to depression. Diagnosing someone to determine the cause and then getting the right resources in place are paramount so that person can be successful in recovery.

Director Criss then talked about the workforce being a factor in many sectors, especially in the behavioral health fields. The capacity for care is depleted and there are not enough people coming into the behavioral health workforce to meet the demand. OhioMHAS is working collaboratively with the Department of Education, two/four-year colleges, and behavioral health employers across the state to recruit people into the behavioral health workforce. One suggestion is to support paid internships. Research shows that someone is more likely to stay in a position if they are being paid during their internship. All higher education entities are able to be involved with the innovative practices the state is implementing. Hopefully, once someone completes their education, they will then work in their local communities, and not migrate to the big population centers.

Director Criss asked if the Board had any questions or a specific issue they would like her to speak about. Dr. Oluic asked if any Board member or agency representative had

anything in particular. Ms. Bagley asked Director Criss her thoughts as to whether or not housing is an issue for individuals with a mental illness. Dr. Oluic said earlier in the meeting, a Board member asked if it is the Board's mission to address Geauga's housing crisis. Mr. Claypool responded that mental health is the Board's purview who then funds agencies to provide services. Those agencies may have a particular need, such as Ravenwood Health and the Geauga Youth Center, which is funded by the Commissioners. In regard to housing, the Board doesn't respond to mental health issues by providing housing, but would fund agencies if there is a need for some particular type of housing. He does not think this Board should build or own housing, which requires a long-term commitment and should be approached from a business standpoint. Director Criss responded by saying that housing is a critical component to recovery. OhioMHAS has a definition of recovery that people need good health, a home, a purpose, and a community in order to thrive, which includes access to supports and services. There are various types of housing needs, including residential, outpatient, inpatient. The term home means that someone has residential stability, which in turn helps individuals stay engaged with services and supports that address mental health and substance abuse symptoms. Housing is a critical part of the recovery continuum. It is beneficial to everyone to be part of a community and to be connected to something outside of oneself. Housing is one of the four pillars OhioMHAS focuses on.

Director Criss said OhioMHAS has a long history of being engaged with housing developments and supporting housing projects. They partner with the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency to help communities in the planning process in closing gaps by providing housing for those with mental health and recovery needs. They have a capital planning team and a housing team that can assist with housing of all types and help access funding for projects. Some boards have utilized these teams to assist in creating local capital planning and for help in prioritizing the development of housing in their community. Most boards have that as a priority and partner with various community providers. The board wouldn't own or operate the housing facility. The exciting thing now is that boards have the opportunity to really engage in the community planning process and partner with other entities in the community about how to best fill those needs.

Mr. O'Brien said the Board is just starting to address a housing crisis in Geauga as it relates to individuals with mental health and recovery needs. The Board is looking to forge public/private partnerships to meet those needs. He feels that no governmental body, especially this Board, should be in the business of owning or managing facilities, but the Board can help with funding and partner with agencies and stakeholders to provide for the housing needs of our residents. He would be interested to know if there are communities like Geauga in the last several years that have collaborated with developers, stakeholders, professional operators, on similar projects, which the Board may be able to use as a springboard. Director Criss responded their capital and housing teams could be very helpful in this process to determine the best type of facility and any supports that would be provided. They may be aware of any similar projects to what Geauga will need.

Mr. Claypool commented that the government does not have a good track record when making decisions. He gave the example of the huge investment made regarding housing/facilities/nurturing environments for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Then the government decided that wasn't the best solution and individuals were then placed in the community. This was done in Geauga with the Metzenbaum complex, which is now not being utilized for its original purpose. He has seen many times when the government has reversed course on decisions that were made. He wants to make sure that whatever the Board does is well thought out and that we don't have a similar situation. Director Criss replied she is not aware of the Metzenbaum issue but can learn about it if it would be helpful in the Board's planning process so the same mistakes aren't repeated. One way to achieve this is by OhioMHAS making a long-term commitment to housing developments and the organizations involved to make sure the projects endure. This is another way to ensure that money received from the state and any local match funds are being used for their intended purpose.

Dr. Oluic asked if the state is looking at funding for additional state hospitals such as Northcoast. Director Criss said Ohio currently has six regional psychiatric facilities. The state is focused on maximizing the facilities they do have and that individuals have access to inpatient care. Inpatient facility placements are civil, forensic or involuntary. Forensic placements are made with criminal justice involvement, and includes a person who is deemed not guilty by reason of insanity or are declared incompetent to stand trial. This type of placement usually necessitates longer lengths of stay. Acute care placements average about 11 days. Dr. Criss reiterated that at this time, they are working to maximize the numbers of beds in their current hospitals, and not building new facilities. They have indigent funds available that can be used for placement in a private hospital if there is no availability in a state hospital. They have also been working with sheriffs and jail administrators to create new initiatives so inmates get the right kind of care when needed and in the most appropriate environment. They are looking at the creation of more residential availability for stepdown units when someone is discharged from the state hospital or in lieu of placing that person in the hospital, before they are back in their own community.

Dr. Oluic thanked Director Criss for her time and asked if there were any more questions. Mr. Claypool felt this was very informative, and would like to do this again if possible. Director Criss offered to come to Geauga and spend some time with Board members and providers. She is also willing to participate with Board members virtually again. Mr. Petruziello referred to Director Criss' statement about collaborating with jails. He would like to speak further with her and the OhioMHAS teams because Geauga has a similar issue to address and someone else may already have a solution or is working on one. Director Criss has been working with a committee of the Buckeye Sheriff's Association. She asked for Mr. Petruziello's contact information to connect him with the OhioMHAS teams and some of the sheriffs to see the creative ways they are meeting needs.

Ms. Shumway said part of the reason these housing issues should be addressed by the Board is because many funding streams flow through the Board to be distributed for a particular purpose, such as managing a housing facility. Dr. Oluic said the Board should not be landlords, but can act as advocates and help solve problems. Ms. Shumway said the Board can apply for and allocate funding through grants and other financial means on behalf of agencies once the housing priorities have been decided upon. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the Board has been successful when applying for capital grants. Mr. Claypool responded that many times this is not the government's responsibility. There is

a business opportunity here. He referred to Director Criss' mention of a stepdown unit to a hospital. In a capitalistic society, the hospital would set up that facility because it would be a money-making opportunity for them and would be part of their business model. If there is a need for stepdown or other facilities, he feels businesses would see that opportunity and fund it rather than have government controlling it. Dr. Oluic responded that so much of society can't afford what the hospitals can do. Mr. O'Brien agrees that the Board should not be in the business of running housing facilities, but if the Board can assist in meeting the significant capital cost in building something new or renovating an existing facility, and also entering into a long-term contract, that is in the Board's purview. He is committed to pursuing this and will do everything in his power to get it done.

VIII. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Correction to Resolution 22-09-7 SAMHSA Emergency Covid-19 Crisis Funds Allocation Date Extension

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said this Resolution was passed at last month's Board meeting, but the wrong resolution number was referenced. Mr. Petruziello moved to accept the correction to this Resolution. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. **Voice Vote: Ayes-11; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.** (Mr. Claypool had briefly stepped out of the meeting).

b. Resolution 22-10-1 Lake Geauga Recovery Centers Additional Allocation for SFY2022

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo explained that Lake Geauga Recovery Centers experienced an increase in the amount of services that was unexpected for SFY2022, which resulted in an overbilling of \$10,810.66 for SUD Residential and Prevention services. The agency will not be paid for these services unless the Board allocates additional funds. The funding for this allocation would come from the Board's unencumbered reserves. Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-12; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

c. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser reported that 21.9% of the Board's administrative budget was expended through September. There was one expenditure from the Community Education Budget for Constant Contact, which is used to distribute information via an online newsletter. Expenditures for the calendar year were just over \$5.47 Million. The Unencumbered Reserves balance has been substantially reduced due to moving funds into the Capital Projects Reserve fund. He is still waiting to hear back from the State Auditor to have this finalized. As of September 30th, Unencumbered Reserves were just over \$1.88 Million. There are some Cash Balances by Source of Funds line items that are negative because he is waiting to receive second quarter allocations from OhioMHAS.

d. Voucher Recap

The following September Voucher Recap was sent to the Board for informational purposes: Voucher #675 in the amount of \$562,848.83.

Dr. Oluic reminded the agencies to come to the Board if they are experiencing any issues or stressors with funding. There are many needs in the community and the Board's mission is to address the needs of Geauga citizens.

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Levy Update

An update was provided earlier in the meeting.

b. HUD Monitoring Report

Mr. Mausser reported on the weeklong federal audit review. The Board passed with flying colors. He commended Ravenwood on all the information they provided for many of the review items. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said there is a tremendous amount of work that goes into an audit and that Mr. Mausser did a wonderful job.

c. Board Training Topics

A list of trainings that can be provided by the Association was sent to the Board for review. It was decided the Board would like to have the Roles, Rights and Responsibilities training presented in person if possible. Ms. Slater will reach out to the Association for some tentative dates.

d. Prosecutor Opinion Re Emails

As noted in the email distributed to Board members, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Weiland suggested that geauga.org email addresses be assigned to Board members if they so choose. Ms. Slater will get that process started.

e. Public Comments

Dr. Oluic asked if there were any public comments. Ms. Bertman asked about getting some yard signs. Ms. Blasko thanked the Board for the additional funding. Mr. Petruziello suggested that agencies speak about the levy at their local trustee meetings.

f. Executive Session Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1) to Consider the Employment of a Public Employee or Official

Mr. Petruziello moved that the Board go into Executive Session pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(1) to consider the employment of a public employee or official. Ms. Bagley seconded the motion. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-12; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion**

approved. The Board then went into Executive Session at 7:05 PM. The Board came out of Executive Session and was back in Regular Session at 7:46 PM. There was no action taken as a result of the Executive Session.

X. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business discussed.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Shumway would like the Board to discuss allocating funding to certify a specialist to provide the Miss Kendra program (a K-12 Trauma Informed Social Emotional Learning program) in Geauga.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Oluic moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Lesyk seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ms. Teresa Slater
Secretary/Receptionist

Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

Ms. Alberta Chokshi
Secretary of the Board