

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

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Board Minutes

November 16, 2022

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Martin Fay, Mary Ruth Shumway

GUESTS: Kim Carter (NAMI Geauga), Katherine Franz (Gauga League of Women Voters), Vicki Clark (Ravenwood Health), Melanie Blasko (Lake-Gauga Recovery Centers), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe), Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities)

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

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

Dr. Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He asked Ms. Chokshi to call the roll for attendance purposes and the following Board members were present: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Carolee Lesyk, Jennifer Malainy, Ryan Mekota, Linda Miller, Gregory O'Brien, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 19 AND NOVEMBER 1, 2022

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Minutes as written. Dr. Lesyk seconded the motion. Ms. Slater made a correction on the last page of the October 19th Minutes and changed Dr. Carolee to Dr. Lesyk. **Voice Vote: Ayes-12; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic talked about the following:

- He thanked the agencies, Board members and staff for their joint efforts in helping to get the levy passed. The response of the community was very heartwarming despite all of the turmoil in the media and with the Commissioners.
- The Capital Projects Reserves Fund line has been approved by the State Auditor and will now be included as a budget line item in the Board's financial reports.

- A job description has been created for the Executive Director position. This topic will be discussed in more detail later in the meeting. One unsolicited application has already been received.
- There will be no meeting in December unless something comes up that needs to be addressed before the January meeting.

IV. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Vidmar reported on the following:

- She thanked everyone for their contribution in helping to get the levy passed in every precinct by an overwhelming 72%. One other county received 73% approval on their levy.
- Staff is being cross-trained in different areas. Ms. Slater is being trained to serve as the backup for billing, along with some compliance matters, to insure coverage while others are on vacation or out of the office.
- She reviewed the 76-page Community Plan with Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo that was included for the Board to review and thanked her for all the amazing work that went into completing it.
- Mr. Mausser is off this week, Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo is off next week, and Ms. Slater is off the week after that. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo will also be out of the office the last two weeks of December. The office will be closed next Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving.
- Her meeting with Cheri Walter from the Association was cancelled and will be rescheduled.
- Ms. Vidmar has had multiple interactions with agencies throughout the month. She thanked them for their patience as she is asking questions. She has told them to continue to reach out to her whenever they need her help.
- There is no update at this time regarding Stepping Up. This is a great organization that helps with the placement of individuals once they are released from jail. Ms. Bagley asked if this is new to Geauga County and why we are waiting to start this program. Ms. Vidmar said she has spoken with Retired Justice Stratton, who is the Director of Stepping Up in Ohio. The plan is to wait and implement the program in Geauga County once the Board's new Executive Director is in place. NAMI Geauga has had some initial involvement with the program and would like to continue that involvement along with the Board. She has spoken with the Lake and Cuyahoga Board Directors, who use various aspects of the program. It is her plan that Justice Stratton will provide an overview of the program to the Board after the first of the year.

Ms. Slater said she discussed Board member training obligations and opportunities with OhioMHAS. A representative from the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities can present the *Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities of Board Members* training as part of a Board meeting. The training is about 30 minutes long. Ms. Slater listened to the presentation today and thought it was very helpful and contains a lot of good information. The plan is to have someone from the Association come to the January +Board meeting and make the presentation in person, weather permitting. It can also be done virtually. Ms. Slater suggested that the person could come earlier in the day if they

want and meet with Board members and/or agency directors prior to the Board meeting itself.

V. ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo talked about the following items:

Geauga Street Card and Resource Guide: Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo developed a street card, resource guide and webpage as a result of findings from a Geauga County Community Health Needs Assessment Plan. She has set up a separate website so the Board could review the information first, but it will be linked to the Board's website. She would like to get the Board's approval before launching this. Ms. Chokshi asked who the documents would be distributed to. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded courts, agencies, probation officers, jail personnel, social service organizations. Her thought is to send the documents to the various organizations electronically to print as needed. The pdf links to both documents will also be on the Board's website. The Health Department offered to provide a QR Code that when scanned would link to the Board's webpage. The documents will be updated on an ongoing basis. Ms. Bagley said some of the entities are different now. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said she called all of the numbers to verify they are working. The documents can be changed or updated at any time. She said the information has not been distributed yet, but was just an idea she had. Ms. Bagley feels it is a great idea. She said that Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo would have gotten an answer at the 285-9141 number because that is Geauga Job and Family Services, but the Sunshine Shop is no longer in business. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied she understands the shop itself is no longer there, but the program that was associated with it is still in place and that is why she kept the information in. She will reconfirm with JFS to make sure. She then asked if the Board is ok with moving forward with this project and received several affirmative responses.

Mr. Claypool asked where the list of agencies and phone numbers came from. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said she used Google for a lot of them when creating the documents. They were also reviewed by the Faith-Based Coalition, the Health Department, Job and Family Services, and Judge Stupica. Mr. Claypool commented that Next Step is not a homeless center. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that it provides emergency housing to 18-25-year-old transitional youth. Mr. Claypool reiterated that it is not a homeless shelter and right now it is full. Ms. Gutka responded that Next Step is considered a homeless shelter and so is WomenSafe. Mr. Claypool asked if anyone can go and ask to stay there. Ms. Gutka responded Next Step is classified that way because the facility is for transitional age youth who are or may become homeless. Mr. Claypool disagrees with classifying it as a homeless shelter because youth are being placed in transitional housing, but they are not homeless.

Mr. Claypool then asked what the Harriet Tubman Movement for human trafficking is. He has never heard of that entity. Ms. Johnson said it is a fabulous program. Mr. Claypool replied the FBI oversees human trafficking. If that is going on here, then the FBI should be called in. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said they do inform the authorities but the individuals they serve need somewhere to go. Ms. Johnson said she attended a Harriet Tubman steering committee meeting. The woman who spoke had went through the program and talked about what it entails. Ms. Johnson again said she feels this is a fabulous program.

There is a lot of information about the Harriet Tubman Movement online and Ms. Johnson suggested anyone not familiar with them can research the program and see what it is all about. She feels it is a program that is really helping people. Mr. Claypool would like to know more about it because he has had some personal experience with human trafficking.

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said these are living documents and only the Board has seen the completed documents. Mr. Claypool asked if United Way is still in Geauga County. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied yes, it is. Mr. Claypool responded that United Way is now in Cleveland. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo reiterated there is an office in Geauga. Mr. Petruziello suggested including websites for all the agencies. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo isn't sure if all that information would fit but she can try. She did include the websites for AA and NA meetings. The Board's website will of course be included.

Ms. Miller asked if these are the documents that were developed by one of the HUB subcommittees. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said that was a grid showing available treatment resources. It is already on the front page of the Board's website. This is more of a quick resource guide for use by social service and county entities in Geauga.

The Geauga Community Assessment and Plan for the Provision of Mental Health and Addiction Services in CY2023-2025: Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo prefaced this discussion by saying that the state chooses the boxes that need to be completed. They were not chosen by her. We are to then let the state know how we are going to address what they say is needed.

Mr. Petruziello asked what the 40.3% means regarding the lack of affordable or quality housing as shown on Page 10. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said it means if the amount of a person's take home income reaches a certain bar percentage wise for housing, then it is not considered affordable housing. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo reiterated that these are not our bars, so in the state's terms, this means that this percentage of individuals in Geauga do not have what they would qualify as affordable housing. In other words, the percentage of take-home pay someone is paying for rent or mortgage is higher than the bar the state set for affordability. Again, she stated that we don't control this data and we don't control the measures. Mr. Petruziello asked for clarification that this means 40.3% of Geauga County residents are not in affordable quality housing. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded the state is saying the amount Geauga residents are paying in mortgage or rent compared to the percentage of income they have in their take home pay is higher than the bar the state would consider as affordable housing. She thinks the state's bar is 25/30% of income. Their findings show that 40.3% of Geauga County residents pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

Mr. Petruziello then asked about the 42% as it relates to the lack of broadband access. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo again prefaced her answer by stating that she did not populate that number, the state did. Mr. O'Brien interjected that Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo has said that several times and that the Board gets it. In response to Mr. Petruziello's inquiry, Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo says it means they took everybody who had internet access and then somehow came to that number as the percentage of Geauga residents who don't have

broadband. Mr. Petruziello asked if that is a state number or a county number. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that it is a county number.

Mr. Claypool commented that if the state is doing all this... Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the state did that part. Mr. Claypool then continued and said this isn't the Board's Plan, it is the state's Plan. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded that is correct. Mr. Claypool replied that the Board should not be voting on anything tonight, because he isn't voting on a state plan, but he would vote on a Geauga County plan. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said this is the Plan for our county that the state is requiring us to fill out and submit as the Community Plan. We don't have a choice. It is statutorily required. Mr. Claypool followed up stating that if it is statutorily required that we submit a plan, shouldn't the plan... Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said it is not that the Board must submit a plan, it is statutorily required that we submit this Plan. Several people then spoke at the same time and Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo tried to continued her explanation. Mr. Claypool emphatically stated that he objects to the state giving this Board a plan that the Board must then submit as its own. He called that action fascism and vehemently spoke against it. He then suggested contacting Director Criss now and reiterated that he is not going to vote on something that is not the Board's.

Mr. O'Brien asked what the purpose would be for the Board to approve and vote on something that was created by the state and was populated with data and information gathered by the state. He is not saying that the Board should independently verify all this information, but is asking what the practical reason is why the Board would have to vote on something the state created. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said it is because the state wants us to approve the Plan in its totality. She said the state provides the data sets we are allowed to use – they give us the data – and she then has to go through that data and place it in the document and make it fit into their defined goals. Then in the goals document, she put how each goal will be met, and made the answers as generic as possible. As an example, under harm reduction, she said we will continue to work with the Geauga Health Department on Project Dawn and Narcan training. She tried to make the goals – especially since we are in between leadership – as broad as she could make them so that whoever came in could do whatever they wanted to do to meet that goal.

Mr. O'Brien reiterated his understanding in lay man's terms: The state has identified these issues using their metrics and the Board is to respond how we are going to address them. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded that is correct. She said the places where she cited specific information includes reference to all of the data sets that were utilized. She had to hand pull all the data from specific data sets. Ms. Bagley asked if part of the purpose is so the Board can't say at some later point in time that we didn't know this. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that every county does this and it's legislatively decided. Mr. O'Brien asked what the significance of the 1,2,3 categories is and who put those there. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded that honestly, she has no idea.

Mr. Petruziello asked how does the state know whether or not we are following this Plan. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said every year she has to complete a progress report – an example was included – to tell the state how we are meeting the benchmarks or not. Every year when this progress report comes out, if there is an issue that comes up it is flagged and the Board can then alter the Plan for that issue. The Plan is evaluated yearly.

Ms. Malainy asked if it would make sense to table this since we don't understand what every piece of data means. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo started to explain. Ms. Malainy clarified that the Board is being asked to take what the state said and that they should respond to it without fully understanding what every number means and approve it. She is not saying it is Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo's fault. Ms. Malainy asked the other Board members whether they should talk to the state about this or if everyone is ok with pushing through something we don't even know what it is. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said she knows what every number is. Ms. Malainy then asked her to talk about the 1, 2 and 3 categories. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the state asked the Board to prioritize based on the data sets that they approved and that we are allowed to use to fill in the blanks. That is why she is having the Board look at it. She said the Plan is due January 1st and the Board doesn't meet in December. She needs time to input all of this data into a state databank.

Mr. O'Brien asked in response to Ms. Malainy's question and using some of the categories Mr. Petruziello pointed out – such as lack of broadband – is the Board saying that No. 1 is important and is something the Board needs to work on. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the top three challenges are ranked by the data that you are required to input from and the databases that they approve for you to input from. Mr. O'Brien asked for further clarification. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied as an example, on the first page where it says we have priorities 1, 2 and 3, all of the moderate and minimal challenges wouldn't be included. It has to be the top data points that came out of what the state would consider standard deviation from the mean. In our case in regard to youth alcohol use – which was 32% overall for youth and 52% for 17 and 18-year-olds in our county - is a lot higher than the state value and that's why it would be No. 1. The reason why I put youth depression as No. 2 – even though we have an Ohio value, we don't have a county value because it's not a question we ask kids in this county, is due to the fact that the adult rates are very, very high. Because of that, Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo used it as a benchmark to say since the Ohio value is high and the adult rates are high we are going to choose to address this issue, which is already being done through outpatient services and is part of the Board's continuum of care. The third one says crisis calls in youth have increased 14% from 2021 to 2022. Anxiety and depression diagnoses in youth in Ohio increased 50% from 2018 to 2021. That then became our third top challenge because that was the third down as far as standard deviation from the mean. It is not about what our Board feels is most important, but what the data says is most important and how the Board is going to address it is in the Plan.

Ms. Johnson's understanding is that Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo inputs the data and the program established these priorities/challenges from the data. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that is correct. Mr. Petruziello asked if any Board has ever questioned one of their Plans. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied no. Mr. Petruziello asked why aren't we questioning the Plan based on our experience. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said some of the things in the Plan can be altered. For example, if for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), instead of increasing the number of households, the Board could put in a different goal in that box if they wanted to. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo further said the Board would still have to address how you are going to increase services for MAT since that is what is required. You can change the actual example. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo made them as broad as possible so that whoever came in could put in whatever programming they saw as the strategy and

the Board could have the most leeway. In regard to the black boxes – like crisis services and harm reduction – the Board doesn't have a choice over that. Also, the outcomes indicators clearly say where those are supposed to come from and the priority groups clearly say what they should be. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said it took her a lot of hours of work to get to this point, but she did try to make it as broad as she could possibly make it given the data we were to use.

Mr. Claypool commented that given how we are seeing mental health melt down in this country, isn't it time we start acting like adults and start questioning some of this stuff. He is looking at a statistic on Page 3 under mental health substance abuse and we are saying that 25.09% of Geauga's population have mental health issues. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo thought Mr. Claypool may ask about that and she some information for him. Mr. Claypool stated that would equate to 23,000 people and asked if there are 23,000 people in Geauga County who have mental health issues. If so, he thinks that is nuts, but it may depend on how you define mental health. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded that the prevalence rate includes adjustment disorders which is a huge number of individuals, and does not just include individuals with severe mental illness. Mr. Claypool asked what that means. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said that means stressors and would include people who are under stress. Mr. Claypool responded that attending this meeting tonight is stressful and asked if she is saying everyone in this room is mentally ill tonight. If we are going to start categorizing everybody that has stress and depression in their life then we have 100% of a problem in Geauga County. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that is the statistic provided to the Board by the state. Mr. Claypool then said he is questioning the state and doesn't think the state has good data. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo reiterated that it is not her. Mr. Claypool responded that he knows it is not her and he is not taking a shot at her. He is saying it is time we start questioning stuff because the state is basing decisions and making mandates to the Board based on questionable data. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo thought Mr. Claypool might have some questions so she did print some information for him to review. Mr. Claypool said he will look at the data sets, but he is also going to call Director Criss, set up a meeting with her and start challenging and questioning some of this.

Ms. Chokshi said if it is a requirement, she will go along with Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo, in that we need to fulfill the requirement. The next step would be to address this at the state level if Mr. Claypool feels it doesn't represent the county. She feels the Board should vote on whether to do that. She thinks the Board has to do this if we want funding. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded that is correct. This is legislatively required. There is also a legislative requirement section in the Plan that was pre-approved on October 7th. If we don't approve this we get no funds. We won't have any state or federal funds. Mr. Claypool asked how much funding that would be. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said it would be everything else except for the levy. Mr. Claypool again asked how much that is. He said the Board has \$4 Million that wasn't used this year. The Board should tell the state to go pound salt and we'll use our levy money. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that would not be enough money.

Mr. Petruziello said the Board should start working with our legislators if this is a legislative issue. We need to get our state representatives in here and tell them the dilemma we are having. The Board is just cart blanche approving/authorizing whatever the state wants.

Ms. Chokshi said Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo included responses that are very broad as to what the Board is going to do. She believes the Board has to approve this because it is about funding. Then if the Board wants to, we can proceed with contacting the state and/or the legislature.

Ms. Malainy asked why only Ravenwood Health is listed. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded that some of these services are only provided by Ravenwood, such as the higher end severe mental illness services in the county. Further on, you will see some services we pay for that are only provided by Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers. Mr. Claypool asked about Peer Mentoring as a category. NAMI Geauga does peer mentoring and asked why their name isn't in the Plan. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied they do Peer to Peer Mentoring, but in regard to the Plan, it has to be provided by someone certified to do peer recovery supports, which in this case is a very specific category. Both Ravenwood Health and Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers do that. NAMI used to have a certified peer support specialist on staff. It is a statutory definition. She can ask if NAMI can be added, but this Plan refers to the continuum of care.

Ms. Bagley said it is very confusing to have several sections with the same numbering. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied that she understands that, but she doesn't control the document. Ms. Bagley asked if part of the feedback could be that most documents only have one Page 3. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said we can let them know, but this is in a database and she would have to fill it all in on the database itself. Ms. Bagley replied that just added to the confusion. Mr. Petruziello replied that this needs to be done legislatively. Dr. Oluic feels that the Board can provide feedback. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo commented that the Board can provide feedback, but as she said, she has no control over the document itself. Dr. Oluic responded that the document is very metrics driven.

Dr. Mekota commented on the fact that if the Board has to approve this, the Board could then explore what the data sets are. He suggested doing that instead of just outright refusing and rebutting a database on a hunch or because we don't like the number. Dr. Oluic said the Board does have committees that we could engage to address this issue, such as Planning and Policies and/or Agency Relations, and spend some time on this matter. He reviewed this and a lot of what was said here he saw also. But, to keep our operation going...He then asked Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo if that finishes what she had to say. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied yes, and with that in mind, there should be a motion on the Resolution for the Community Plan. Dr. Oluic said that will be done later in the meeting.

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo then distributed information from the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities titled *ADAMH Boards: Your County Mental Health and Addiction Leaders*, which includes a broad overview of what Boards do.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Agency Relations

Ms. Johnson reported she did receive agency outcomes data from Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo and they will be reviewing that information together to help her understand what all the

numbers mean and what else the Board may want to track. Ms. Johnson will also be reviewing the Request for Proposal process in the next few months.

b. Finance

Mr. Petruziello thanked everyone for the great job in getting the levy passed.

c. Planning and Policies

Mr. Claypool said at the last meeting, the committee discussed what their goals and objectives should be in light of the committee's charter, the Board's Bylaws and any Ohio Revised Code requirements, and then will choose what to focus on first.

d. Opiate HUB

Ms. Miller had nothing new to report.

e. Housing

Ms. Shumway was unable to attend this evening.

VII. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Resolution 22-11-1 Approval of Community Plan for CY2023-2025

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution to pass the Community Assessment and Plan. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. Discussion: Dr. Oluic commented that there has already been quite a bit of discussion regarding this matter. Mr. Petruziello said he supports this in order to get funding, but he would like to have some more input next year. Ms. Johnson said it is a three-year Plan. He then asked if the Plan can be revised. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the Board can revise it with permission from the state. But again, we can only use their data. The data sets that they allow us to use, that we are allowed to compile from, and those numbers are not going to change. They will change for next year, but it won't change what we are allowed to use now. The overall goals that they have are not going to change, but we can change the ways in which we are going to fulfill them. Mr. Petruziello said the Board would then have two years to come up with a different strategy.

Dr. Oluic said there were some comments made tonight that there is nothing stopping the Board from giving feedback to the state. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo can let the Board know the contact information for the person who is in charge of this at the state. Dr. Oluic said we will need people to actually work on doing that. Mr. Claypool said he is not a believer in we can't challenge something. We can and it is our duty and responsibility as citizens of our county to try and change things for the good. Last year, the Board was looking at the same document and the same questions came up and now a year has passed. We have to start looking at some of this stuff. He doesn't think that the data is good. He feels if someone sits down with Director Criss and anyone else at the state level and have a conversation with them, we can get to the heart of this and give us some answers and

demonstrate that the data is good. He can point out several places where the data doesn't make any sense from a commonsense perspective. He reiterated that the Board needs to start doing that. If not, then his time and everyone else's here is wasted.

Dr. Oluic responded that the Board is talking about contacting the state. Mr. Petruziello said this Board has an obligation to provide mental health services to our constituents. In order to get funding, we have to get this document approved and signed. We have an obligation to do that, but we also have an obligation to make sure our recommended changes are heard by the state agencies and representatives to get these things done.

Mr. Claypool said another thing is that we have one agency – he is not taking a shot at Ravenwood – but they provide 90% of the services. He asked if the Board should start looking at how to get other agencies involved so we have some diversity of thought and some different ways of looking at things. Mr. Petruziello responded that is a completely different issue. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said every one of the data sets in these grids is utilized to get grants. If the Board would like to look at the data sets further, she has that information, but the approved data sets are not going to change. Mr. Claypool replied that showing him a number doesn't mean that number is good. Anyone can fudge numbers. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said what she is being told by the government is that the numbers are good. If you don't believe it is or you believe the data is bad that is another argument. The state is telling her this is the data that is good to use for this.

Moving forward, Dr. Oluic said the Board has the data that is to be used from the state. Ms. Johnson said she believes this is a three-year Plan. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said that is correct. She did include the progress report so the Board can see that we do have the ability to change a strategy used to meet a particular goal.

Dr. Oluic said if the Board is going to question the data, we can't always go to Director Criss. There are departments that handle the data collection and interpretation and that is where the Board should start. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo can provide the Board with the contact information for the state, including the person who did the county's profile. That part wasn't her. She was just plugging in the numbers. The part about how we are going to meet it – that was her. Dr. Oluic commented that it doesn't do any good to just talk about it here, but we need to move forward and make the time to do it. Ms. Bagley asked if there should be an ad hoc committee to do that. Dr. Oluic was looking at either Agency Relations or Planning and Policies. He doesn't know which committee would be better suited. Mr. Claypool suggested that Planning and Policies could pick some sections to start with and address those at the state level. He would like to talk about that more at the next meeting. Ms. Miller called the question. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-11; Nays-1; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

b. Written Summary/Financial Reports

Dr. Oluic referenced the summary provided by Mr. Mausser and included in the Board packet. He noted that the Capital Reserves Fund has been established by the Auditor's Office. Approximately 26% of the Board's budget has been expended through October of the current fiscal year which started in July. Mr. Petruziello suggested Board members call Mr. Mausser with any questions.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Housing Committee – Standing or Ad Hoc

Dr. Oluic said there has been discussion about whether Housing should be a standing committee or continue as an ad hoc committee. There has also been some discussion about changing the name of the committee in that Housing may not reflect all the items that may need to be addressed under that committee. He then opened the floor for discussion. Ms. Bagley asked what the motivation is for changing the name. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo replied so that it would be more in line with funding. Capital Planning was one of the suggestions made by Mr. Mausser. It is much broader than the word "Housing". The Board also has other facilities under its auspices. An example would be if one the houses needed a new boiler, or if an agency needed to remodel a bathroom, that would allow the Board to utilize the funds for those purposes. Mr. O'Brien feels that name would be appropriate. He sees that committee working in junction with the team and going out to do an inventory and assessment and determine what may be needed in the future, such as a new roof, and then funds could be set aside for specific purposes. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said it would open the door for the funds to be used not just for new facilities but to retrofit/renovate facilities, such as Metzenbaum and agency residential facilities. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said agencies are excited about that potential use going forward. The funds would give the Board the option to be used to ensure specific housing meets code and is operational instead of starting over. Dr. Oluic said the Board is not in the "Housing" business and that's why the name Capital Planning would be better and allow the Board to move forward and work in partnership with an agency depending on what the need is. He feels it is time to make this a standing committee.

Mr. Claypool asked what the argument is for that because he disagrees. According to the Board's charter and Bylaws, there is a Planning and Policies committee and the purpose of that committee is to do planning and establish policy. It would make sense that an ad hoc or subcommittee would provide the information to Planning and Policies to do the planning necessary if housing is even appropriate. This is a Mental Health Board, not a housing board. He feels the committee should remain informational and then feed that information to Planning and Policies so they can do its job which is to create plans and strategy. Mr. O'Brien said based on the statement earlier from Mr. Claypool about not being able to "eat the whole elephant", Planning and Policies already has a lot going on. This is a very important issue and is something the vast majority of Board members feel the need to focus on, which includes addressing capital planning needs and improvements. He feels it connotes being its own standing committee in order to move forward with the challenges that we have. Ms. Chokshi disagrees with Mr. Claypool and also feels it should be a standing committee on its own and be called Capital Planning. Ms. Johnson also feels it should be a standing committee and that Capital Planning is a good name for that committee. The committee would be one of four standing committees that would then work in conjunction with the other committees of the Board and also with the agencies. As far as being ad hoc, she sees capital planning as something there will always be a need for, especially with the expanded definition given by Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo.

Mr. Claypool said the decision should be based on the scale and scope of the issues in terms of housing. He has heard talk about housing in vague terms which have not been defined. The Board needs to define what that is, what the magnitude is, and what the Board is trying to accomplish. He mentioned talk about homeless people in Geauga and he asked someone show him a homeless person – what the statistics are and how many are there. When the Board defines what it is trying to accomplish then we should talk about whether the committee should be standing or ad hoc. The Board may find we are talking about a very little need instead of a big need. Dr. Oluic responded that the homeless population is not what is being discussed or even the goals. Mr. Claypool replied he doesn't know what is being talked about. Board members keep talking about housing and he doesn't know what that means. Ms. Bagley said the Board is talking about capital planning now. Ms. Chokshi said capital planning could include housing.

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said there are certain crisis services the county doesn't have, including crisis respite housing, 23-hour observation, or transitional housing. Dr. Oluic said we are not talking about homeless people per se, but people who receive mental health services and individuals who need to transition out of stabilization facilities. Mr. Claypool said that should be the function of an agency and not the Board. Mr. Claypool asked where individuals who need transition come from and if that include the Sheriff. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said they need a stepdown facility. Mr. Claypool responded that is Ravenwood's job. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the Board would help Ravenwood or Lake Geauga do that. Mr. Claypool said that is the agency's business if they need transitional housing - it is on them. He then asked where they would be transitioning from and whose responsibility is it. Dr. Oluic said it is individuals coming from Northcoast Behavioral Health Center, the jail, individuals who get pink slipped by police officers and sent to Laurelwood or University Hospitals. There are multiple feeder paths for transitional housing. Ms. Bagley said Stepping Up could be part of this. Mr. Claypool said that would not be the same kind of people as from the different agencies who would have different needs. You would not want someone transitioning from the jail population with other individuals coming from Ravenwood. That is two different populations. Dr. Oluic responded that it would depend on the level of care needed. Sometimes jail is the only place to put individuals with mental illness who are then held in isolation and don't get the care they need.

Dr. Oluic said housing would be for individuals with mental health and addiction needs and may include someone that is being released from the jail. It would also depend on the level of care each person needs. Mr. Claypool said if they are coming out of the jail that means they behaved in a criminal manner and you would not want to put them with others. Ms. Vidmar replied sometimes that is the only place available. Every person needs to be assessed individually. Mr. Holden asked if the Board is talking about building our own facility here. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the Board is talking about making a standing committee and then changing the name because the way the fund is set up is capital planning. If we change the name of the committee that would change the focus of the committee to do some of the other things she mentioned earlier instead of just focusing on building houses.

Mr. O'Brien said this much debate furthers the point and dictates that it should be a standing committee. Dr. Oluic asked for Dr. Mekota's opinion on housing, crisis facilities,

treatment. Dr. Mekota said there is inadequate care in any jail of individuals with mental illness. You don't want someone to transition from an inpatient psychiatric treatment facility right back into the community. Having some type of stepdown unit or facility that provides the services and support someone needs to help them transition back into the community makes the most sense to him.

Dr. Oluic asked if the agencies had anything to add. Ms. Carter said Stepping Up program was mentioned. She was appointed as the county contact and has been working with Stepping Up for almost two years. She would like to tell the Board what it is and what it is not. If you understand what the program is, then when we go through the process, it will answer a lot of the questions the Board is asking. She explained that Stepping Up is a federal initiative. Each state has its own Stepping Up initiative. Ohio was chosen as one of the five original focus states to implement this initiative. Retired Justice Stratton is the Director of Stepping Up in Ohio. The program was started because jails and prisons have become the de facto institutions for individuals with mental illness after psychiatric institutions were closed. Her son is part of this system which is why she is so passionate about this issue. We need to look at what we are going to do to get people out of jails and prison who have mental illness. It does not make sense to take a psychotic individual and throw them in a cell 23 hours a day with no treatment and no medications and expect them to be ok. Stepping Up is a national initiative created to address this issue. There has already been a lot of work done in the two years before the Board ever found out about Stepping Up. The Board is the last stakeholder to be included locally. The jail, Sheriff, Judges, County Commissioners are all on board. The sooner this group gets on board, the sooner this project can get started. When it is started, all the stakeholders will come together to address this mental health issue. That would include legal, justice, judges, providers, public health. She and Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo were in a meeting last week with Geauga Public Health and University Hospitals. All of the people involved as a stakeholder and touched in any way by this issue are in the room together. University Hospitals has hired an organization to conduct sequential mapping in Geauga - which is a \$35,000 service – but since Geauga is a registered Stepping Up county that will be included as part of the project. Ms. Bagley asked Ms. Carter to further describe what she is talking about in regard to sequential mapping. Ms. Carter said there will be trained facilitators to determine where the gaps are and provide experts, access to funds, and additional resources to fill those gaps. Ms. Carter said there will be experts smarter than everyone else in the room to help find the service gaps. We are learning from people who are far out in front of us at solving these issues. Stepping Up has access to funds and resources. They will facilitate and help decide what the problems are and then what the county wants to do. Maybe that would be building a transitional housing unit and approach Stepping Up for the funds.

Ms. Carter reiterated that she has been working on this program for two years before Ms. Vidmar knew anything about it. Ms. Chokshi said that population requires a different type of housing which could be addressed through the Capital Planning committee. She asked if the funds come from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and/or the Department of Corrections. Ms. Carter said the funds could come from many sources. It takes a lot of money to repeatedly incarcerate someone. We are going to spend the money one way or another when someone gets involved with the justice system. If we could find a way to treat individuals with mental illness and keep them out of justice

system where they don't belong, which includes providing housing, work, rehabilitation, medication, therapy, then they can become a productive member of society. She gave an example of someone who has been incarcerated many times at a cost of over \$1,000,000.00. Dr. Oluic responded that the Board is very familiar with the issues regarding Stepping Up.

Ms. Chokshi reminded everyone that this discussion is about whether Housing/Capital Planning should be an ad hoc or standing committee. Mr. Claypool said the Board is creating a plan based on no definition of scale or scope. Ms. Chokshi said the committee would decide what their charge would be and then work with the other committees and agencies. Mr. Claypool said the committee should bring a plan to the Board – the size, scale, scope and what is trying to be accomplished - and then the Board can decide based on that information where to go - whether it should be standing or ad hoc committee or a capital committee. He has seen no definition from the Board of what we are even talking about. Mr. Petruziello responded that the Housing committee has meet with a lot of the stakeholders and determined what is needed. We know the Sheriff has a huge problem with recidivism and many of those individuals don't belong in jail, but need some type of stepdown facility. There are people who need 24-hour care. The committee identified a problem at the Geauga Youth Center that is now being addressed by Job and Family Services and Ravenwood. Mr. Claypool responded that the committee should bring their findings to the Board. We are ahead of ourselves if we don't know what the issues are. Mr. Petruziello asked how you get the information if there is no committee that is investigating what is needed. There are several different housing needs that have been identified. Ms. Chokshi said the Board needs to first decide if the committee will continue as ad hoc or become a standing committee. Once that is determined, the committee can then move forward. You can then bring in Stepping Up if there is a need for transitional housing from the jail. Mr. Claypool responded we are already finding a solution and we haven't defined the problem. He feels the Board will only be creating additional bureaucracy for no purpose. Dr. Oluic feels everyone has been heard from on this issue.

Dr. Oluic then directed his comments to Ms. Carter that Stepping Up is a good program based on the literature he has seen. He is not sure how much the Board was bypassed in not knowing about Stepping Up and what is going on. The Board will be working with Stepping Up in some way moving forward.

Ms. Bagley moved that the Board have a standing committee called Capital Planning. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Petruziello asked if someone will be writing a charter for the committee. Ms. Chokshi said the staff can work on that. Dr. Oluic said establishing a committee is great on paper but is meaningless if the committee doesn't move forward and work together with our partner agencies, the other Board committees and OhioMHAS. The potential goals and mandates of the committee should be presented for review by the whole Board. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-8; Nays-4; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

Mr. Petruziello asked if anyone from Stepping Up approached this Board to be a member of that group. There are other committees in the county that do things and then expect the Board to get involved. Dr. Oluic replied that it is not quite that black and white. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo, Ms. Vidmar and Ms. Carter have been working on this and are moving

forward. Stepping Up is a very specific program for individuals coming from the jail. Ms. Carter said this Board was in the loop from the beginning.

b. Ms. Kendra Program

Ms. Johnson reported that she looked very carefully at all the information provided and also watched a video about the program. Dr. Oluic said this discussion item will be tabled until the next Board meeting. When you read about the program and go through the slides, he is not sure Geauga needs a program like that.

c. Executive Director Position Timeline and Selection Committee

Dr. Oluic said a position description was created. The position will be posted and advertised beginning after Thanksgiving. A Selection Committee will need to be formed. He has had several Board members express interest in serving on the committee and asked if anyone else is interested. The makeup of the committee was discussed and it was suggested that two county appointees and two state appointees serve on the Selection Committee. Dr. Oluic would then serve as the fifth committee member. Mr. O'Brien trusts that the committee will properly vet the applicants and present the Board with the most viable and best candidates. Dr. Oluic will choose the committee members and let the Board know. The plan is to have interviews start in January.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business discussed.

X. NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business discussed.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. O'Brien asked the agencies about their budgets in regard to labor costs. Ms. Gutka responded that she needs to increase salaries in order to retain staff. Mr. O'Brien then asked what the Board can do. Dr. Oluic said the agency directors should reach out to the Board and communicate what their needs are. Ms. Gutka said she will submit something to the Board on behalf of WomenSafe. Dr. Oluic commented that the squeaky wheel gets the grease and that the Board can't address an issue if they don't know about it, such as increasing salary to attract and retain good talent. Ms. Chokshi asked if WomenSafe receives money from Family Violence Prevention Services. Ms. Gutka said those funds pay for direct services, including a third shift worker and clinical oversight. Mr. O'Brien asked if agencies have means and methods of determining what their need is. This issue is part of the Board's mission and they are open to provide help in this area. Ms. Gutka expressed her appreciation for the Board's willingness to have an open dialogue about agency work force needs, agency capital needs, and ongoing facility maintenance. Mr. O'Brien suggested the agencies do a five-year capital plan review and assessment and submit that to the Board.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Bagley moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Lesyk seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

**Ms. Teresa Slater
Secretary/Receptionist**

**Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board**

**Ms. Alberta Chokshi
Secretary of the Board**