

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

**Steven Oluic**  
**Chairman of the Board**

**13244 Ravenna Road**  
**Chardon, Ohio 44024**

**Christine Lakomiak**  
**Executive Director**

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**Board Minutes**

**MAY 17, 2023**

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

**GUESTS:** Kim Carter (NAMI Geauga), Kathy Franz (Gauga League of Women Voters), Vicki Clark (Ravenwood Health), Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities), Melanie Blasko and Charles Tong (Lake-Gauga Recovery Centers), Mary Wynne Peaspanen (Signature Health), Angi Daugherty (Family Pride), Michelle Kincaid (Torchlight), Martha Sorohan (Gauga Times Courier), Lee Miller (community member)

**STAFF PRESENT:** Christine Lakomiak, Jim Mausser, Teresa Slater

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

Dr. Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Ms. Chokshi called the roll for attendance purposes and the following Board members were present at that time: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, Reba Dykes, Martin Fay, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Ryan Mekota, Linda Miller, Gregory O'Brien, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, and Mary Ruth Shumway. Dr. Lesyk arrived at 6:10 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

**II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM APRIL 19, 2023**

Ms. Shumway moved to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Miller seconded the motion.  
**Voice Vote: Ayes-13; Nays-0; Abstentions-0. Motion approved.**

**III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Dr. Oluic welcomed everyone. Ms. Lakomiak will update the Board as to what has been happening since the last meeting.

**IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Lakomiak provided updates on the following:

Grant Opportunity: Each MH Board region has received up to \$7.5 Million from OhioMHAS to build, renovate, upgrade, operate, and/or manage residential facility(ies) for individuals who have been discharged from hospitalization or an individual needing a

diversion or transition from a hospital setting to prevent further decompensation and subsequent psychiatric admission. This facility would be a safe and affordable home like environment for individuals as they work to transition back to their home. The programs provided would include independent living skills, counseling, medication management, peer support, linkages, and would be staffed 24/7. One option for funding is to renovate the Metzenbaum houses. Another option is to add to the Transitional Living Center or build another facility on that property. The budget request is \$1.3 million with a board match of \$126,000. The request will be for Capital and Operating expenses. Notice of Award will be several months away. Request to the board to apply for the grant which is due Friday May 19, 2023. After discussion took place about the project including financial sustainability, billable services, out of county placements, criteria, inpatient hospitalization, the board decided to allow the Executive Director to apply for the regional funding. Action item: financial sustainability plan.

Stepping Up: The presentation is next Thursday from 11-2 via Zoom. The information and link will be sent out again at the end of the week. The Geauga county initiative would be a systemwide approach to reduce the number of people in the safety center with a mental illness.

Planning and Policies: The Ohio Revised Code gives mental health boards the authority to appoint health officers. An involuntary commitment placement can be made if it is determined that a person is at risk of hurting his/her self or others. Pursuant to ORC, the individuals who can act as a health officer are: licensed physician; licensed clinical psychologist; clinical nurse specialist who is certified as a psychiatric-mental health CNS by the American nurses credentialing center; certified nurse practitioner who is certified as a psychiatric-mental health NP by the American nurses credentialing center; health officer; parole officer; police officer; and a sheriff. Some boards choose to appoint health officers and develop their own criteria as to who can become a health officer. Ms. Lakomiak drafted a policy to review if the Board wants to move forward. Approximately 90% of boards appoint health officers. Those that don't, utilize the professionals listed in the ORC to facilitate involuntary hospitalization. The Board has appointed health officers in the past, but Ms. Lakomiak would like to formalize the process.

Annual Report: The SFY2022 report was included in the Board packet. The SFY2023 report will include additional information.

## **V. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Agency Relations**

Ms. Johnson reported that she, Ms. Miller, and staff completed their meetings with agency directors. She said the interactions were extremely informative and positive. The main takeaway is that Geauga has a very good system of care and that there is a spirit of cooperation among agencies in the county to provide the best services possible to residents in Geauga.

### **b. Finance**

Mr. Petruziello reported the committee had a very productive meeting last week and discussed the following: 1. The Board's administrative budget for SFY2024. 2. System of Care allocations for SF2024. 3. Ms. Lakomiak provided an update regarding the Metzenbaum facilities. 4. MRSS passthrough grant award to Ravenwood Health from OhioMHAS. Ms. Clark explained this would be a new program that is specific to children and families to provide services in the home by a team of therapists for up to 42 days. This program is designed to alleviate the need for out of home placements and help prevent future trauma. If state funding for this program goes away, and neither the Board nor Job and Family Services decide not to provide funding, Ravenwood would only provide the service to children with Medicaid. 5. Request Commissioners to put the Board's .7 mil levy on the ballot in November as a renewal. 6. Request from agencies to provide funding to train 16 additional staff in the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing treatment model. 7. Recommendation to provide the Executive Director with a cell phone and laptop. 8. Strengthen relationships with agencies by supporting their fundraisers.

### **c. Planning and Policies**

Mr. Claypool requested a summary of what was learned during the agency meetings so the full Board can benefit from the information provided. Ms. Johnson responded the meetings were about relationship building. They were not held to address any problems or issues, but to hear what people are excited about and the positive things happening at the agencies.

Mr. Claypool reported that the committee will be reviewing the policy manual from the beginning, except for when issues arise that need to be addressed out of turn, such as the housing policy, which should include the definition of what that means to the Board.

The committee reviewed a new organization chart and a job description for a clinical and compliance manager.

The committee had a robust conversation about the process used to identify someone who may be a danger to themselves or others and whether that person meets the criteria to be involuntarily hospitalized. They talked at length about who is authorized – pursuant to Ohio Revised Code – to be a health officer, along with who has the authority to appoint health officers. Ms. Lakomiak's suggestion is to formalize this process if the Board so chooses. She envisions providing trainings yearly, provide updates as needed, along with convening a roundtable to discuss current issues and include agency staff, hospital representatives, law enforcement, and others, to help learn the dynamics of someone who is under an involuntary hospitalization.

### **d. Capital Planning**

Ms. Shumway scheduled the following meetings to take place from 4:30 to 5:30 prior to the Board meetings: June 21<sup>st</sup>, August 16<sup>th</sup>, and November 15<sup>th</sup>.

**e. Opiate HUB**

Ms. Miller reported that the committee has begun working on the first responders recognition. Dr. Oluic said proceeds from the opiate settlement have been transferred to the Commissioners. Ms. Lakomiak said one of the Commissioners reached out and asked her to attend the meetings regarding distribution of the settlement funds.

**VI. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS**

**a. Resolution 23-05-1 Behavioral Healthcare Levy**

Dr. Oluic read the Resolution in its entirety. Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**b. Resolution 23-05-2 System of Care Funding Allocations for SFY2024**

Mr. Mausser said the total amount is the same as last fiscal year, but Residential Services was decreased by \$20,000 and Trauma Informed Care and Response was increased by \$20,000. Ms. Shumway moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Bagley seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**c. Resolution 23-05-3 Approval of Board Operational and Community Education Budget for SFY2024**

Ms. Miller moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Bagley seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Petruziello suggested including the community education budget in the administrative budget. There was discussion about tweaking the budget to include a work phone for Ms. Lakomiak so that she no longer has to use her personal phone. Mr. Mausser said that expense is not included in this budget. There is not enough in the utilities line item, but he can use funds from another line item. He said there is enough money in the equipment line to purchase a laptop for Ms. Lakomiak, who has been using her personal laptop. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**d. Resolution 23-05-4 EMDR Training Allocation**

Ms. Shumway moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Petruziello suggested tabling this Resolution until the Board receives some feedback about the eight staff from Ravenwood who are being trained.

Mr. Petruziello asked Dr. Mekota his thoughts about this type of therapy. Dr. Mekota said it has been shown to be as good as or marginally better than other types of cognitive based-therapy. This is a new wave of treatment that does not have so much to do with eye movement but rather reprocessing the brain as it pertains to exposure to trauma. Ms. Bagley asked if EMDR is more efficient. Dr. Mekota replied it can be, but that depends on

the provider, and that the patient is a good candidate for this treatment. One of his bones of contention is that sometimes we look to utilize different services which may do nothing to triage a client. Dr. Mekota said he can't speak to the quality of training, but clinicians must be judicious and well-informed to recognize and know when it is not needed or not appropriate for their clients.

Ms. Lakomiak said there are currently clinicians in Geauga who are trained in EMDR but the training was not paid by the Board. Mr. O'Brien commented that if the Resolution is approved, there would be 24 agency staff receiving this training that the Board has paid for. He asked if this is sufficient going forward at this point in time. Ms. Clark responded that would give agencies a good balance of trained therapists. Ravenwood clinicians must sign an agreement that if they leave the agency prior to two years, they will pay Ravenwood back for the training on a prorated basis. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-11; NAYS-3; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**e. Resolution 23-05-5 MRSS Grant Allocation to Ravenwood Health**

Ms. Bagley moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Petruziello said Ravenwood has already hired staff for this new program, but they have been talking about staffing issues over the last several months. Ms. Clark responded this is the type of work the counselors that were hired want to do. Staffing is a statewide issue and agencies have to make decisions about priorities. This is a juggling act every day, but the agency needs to stay up to date with what is needed in the community. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-11; NAYS-3; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**f. Financial Reports**

Mr. Mausser said the financial reports have been color-coded to help understand them better. He also provided a summary of the May reports. Ms. Miller asked about the ending dates of SORS 2.0 and SORS 3.0. Mr. Mausser said these allocations are expense driven. As bills are submitted, the funds will be drawn down. We will probably not spend all of the funds allocated. Most boards will not, so the state will see how much funding is left over and then decide what to do in the next grant period.

**g. Resolution 23-05-06 OhioMHAS Funding Request**

After further brief discussion, Mr. O'Brien moved to authorize the Executive Director to apply for OhioMHAS funding and execute documents for the provision of mental health and addiction services in a type one residential facility. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-12; NAYS-2; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**VII. Discussion Items**

**a. Nominating Committee**

Dr. Oluic asked Ms. Johnson to chair the Nominating Committee to select a proposed Slate of Officers for SFY2024.

**b. Grant Update**

This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**c. Agency Unit Rate Adjustment**

Dr. Oluic said this was discussed at the last Finance meeting and at several Board meetings. Mr. Holden suggested the Board wait until SFY2023 billings are in and revisit this subject in July. Mr. Mausser said the discussion was in regard to providing agencies who bill through Gosh, a retroactive unit rate adjustment based on a percentage of their billings for the fiscal year. He presented a spreadsheet to Finance that included annualized billings and showed what a 5/8/10% one-time payment would look like for each eligible agency. Medicaid rates will be increased next year and Board reimbursement typically match those rates. Based on his projections, Ravenwood Health's unit rate adjustment of 10% would be approximately \$180,000. Mr. O'Brien asked how the money would be used. Ms. Clark replied for operating expenses. Mr. O'Brien then asked where the money is coming from until they get funds from the Board. Ms. Clark said they are accessing a line of credit. Mr. O'Brien commented that it is costing the agency while the Board waits. Dr. Oluic said the topic will be revisited at the next Board meeting.

**d. Cell Phone/Laptop for Executive Director**

This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**e. Agency Fundraisers**

Ms. Lakomiak suggested one way to work with our partner agencies and show the Board's support is by taking part in agency fundraisers. The Board can be a sponsor, provide a donation, advertise, and participate in other ways to get our name out in the community. Mr. Mausser said the \$25,000 allocation on the System of Care could be used for this purpose. Ms. Lakomiak will send an email asking agencies about the cost of their fundraisers and then set an amount for each one. She will then report to the Board on what has been done.

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business discussed.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Organizational Structure**

Mr. Claypool moved to approve the proposed organizational chart. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**b. Job Description**

Ms. Bagley moved to approve the proposed job description for a clinical and compliance manager. Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**c. Health Officer**

Dr. Oluic said the Board discussed this earlier and needs to decide whether or not to put a policy in place allowing the Board to appoint health officers. Ms. Lakomiak said there is no mandatory way this must be done. She is just asking for a more formalized process be put in place if the Board chooses to go this route. Mr. Holden moved to adopt the Health Officer Policy and Procedure. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-14; NAYS-0; ASTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Carter distributed packets to Board members about an advocacy alert issued by NAMI Ohio regarding the proposed state budget as it pertains to mental health and recovery services allocations.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Petruziello moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned at 8:02 PM.

**Respectfully submitted by:**

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**Ms. Teresa Slater**  
**Administrative/Office Manager**

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

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