

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

**December 16, 2024  
Programs & Policies Committee  
5:00–6:00 P.M.**

**Present: Kathy Johnson, Mary Ruth Shumway, Patricia Varanese, Christine Lakomiak, Michelle Maneage, Teresa Slater**

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:17 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

**II. Approval of Minutes from October 14, 2024**

Ms. Johnson moved to waive the reading of the Minutes. Ms. Varanese seconded the motion. Voice Vote: Ayes-3. Ms. Shumway moved to approve the Minutes as written. Ms. Varanese seconded the motion. Voice Vote: Ayes-3.

**III. Recovery Housing Grant Update**

This is a new grant from HUD through OhioMHAS. Only boards can apply, but the funds can be sub-awarded to an agency. It is available to existing agencies that provide certified recovery housing and already have a relationship with a board. Both Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers and Ravenwood Health each have three recovery houses and would like the Board to apply on their behalf. The total request will be \$140,985.00 for 16 months from 4/1/25 to 5/31/26. The funds are to be used for individuals in recovery from substance use and can be used for rent and utilities while a person is in recovery housing for no longer than two years. The award will include a 5% administrative fee, which will be passed on to agencies. There is no match requirement. The money cannot supplant funding sources already in place. Individuals usually can work after leaving recovery housing. These funds will provide a cushion for individuals with no income. The maximum amount taken from a person's income in recovery housing is \$60.00 a month. The grant is due 12/23/24.

**IV. BSCA Grant Update**

There is an opportunity for boards to apply for additional BSCA Grant funding. Some of the initial grant funds have been used to review policies and procedures of Geauga County's disaster plans as they relate to mental health, become an active part of the emergency management agency, and other community education opportunities. The grant is due 12/27/24. The grant period is 1/24/25 to 9/29/25. The maximum grant amount is \$56,000.

There are four categories which each have goals and objectives:

- BSCA Initiative—Preparation: Participate in disaster risk reduction by mitigating the short—and long-term effects of disasters through training in the behavioral health field.
- BSCA Initiative—Action: Conduct community education opportunities to expand community knowledge of the importance and availability of behavioral health services in disaster response.
- BSCA Initiative – Partner with youth-serving peer organizations to develop a youth advisory council.
- BSCA Initiative - Maintenance: Hire a contractor to develop a webpage for public transparency of plans and centralized communication to increase knowledge of the behavioral health emergency preparedness plan.

Ms. Manage briefly outlined the goals and objectives of each Initiative.

## **V. Revised Benefit Handbook**

The Board is required to provide agencies with specific information for individuals who are receiving Board subsidies. The proposed handout includes all the necessary information and will be part of an agency's assessment packet. Michelle Manage is the Board's Client Rights Officer. Many issues can be resolved with the first step before the entire grievance process needs to be initiated. Grievances begin at the agency level and, if not resolved, are elevated to the Board level. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, all personnel at an agency must know who the client rights officer is.

## **VI. Credit Card Policy Discussion**

Director Lakomiak has contacted Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Susan Wieland about this matter. In the past, boards were not permitted to have a credit card. The State Auditor's Behavioral Health Handbook has been updated, and boards can now have a credit card. It would be used for travel and other expenses/purchases. Some expenses are paid personally out of pocket, and then staff is reimbursed. The board has an Amazon Business account where we get invoiced for purchases. The Geauga Board of Commissioners has been discussing updates to their credit card use policy, which will go into effect on January 1, 2025. Director Lakomiak has asked Ms. Wieland if the Board can be under that policy since the Auditor is our fiscal agent. If not, we can develop our policy using theirs as a template.

## **VII. Board Sliding Fee Schedule for SFY2025**

The sliding fee schedule for the current fiscal year was presented for review. This is updated as needed and sent to agencies each year. The proposed Fee Policy contains language that needs to be changed. The committee voted to submit the new version to the Board for approval.

## **VIII. Culture of Quality**

Many board policies need to be updated. Some changes, such as using an Executive Director instead of a CEO, can be made without committee/board approval. Other policies will need to be revised and reviewed.

## **IX. First Responder Fellowship Update**

Staff is moving forward with this initiative. There has been a lot of discussion about this at the Board level. Once the program is fully developed, funds will be requested from the Board for specific projects. Right now, the funds are coming from the Community Education line item. The planning team has discussed offering yoga/drum circles, etc., which will be tied with an education piece about wellness. Additionally, there are opportunities to partner with other entities, such as University Hospitals, to help plan events. The first meeting of that group went well and was well received.

## **X. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.