

**GEAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH  
AND RECOVERY SERVICES  
CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023  
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Christine Lakomiak, Jim Mausser, Michelle Maneage, Teresa Slater, Reba Dykes, Gregory O'Brien, Kathy Johnson, Douglas Lundblad, Steven Oluic, Melanie Blasko

**I. Call to Order/Pledge**

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

**II. Approval of Minutes from October 11, 2023**

Ms. Johnson moved to approve the Minutes. Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion. Voice Vote: All Ayes.

**III. Committee Name**

After a brief discussion, the committee's name shall remain Capital Planning.

**IV. Charge of Committee**

The committee reviewed the changes that were made. The word "targeted" needs to be removed in three places. Ms. Johnson moved to approve the Charge of Committee with the update discussed. Mr. O'Brien seconded the motion. Voice Vote: All Ayes.

**V. Housing Definitions, Inventory and Gaps**

The housing definitions from OhioMHAS were reviewed and will be used to categorize Board funded housing programs and determine service gaps.

**VI. Planning Initiatives**

**Geauga County General Plan:** A portion of Geauga County's General Plan Update from October 2021 was distributed. Ms. Dykes suggested that the Board participate in the future so the importance of housing for board clients is recognized and prioritized. She will find out what the next meeting date is and see if the Board can participate in the next update. There is some senior housing that can be an option for mental health consumers. Sometimes people on a wait list find other housing, so a long wait list doesn't necessarily equate to a long wait. The Board can determine how our housing fits in with state and federal priorities and within existing housing such as GMHA. Mental Health consumers are often a subset of a larger group and there will always be housing issues and barriers. Geauga County does not have any type of list that shows how many places are available to rent apart from apartment complexes. The committee discussed working with the County and GMHA to help get landlords to accept vouchers for housing.

**Federal Funding:** The Permanent Supportive Housing and Shelter Plus Care grants are submitted annually through COHHIO (Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio). These grants were just renewed in October. We can look for what funding is available for what types of projects, including grants for projects that partner with the local housing authority. The SPC grant is tenant-based and uses vouchers.

Local Shelters: Director Swenson's housing group is compiling a list and should have a good idea of what is available. This will help in assessing the housing needs in the county. Ms. Dykes will forward that information to the committee when she receives it. There may be an opportunity to expand some existing facilities.

Residential Treatment/Housing: Director Lakomiak has been meeting with agencies the last two weeks and there are no waiting lists right now for mental health and substance use services. Residential treatment is different from the Transitional Living Center. The TLC serves as a short term stay or crisis intervention for 30/60/90 days; up to two years would be the exception. TLC programs were recently reviewed and audited and some changes were recommended. One of our housing gaps is for folks who need to learn independent living skills before moving to independent housing.

## **VII. TLC Project Update**

The Board has been awarded \$1.2 million in ARPA funds. Last Friday Director Lakomiak met with the project manager from OhioMHAS. The grant was originally written using the two Metzenbaum homes. Once the operating budget was in place, it was determined that the Board could not afford to operate two 8 bed facilities. We were granted approval to move forward using these funds to expand the TLC up to 16 beds. The 111 page guidelines were received yesterday.

The committee discussed the merits of using an architect/construction manager or the design/build model. There are many rules, regulations and guidelines that need to be followed moving forward. An architect familiar with mental health housing could also act as the construction manager and oversee the project from beginning to end. The design/build model is sometimes quicker. Ms. Blasko said she engaged an architect and a contractor for her properties. The guidelines outline allowable expenses, including how we need to engage with an architect who is familiar with these regulations by either putting the project out for a formal bid or asking at least three architects the same set of questions, which would include their qualifications.

Mr. Mausser said an updated budget needs to be created. The state has provided parameters for the total project. There will need to be a construction budget and an operations budget. The grant applications were not supposed to include operating costs, but that's how they were submitted and approved by the state. The funds for each piece will come from two different places. There has been no deadline set for the budget revisions. Staff will review the guidelines and contact our OhioMHAS project manager as needed.

## **VIII. Board's Service and Population Priorities Resolution**

Ms. Dykes said the populations we serve are also high priority for state and federal grants. She provided a History of Mental Health Housing Best Practices for the committee to review. She talked about a "Housing First Philosophy" wherein physiological needs are met first - which can include housing - and then taking care of someone by getting them into treatment and other programs.

## **IX. Announcements**

The Homeless Coalition of Job and Family Services is meeting next on November 16<sup>th</sup> from 1-3 pm. Director Lakomiak, Ms. Dykes and Ms. Johnson plan to attend.

Ms. Dykes briefly spoke about the Ohio Senate Select Committee who is holding hearings about housing needs. The group includes the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Ohio Builders Association, the Ohio Mayors Alliance and the Ohio Department of Development, among other entities. The discussion has

included affordable housing, the high cost of construction, high interest rates, and out of state entities buying property in Ohio.

**X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.