

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

Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

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Board Minutes

MARCH 26, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Reba Dykes, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Douglas Lundblad, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, Patricia Varanese

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Alberta Chokshi, Carolee Lesyk, Mary Ruth Shumway

STAFF PRESENT: Christine Lakomiak, Jim Mausser, Michelle Maneage, Teresa Slater

GUESTS: Melanie Blasko (Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers), Kathy Franz (Geauga League of Women Voters), Kristy Mowry (Red Tulip Project), Brittain Paul (Ravenwood Health), ND Howard (GCTP), Angi Daugherty (Family Pride), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe)

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

Chairman Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. Mr. Holden called the roll for attendance and the following Board members were present: Reba Dykes, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Douglas Lundblad, Steven Oluic, Michael Petruziello, and Patricia Varanese. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 19, 2025

Mr. Holden moved to waive the reading and approve the Minutes as presented. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Oluic welcomed everyone in attendance. He encouraged everyone to drive by the Transitional Living Center and see what has been done. Even though there were some challenges with weather conditions, a lot of work has been accomplished. Chairman Oluic said that in light of what is happening at the federal level, there could be funding challenges, especially for the agencies that may need to be addressed. Chairman Oluic reported that since the last Board meeting, there have been two suicides in the county. There is still a need to help people, and the Board will continue doing that.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Lakomiak provided the following updates:
Statewide Updates

- She will be attending the Board Association Membership meeting Friday, March 28th in Columbus. There will be a lot of discussion about the biennium budget. OhioMHAS

Director Cornyn and senior leadership will be attending. Discussion will include decreasing the number of state block grants, providing more flexible funding tailored to each county's needs, replacing levies, and the marijuana bill.

- The House Finance Committee will release its version of the fiscal portion of the state biennium budget, House Bill 96, on April 1st. Several steps need to be taken, including being reviewed and voted on by the full House and also by the Senate. Hopefully, all budgets will be finalized in June.
- The Board was awarded a \$5,000 awareness mini-grant for 988 from the Board Association. Director Lakomiak was asked to serve as a project advisor for a local Girl Scout working to achieve her gold award. She will work with staff to design and distribute promotional items for 988.

Local Updates:

- The deadline for submitting SFY2026 funding proposals is Friday, March 28. Several have already been turned in.
- Assessing & Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR) Training: Representatives from 14 different agencies and community members participated. The training was well-received and very informative. Comments included using the safety plan as a resource to help others and having the tools to talk to someone about suicide. A grant from the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation helped pay for the materials.
- Newspaper articles published since our last board meeting are available to review. These include the AMSR training and the February Board meeting, information about suicide prevention awareness, and what to do when someone is at risk.
- Staff is getting the word out into the community about 988 and also about contacting the Board for any assistance/information. Staff has developed a procedure for triaging calls, what exactly we want to say, and the steps to take.
- Overdose and Suicide Fatality Review Board: The Geauga Commissioners voted to create the Review Board pursuant to Ohio Revised Code. Director Lakomiak had been advocating for this. She could not attend the meeting, but Mr. Mausser and Kathy Johnson did on behalf of the Board.
- Strategic Plan: The handout for the most recent Plan shows what has been accomplished. The draft Plan for 2025-26 will be discussed later in the meeting.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Programs & Policies

Ms. Johnson reported that the next committee meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2025, at 5:00 PM.

B. Fiscal & Capital

Ms. Dykes reported the committee met on March 3rd. Several policies and procedures were discussed and will be reviewed and voted on tonight. Credit Card Policy – discussed the credit card limit, a single transaction limit, the card's use, and a login/logout mechanism. Federal Awards Financial Policies—Substantial updates include an increase in self-certification and micro-purchases to \$50,000, the requirement that agencies receiving more than a million dollars

have a single audit, implementing cybersecurity controls, and revising procedures for rejecting an invoice/bill. The committee suggested no changes. The committee recommends approval of all the policies as submitted.

Approval of Credit Card Policy

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Policy. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; ABSTENTIONS-0; NAYS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

Approval of Federal Awards Policies & Procedures

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: Due to new requirements, the Association has crafted updated policies for those currently in place, along with a new policy related to federal funding. The State Auditor approved them. Attorney Wieland has also reviewed and approved the policies as written. The Fiscal & Capital committee received a set of the original policies, an updated one showing the changes, and a final one to review. The Association created the original policies in conjunction with the State Auditor. They were reviewed and adopted by the Board in 2020. The final updated policies were sent to the Board for review. Discussion included who may be subject to a federal audit. The Board is included in the Geauga County Single Audit, which is very comprehensive. The documents will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

VI. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution 25-03-1 Reimbursement to Geauga Safety Center

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. Discussion: These funds are from OhioMHAS to reimburse the Geauga Safety Center for psychotropic medication dispensed to inmates. This is done biannually. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

B. Resolution 25-03-2 BH Disaster Preparedness Project Grant Award

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. Discussion: The Board received a similar grant recently in the amount of \$55,000, and a lot of the groundwork was laid for what we hope to accomplish with this grant. The Board was awarded \$56,000 to provide coordinated and collaborative community behavioral health response in the event of a traumatic experience, in conjunction with local, state, and national emergency services agencies, as needed. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

C. Geauga County Behavioral Health Disaster Plan

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Plan. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. Discussion: This Plan was reviewed on October 14, 2024, by Programs & Policies. The prior Plan was included for reference. The updated Plan aligns with what the Board is responsible for pursuant to ORC

340. The Geauga County Emergency Management Agency reviewed it and recommended a few changes. Those changes have been made, and the final version is before the Board for approval. The various crisis response teams have different training requirements. Funds are available to provide community education and for fire departments, police, and first responders. Many items needed were already purchased – to-go bags for crisis response teams and identification badges. Information about behavioral health disaster responses will be included on the Board's website, along with steps to take before a disaster or traumatic event occurs. The Plan includes a requirement that it be reviewed and updated annually. The date the Board approves the Plan will be added. The approved Plan will be a part of the countywide response as it pertains to behavioral health. Different crisis teams respond depending on what is needed. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

D. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser reported on the following for February:

- 60.4% of the Board's administrative budget for SFY2025 has been expended.
- Geauga County calendar year expenses through February were just over \$1.25 million.
- Auditor's SFY2025 Unencumbered Fund Balance at the end of February was slightly over \$2.7 million.
- Voucher Recap #704 for February: \$547,256.47.

Mr. Mausser reported that the State Auditor is simultaneously working on the 2023/2024 audits. He has already sent the requested documentation.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Oluic reported that the TLC expansion's completion is on schedule for November 2025. The bi-weekly meetings provide good feedback and interaction with the architect and contractor. Several cost-cutting measures have been discussed, including a change order from today that will result in a cost reduction of approximately \$2,000.

Mr. Petruziello asked for an update about the generator. Mr. Mausser said Shepp Electric has not yet received the generator from the manufacturer.

VIII. STRATEGIC PLAN

The draft Strategic Plan for 2025-2026 was distributed for review. The old plan was included in the meeting packet. The new plan is aligned with state priorities and includes crisis services, quality improvement, data-driven decisions, growing the behavioral healthcare workforce, and increasing criminal justice services.

The following was discussed:

Mission Statement: The last revision was in 2009. It was very short. Director Lakomiak is proposing an updated mission statement, as shown on the first Page of the Plan. The Board's Mission Statement should be reviewed annually and updated as needed. The Board discussed various wording changes and then decided to use the updated version as presented.

There are six goals, each including a set of strategies and actions:

Goal 1 - Enhance Access to Crisis Services:

Discussion revolved around developing a youth steering committee. Staff is working with the ESC to see if it would be appropriate to include youth with whom they are already involved. Additionally, Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers and other agencies work closely with youth in various groups who could participate in the steering committee. The steering committee can comprise youth already in the system, outside the system, or a combination of both. The steering committee aims to determine what would be helpful for youth during a disaster or traumatic event. In doing this, staff can then develop plans with schools that will be included in the behavioral health response of the county. Reba Dykes suggested reaching out to youth who survived the Chardon shooting. Michelle Maneage said several survivors are counselors within the system and on crisis response teams.

Goal 2 – Enhance Criminal Justice and Recovery Supports:

Discussed having OhioMHAS/Northcoast as a separate action item and including effective communication with the Board area and agencies. Also discussed creating a mental health court in Geauga as an action item. Judge Paschke has not moved forward due to the limited mental health beds. It was suggested that we collaborate with another county with an established mental health court. Director Lakomiak will look into that suggestion. She will also discuss this with Judge Paschke again in light of the TLC expansion. Information about exploring the viability of a mental health court will be included.

Goal 3 – Prevent Overdose and Substance Use Related Harms:

Director Lakomiak is excited about the creation of an overdose/suicide fatality review board for Geauga. Data gleaned from the review board, HUB Coalition, and Suicide Prevention Coalitions will help determine any gaps in service provision. All of the coalitions the board is involved in will have strategic plans.

Goal 4 – Build Resilience in Children, Youth, and Families Through Prevention Services:

Mr. Petruziello is concerned about collaborating with the ESC because they have done things in the past that he thought were inappropriate regarding school surveys. Director Lakomiak said many individuals have been in the community for 20 years and are doing good work. She assured the Board that she and Ms. Maneage would be involved and would diligently watch for anything harmful.

Goal 5 – Build Hope Through Education, Advocacy, and Support for a Future Free from Suicide:

Suicides continue to be a challenge in the county. Director Lakomiak said the Suicide Prevention Coalition is doing good work in many ways, including purchasing Geaugalives.org and launching the website soon, having an increased social media presence, and advocating for how to get help through various avenues.

The LiveWell Festival is on June 4th. Many vendors will focus on health, behavioral health, wellness programs, and information for seniors. There will also be many activities to draw people in. The Department on Aging is sending flyers to senior groups and including information in their newsletters.

Veterans Services is getting information to work environments and letting people know there is help and where to find it.

The AMSR training educates people on what to do if they encounter someone who is struggling, is at risk, or has thoughts of suicide. The training is appropriate for professionals, agency personnel, and community members.

The biggest push is to get the word out in the community that there are people you can talk to and help is available.

Director Lakomiak said staff will report quarterly on what has been done to achieve these goals/actions. Chairman Oluic moved to approve the Strategic Plan for 2025-2026, contingent upon the modifications discussed. Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the motion. There was no further discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-7; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

IX. NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business discussed.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Holden moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lundblad seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Teresa Slater
Administrative/Office Manager

Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

James Lee Holden
Secretary of the Board