

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

Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

13244 Ravenna Road
Chardon, Ohio 44024

Leila Vidmar
Interim Executive Director

Phone: (440) 285-2282
Fax: (440) 285-9617

Board Minutes

January 18, 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, Martin Fay, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Ryan Mekota, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann Bagley, Carolee Lesyk, Jennifer Malainy, Linda Miller, Gregory O'Brien

GUESTS: Melanie Blasko, Charles Tong (Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers), Margaret Osborne (OhioMHAS Regional Liaison), Mary Wynne-Peaspanen (Signature Health), Gail Roussey (Geauga League of Women Voters), Tia Lawrence (Torchlight), Vicki Clark (Ravenwood Health), Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities), Kim Carter (NAMI Geauga), Anastasia Nicholas (Chagrin Valley Times), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe)

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

I. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, ROLL CALL

Dr. Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and the Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

Dr. Oluic welcomed everyone and introduced Margaret Osborne, who is the Regional Northwest/Interim Northcoast Regional Liaison, Office of Community Planning & Collaboration, Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services. He then reported on the following:

- Noticeable accomplishments from last year: The levy was a challenge, but everyone pulled together and it was very successful, several grants were obtained, and even with the turmoil around the Executive Director and other issues, Board operations were maintained and agencies were funded. He thanked the staff for all the work they have done.
- The Board does have a mission statement and nothing should distract from helping the residents of Geauga county.
- The Board will have another levy on the ballot this November and will need the support of everyone to advocate on behalf of its passage.
- Governor DeWine announced the allocation of \$174 Million to address mental health challenges and needs across the state. Approximately half of the funds are for

infrastructure and the balance for employee retention, training, and workforce development.

- The county and state will see a new challenge with the legalization of gambling.
- The Board is in the process of identifying a new Executive Director. The Selection Committee is working hard to that end. There were 20 applicants. The committee narrowed it down to six potentially qualified individuals and then further narrowed the applicants to the three most qualified candidates. Phone interviews will be conducted next week and then face to face interviews. The committee has a draft contract to discuss further, before submitting it to the Board for a vote, which will include recommendations for the Executive Director position, salary and benefits. His hope is to have someone fully on-board by early April. Mr. Claypool asked if three candidates or one candidate will be presented to the Board. Dr. Oluic responded that the Selection committee will first conduct phone interviews. The committee consists of himself, Linda Miller, Alberta Chokshi, Michael Petruziello, and Kathy Johnson. A special Executive Session Board meeting will probably be scheduled for this purpose. Mr. Claypool asked if the top three candidates will be presented to the whole Board for consideration. Dr. Oluic said that will depend on the phone interviews. Mr. Claypool would like the whole Board to have the opportunity to look at the top three candidates. Dr. Oluic replied that Board members received all of the applications. Some people did not complete the application process correctly and others were clearly not qualified. The ultimate decision will rest with the Board.

At this point, Ms. Chokshi called the roll for attendance purposes and the following Board members were present: Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, Martin Fay, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Ryan Mekota, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Ms. Johnson moved to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. **Voice Vote: Ayes-9; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic had nothing further to report.

IV. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Vidmar provided the following updates:

- There are six Board members whose terms end on June 30th – three county appointments and three state appointments. Ms. Slater will send an email to those who are eligible to be reappointed. Mr. Petruziello asked if the open appointments will be advertised on the Board's website.
- Ms. Slater has been trained to serve as the backup for billing purposes. Ms. Vidmar will evaluate if additional cross training should be done.

- She has met and also had several conversations with various agencies via face to face, telephone and email.
- The following items were discussed at the last Association Director's meeting: Director Criss provided an overview of Governor DeWine's initiatives around mental health; there is still some confusion about OhioRISE with agencies, hospitals, and the precertification process; a Recovery Housing workgroup has been created; an ethics training course is available online at the Association website; there are many new board executive directors across the state; there is a legislative amendment in regard to the Appropriations Act and how that affects Medicare coverage – marriage family therapists and mental health counselors from agencies - in conjunction with primary care physicians - will be able to work with Medicare patients, but not until January 2024; workforce development and retention issues were discussed, along with the need for an additional 4,000 professionals in the mental health and recovery fields.
- Community Assessment Plan: There was some confusion about the due date which is actually January 31st. The staff has discussed incorporating the three-year Community Assessment Plan into the Board's three-year strategic plan, potentially having agencies submit requests for proposals for the same three-year time frame, and then provide the Board with annual or semi-annual updates.

Mr. Petruziello suggested that this Board meet with agency boards and get their input about putting a three-year plan in place. Dr. Oluic said he has met with two agencies to discuss the challenges with employee retention and workforce development. He then suggested having one representative from each agency attend a meeting to share thoughts and concerns.

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said the CAP can be changed. There is an annual update required by the state. The idea behind how she completed the CAP was to make it as broad as possible so the new Executive Director could then hone the strategies used to meet each section.

V. ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic asked Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo to educate the Board about various reports she has been working on this month, along with coalition updates:

Reports: SOR No Cost Extension SAMHSA Report to OhioMHAS; SOR No Cost Extension grant; SOS/SOR 3.0 SAMHSA Report to OhioMHAS; SOS Grant; IDVU 90% Capacity Report to OhioMHAS; Multi-system adult 6-month survey report; tobacco retail survey; waitlist report; problem gambling mid-year report; Criminal Justice Linkage Grant Report; agency quarterly reports.

Geauga Reentry Coalition: The second meeting is set for January 31st. The Coalition is headed by Family Pride. An Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC) grant was awarded to help with the transition of and provide housing to individuals coming out of jail. There are several community agencies involved. The Coalition is also using some SOR funding. The ODRC grant was awarded directly to Family Pride and is the primary funder of the program. The Board is a member of the Coalition and is working to

assist with housing and explore transportation options. One of the suggestions around housing was to give vouchers for first and last month's rents. They are looking at out of the box solutions for both of these barriers. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said Board members are welcome to attend the meeting on the 31st. She will send out the Zoom link for those interested. Mr. Claypool expressed his concern this would constitute a public meeting and that it cannot be held in this manner. Mr. Petruziello said the Coalition is run by agencies so it would not constitute a public government meeting.

Faith Based Coalition: Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said that Dr. Oluic and Ms. Johnson have attended some of the meetings. The Coalition has set a tentative date of June 3rd for an event at the fairgrounds under the grandstand. The event will be crowd funded and will not need any funds from the Board. There are 88 churches in the Coalition. The Amish bishops are allowing members to attend meetings outside of the faith. The purpose of the event is to bring communities and families together. Each church represented will talk about their ministries and resources that are available. It is the hope that agencies will also attend and talk about their services and the resources they have available for the community. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Shumway are involved with this project. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said a youth coalition comprised of 15 different youth ministries recently led a prevention event. Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers assisted in establishing the youth led group.

The Coalition is working with the Veterans Administration through a grant and will be offering various trainings to work with and support veterans in an impactful way. The Coalition has talked about developing a sticker that can be put in windows of any entity showing they have received this training by the VA. Ms. Johnson asked if anyone from the VA came to the meeting. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo responded no, but they did send material that was distributed at the meeting.

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo hopes that the Geauga specific resource card the Coalition put together can be distributed after their next meeting. It will be available for any business, agency, church, etc. to show what local help is available.

Resolution 23-01-2 Geauga Board of County Commissioners Capital Plan Funding for the Geauga Youth Center: Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo explained that this Resolution is tied to building the new Geauga Youth Center. It resolves the issue around the capital grant that would have made Ravenwood Health responsible for a mortgage on a facility and property they don't own.

Resolution 23-01-3 Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities Grant Funding Allocation: The funds specified in this Resolution will be used to purchase materials for the crisis response team when they go out on crisis calls, including cards with emergency numbers and handouts about available services.

Resolution 23-01-4 Allocation of 2023 State Opioid and Stimulant (SOS) Response Funds: The Board recently received notification that SOS 3.0 funding was approved. These funds will be used to reimburse agencies for services they have been providing since September 2022 but have not yet been paid for.

Ms. Shumway asked if Resolution 23-01-2 gives the Commissioners the money to build a new building. Ms. Clark responded that the Commissioners would apply for the funds and the Board would be out of it completely. It will then be determined whether to build on that site or somewhere else. Ms. Shumway said that still won't meet the need for a locked facility and stepdown unit, so kids will still have to be placed out of county. Mr. Petruziello said it will be the responsibility of Job and Family Services to find housing for those youth. Ms. Clark stated that Director Swenson feels this will meet the need for most kids. The resolution removes the Board from this responsibility. Job and Family Services will then contract with Ravenwood Health to run the facility. The project will have multiple funding sources.

Dr. Oluic said he has spoken with the County Administrator about the funds from the opiate settlement and making the decisions on how to use that money. Mr. Petruziello said Ohio ranks 5th when it comes to opiate use.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Agency Relations

Ms. Johnson will be meeting with Ms. Miller to review the upcoming RFP process and discuss developing ongoing relationships with agency directors.

b. Finance

Mr. Petruziello would like to have a Finance meeting prior to the February Board meeting. He will find out what date works best and Ms. Slater will then send notification to the committee members.

c. Planning and Policies

Mr. Claypool intends to schedule a meeting in the near future. He then asked Ms. Slater to forward the notes from the last Planning and Policies meeting.

d. Opiate HUB

There was no update.

e. Capital Planning

Ms. Shumway said she has been researching the possibility of applying for a grant to run a detox center in conjunction with University Hospitals. The committee will evaluate what is actually needed and what funding is available. Dr. Oluic said some areas need increased capacity and the agencies must have the funding to do that. Ms. Shumway said the community needs housing and the necessary programs such as case management. Dr. Oluic responded that the Board will also need to determine what classification of facility is needed. The Board has had some interesting conversations about the prison population, inmates with severe mental health issues, and the challenges faced by the Geauga Safety Center. There are currently six Geauga residents in

Northcoast Behavioral Health Hospital who can't leave because there is nowhere for them to go. Those beds need to be freed up so others in the region don't just sit in jail. This is another huge challenge that revolves around housing and continuity of care.

f. Executive Director Selection Committee

Dr. Oluic had no further update.

VII. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Resolution 23-01-1 Acknowledgement of County Budget for Calendar Year 2023

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion. Discussion: Ms. Shumway asked if there will be any discussion about salary issues that may need to be addressed. Mr. Petruziello responded not at this time. That will be done at a different Board meeting in Executive Session. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-9; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

b. Resolution 23-01-2 Geauga Board of County Commissioners Capital Plan Funding for the Geauga Youth Center

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo talked about this Resolution in her written report. Ms. Johnson moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-9; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

c. Resolution 23-01-3 Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities Grant Funding Allocation

Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo reiterated that the funds will allow the crisis response team to purchase items that are used during crisis situations. Ms. Shumway moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Chokshi seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-9; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

d. Resolution 23-01-4 Allocation of 2023 State Opioid and Stimulant Response Funds

Mr. Petruziello asked where agencies got the money to make up for these funds. Ms. Martin-D'Arienzo said agencies used their reserves and can now be reimbursed by the Board for those services. Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. **Roll Call Vote: Ayes-9; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

e. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser reported that 37.8% of the administrative budget has been expended through December 31, 2022. There were no expenditures from the Community Education Budget. The Calendar Year 2022 budget expenditures were just over \$8.56 Million, which

includes the \$1.5 Million that was moved to the Capital Reserves line item. The Auditor's Fund Balance from December was just over \$2.4 Million. The Cash Balances by Source of Funds spreadsheet is in order. He will be drawing down some grant allocations which will offset the negative amounts. Mr. Mausser then reiterated the vouchers for November and December: Voucher Recap Schedule #677 in the amount of \$595,953.66 and Voucher Recap Schedule #678 in the amount of \$314,196.96.

Dr. Oluic referenced the concern/discussion with the Budget Commission that the Board had too much money and was not spending it. He then pointed out that Ohio's rainy day fund for this year is the highest it has ever been. There is a reason why agencies have such funds in place.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Crisis Response Update – Vicki Clark, Ravenwood Health

Ms. Clark provided an update on the crisis response team. They go to schools, businesses, and in the community when there is a traumatic event. They do not respond to individual emergencies. The team is comprised of representatives from Ravenwood Health, Family Pride, Catholic Charities, Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers, the Sheriff's Office, and the Educational Service Center. She said the team works together very well.

When a tragedy happens, calls come in in a variety of ways. Ravenwood's COO usually takes the call and works on a plan depending on what is needed. Schools are the most common place for the team to go. They ask what the school feels it needs from the crisis response team. The other agencies involved are called. A team is put together and a plan devised as to how to respond to that particular crisis. A response to schools may include 6-13 therapists for a two- or three-day period. They then go back for an additional day after a funeral service. If it is a response to a business, that would normally entail 2 to 4 staff for one or two days.

Ms. Clark said last year, the crisis team responded to six tragic events, including the suicide of a student at band camp over the summer, a house fire where a mother, father and student passed, an employee committed suicide by gun at work, a student died in a car accident, and a debriefing of agency personnel who were involved in some of those responses. So far this year, the crisis team has already responded to five tragedies – a house fire where a mother and adolescent died, a suicide by gunshot, a few weeks later another suicide by gunshot, an eight-year-old passed away by natural causes at a gymnastics center, and the death of a teacher. To date, that entails a time expenditure of at least 110 hours, contrasted with roughly 31 hours last year. These events are also very brutal on the team that responds. Dr. Oluic commented that most people don't consider the impact on those who actually respond.

Ms. Shumway asked if the loss team is included in the crisis response. Ms. Bertman said some members are also on the loss team. Ms. Clark said both teams work closely together to determine who should be involved – loss team, emergency services, crisis response team. Mr. Petruziello asked if there is a written process or procedure of what is needed for different crises. If so, he would like that information shared with the Board.

Ms. Carter said there is a decision-making process. Ms. Clark said each situation is different. Brittain Paul, COO of Ravenwood Health, has a PowerPoint and could make a presentation at an upcoming Board meeting.

Ms. Shumway attended a meeting today where it was stated that Geauga has a higher rate of suicide than Lake. She would like to know why and what supportive services are in the schools in both counties. Ms. Shumway said there is no component of wellness addressed in Geauga county. Dr. Oluic suggested discussing any shortfalls in Geauga as part of the presentation. Ms. Clark said when agencies are sending 6-15 therapists to respond to a crisis, this means they are not seeing regular clients, etc. It would be very difficult to do this if they did not have the emergency response grant. Mr. Mausser said funds from the risk pool allocation of \$50,000.00 can be used for this year and funding for this purpose can be reviewed in 2024.

Ms. Gutka said the individuals on the crisis response team are all licensed. The loss team is made up primarily of volunteers and respond to different types of events, such as car accidents and overdoses. Ms. Shumway said she doesn't know what the county would do without the crisis response team. It is a great collaborative effort of agencies in the county.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business discussed.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Oluic said there are positive things happening in the state that will cascade down to boards. He then asked Ms. Osborne to provide a quick update:

Ms. Osborne thanked the Board for bringing up Governor DeWine's speech. He and Director Criss' focus is to make sure the crisis system is built in Ohio the way it was promised years ago. It is nice to have a Governor who is pushing funding towards behavioral health and addiction services.

In regard to the 988 line, OhioMHAS does not see the local call center reports. They are working with the national call center to get those reports as a state. Once they have that information, the hope is to release similar reports to each county for comparison. One of her regions has a monthly call where the boards are able to ask questions and talk about trends. She doesn't know if Geauga's local call center does that. In conjunction with the 988 call line, there are also chat and text features that can be used. The age range is from 19-55 of those using the service, but there is no additional demographic data available at this time. A lot of counties are interested in knowing the number of youth calling in or using the chat/text features. The hope is to eventually be able to have some of that information, along with geo location, like 911 has.

Director Criss came from a provider agency, so she understands the struggles that providers have, including staff retention and workforce development.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Clark thanked the Board for the letter sent to agencies thanking them for their efforts in getting the levy passed. Dr. Oluic responded we are all one team. It is very important for the Board and agencies to be more involved with each other in sharing and collaborating for the benefit of the community. There were some challenges last year, but we have to take care of each other. The public understands there are people who are desperate and truly need help. We have to leverage all of our assets to meet those needs.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Petruziello moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ms. Teresa Slater
Secretary/Receptionist

Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

Ms. Alberta Chokshi
Secretary of the Board