

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

Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

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Board Minutes

MAY 21, 2025

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Alberta Chokshi, Carolee Lesyk

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

GUESTS: Melanie Blasko (Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers), Kathy Franz (Geauga League of Women Voters), Vicki Clark (Ravenwood Health), ND Howard (GCTP), Angi Daugherty, Erin Mooneesawmy (Family Pride), Tia Lawrence, Tina Ringenbach (Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance), Mary Wynne-Peaspanen (Signature Health), Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities), Tracy Jordan (Geauga Sheriff LOSS Team), Dianne Kellogg (Red Tulip), Angela North (NAMI Geauga), Allison Wilson (Geauga Maple Leaf), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe)

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

Chairman Oluic called the meeting to order at 6:00 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, Mary Ruth Shumway and Patricia Varanese. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM APRIL 16, 2025

Mr. Holden moved to waive the reading of, and approve, the Minutes as presented. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic welcomed everyone then made the following points:

- He suggested attendees drive by the Transitional Living Center after the meeting to see how much progress has been made.
- May is Mental Health Awareness Month and many events are planned with the goal of helping our fellow Geauga residents.

- The Board will be voting on agency allocations and its administrative budget for SFY2026. The staff thoroughly reviewed each agency request and put a lot of work into the funding recommendations.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Lakomiak provided the following updates:

The SFY2026 State Budget has not been finalized. OhioMHAS' plan is to merge funding sources to make them more flexible and fluid for boards to use depending on the needs of their county.

Joy Black is closing her class two residential facilities. She contacted Michelle Maneage first with this information and then notified the guardians of the closures. She is reaching out to other facilities about placing residents. She is also working with the state ombudsman and surveyor to assist with the transition. Joy called today to let us know that someone is interested in purchasing the homes and will keep us posted.

The Board is sponsoring a fundraiser for Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance on May 30th at Chip's Clubhouse from 4-9. Director Lakomiak invited those present to stop in and play a round of putt-putt to support the agency. There will be a food truck, baskets, giveaways, and many other activities.

Live Well Festival: The Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Board collaborated with many community partners to hold the Live Well Festival on June 4th at Claridon Woodlands Lodge. The event will include local agencies with information about county resources, a polka band, presentation about scams that target seniors, a catered lunch, entertainment, games, gifts, giveaways, raffle. A 15-passenger wheel chair accessible van will be available to shuttle people to the event venue.

Geauga Township Trustee Association: Director Lakomiak is a member of the association. This organization appoints one individual to the ONEOHIO Region 13 governance board to represent the unincorporated areas within Geauga County. On April 9th, the Geauga Township Trustee Association held an election and nominated a candidate to serve a three-year term. Two individuals expressed interest in representing Geauga County. After voting, the trustees decided to appoint Director Lakomiak as their representative. The Commissioners then approved this appointment on April 29, 2025.

In a related matter, the Commissioners have slightly less than \$600,000 in opiate settlement funds to be disbursed. They have asked to meet with Director Lakomiak in June to make recommendations on how to best allocate this money to local programs.

Suicide/Overdose Deaths: There were no new suicides last month. There have been no overdose deaths in 2025.

The Board's annual meeting is in June; we will be celebrating our system achievements, substance use disorders programs, and the decline of overdose deaths in Geauga.

Transitional Living Center: Updated pictures from today were shared. It is amazing to look at the existing building and see what is being added.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Programs & Policies

Ms. Johnson reported that the meeting scheduled for this past Monday was cancelled.

B. Fiscal & Capital

Ms. Dykes reported the committee met on May 5th and discussed a nine-year financial forecast presented by Mr. Mausser, along with two capital grant requests submitted to OhioMHAS in 2023. The first grant is for WomenSafe for facility renovations and the second grant, which is included in the state's 2027/2028 biennial budget, is for another ten-unit residential facility.

VI. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

Director Lakomiak briefly outlined the allocation process: The request for proposal application was completely rewritten and now includes service specifications for each program. The SFY2026 RFP was published in February. Requests were due back to the Board office at the end of March. Staff reviewed and vetted each proposal in April and May. Director Lakomiak met with agency directors to discuss staff recommendations. During the last year every program has been audited – fiscal, clinical & outcomes. Agencies are in good standing with these audits, along with their state certifying body. The Board is charged with assuring the community has access to a full continuum of care. The Board is the payor of last resort and sometimes agencies may be asked to find funding elsewhere. The staff and Board are dedicated to making informed decisions and invested a significant amount of time to this process. A total of \$6.9 million is allocated for services, along with \$2 million for the TLC expansion. The Board anticipates receiving approximately \$7.3 million from OhioMHAS for SFY2026, but the final figure has not yet been announced. The Board will be deficit spending around \$360,000 for SFY2026. Past trends show that agencies do not spend down all their allocations and there is usually carryover funding. For SFY2025, the Board approved deficit spending, but we are on track to have unused allocations of about \$250,000.

A. Resolution 25-05-1 System of Care Funding Allocations for SFY2026

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. Discussion: Director Lakomiak explained each allocation. The allocation to Family First Council was reduced from the previous year due to fewer kids being placed out of county for treatment. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

B. Resolution 25-05-2 Approval of Board Administrative Budget for SFY2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: Mr. Mausser highlighted the changes that are different from the current year. The new staff position is in the budget for a full year. The license for GOSH has increased quite a bit, but

consulting is now included in the price increase. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

C. Resolution 25-05-3 Grant Award for Signature Health SFY2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Shumway seconded the motion. Discussion: Staff is recommending a slight increase to their current allocation to provide HIV/AIDS Education to High Risk Groups. The Board did not fund the general sexuality education program in schools for the current fiscal year. Staff is recommending it not be funded for the upcoming year. The program is provided at the invitation of schools and most districts have an opt-out option. The Board does have a contract with Signature Health for short-term residential treatment services at their CH Everett House facility. They also provided a suicide prevention awareness training that was well received. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

D. Resolution 25-05-4 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance for SFY2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. Discussion: Last year staff made a recommendation to increase the number of participants in the foster care program and that was achieved. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

E. Resolution 25-05-5 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency Family Pride of Northeast Ohio for SFY2026

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. Discussion: The agency requested funding for three new initiatives. One of the programs is currently funded by OhioMHAS (State Opioid and Stimulant Response Grant) through September. Staff was made aware that OhioMHAS plans to continue this funding. The other initiatives focus on parenting: 24/7 Dad is a 12-step evidence-based program for fathers. It has been requested often by individuals in jail. One facet of the program teaches positive parenting skills between mothers and fathers. Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is tailored to the unique needs of each family. Staff is recommending funding for both programs. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

F. Resolution 25-05-6 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency Lake Geauga Recovery Centers for SFY2026

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: Staff recommendations align with the amounts requested except for SUD counseling and therapy. More was requested for counseling than what staff is recommending based on annualized billings. Director Lakomiak will suggest that Commissioners allocate \$6,000 from their opiate fund for MAT services. If not, the Board can revisit this request. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

G. Resolution 25-05-7 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency NAMI Geauga for SFY2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. Discussion: The new Executive Director, Angela North has started. She has been affiliated with NAMI for over ten years. The SFY2026 funding request was submitted by the prior Executive Director and can be revisited if needed. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

H. Resolution 25-05-8 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency Catholic Charities for SFY2026

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: There has been an increase in demand for the early childhood mental health program and a slight decrease in the self-sufficiency program. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

I. Resolution 25-05-9 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency Ravenwood Health for SFY2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: There will be an increase in program costs for the Transitional Living Center due to the additional beds. There has been an increase in counseling. The agency provided less mental health consultation and substance use disorder consultation therefore less funding was requested for those programs. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

J. Resolution 25-05-10 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency WomenSafe for SFY2026

Mr. Holden moved to approve the Resolution. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. Discussion: The agency experienced an increase in counseling services. WomenSafe reapplied for mental health outreach and mental health consultation. It is the staff's recommendation not to fund those programs, but to increase their counseling allocation, although this amount will probably still fall short of their counseling costs. The Board should consider allocating additional funds if needed. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

K. Resolution 25-05-11 Approval of Funding Allocation for Board Contract Agency Geauga County Sheriff's Office for SFY2026

Mr. Petruziello moved to approve the Resolution. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Discussion: This is a wonderful opportunity for two systems to collaborate by strengthening the loss team within the behavioral health framework. Sheriff Hildenbrand has implemented several initiatives that are typically under the umbrella of the mental health board because he is very concerned with mental health issues. There is a push across the state to have more local LOSS teams. Currently there are about 17 teams in Ohio. This program will liaison between law enforcement and the mental health system, determine what type of crisis response is appropriate

for each situation, and coordinate any ongoing support or services that may be needed for those involved. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.**

There were several other requests that staff is recommending the Board not fund:

- Red Tulip Project: Submitted an RFP for SFY2026 under the assumption that the State Opioid and Stimulant Response grant would not be renewed in September. We have since learned that this grant will probably be renewed. Director Lakomiak will recommend that Commissioners use some of their funding for Red Tulip pending the outcome of the state's decision.
- Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio: Director Lakomiak is recommending not purchasing services, but to collaborate on projects.
- Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve: Requested \$108,900 to subcontract with an outside entity for online counseling in schools. Director Lakomiak said the Board does not allow agencies to subcontract services.
- University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center: Submitted a request for \$100,000 for a first responder outreach coordinator position. They would then match that amount. The proposed program's aim is to normalize self-care, wellness, preventative screening, group therapy, wrap around healthcare and leverage resources through University Hospitals. This is an intriguing concept but there was not enough information to make a decision for this funding cycle.

L. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser reported on the following for April:

- 75.5% of the Board's administrative budget for SFY2025 has been expended.
- Geauga County calendar year expenses through April were just over \$2.42 million.
- Auditor's SFY2025 Unencumbered Fund Balance at the end of April was slightly over \$2.76 million.
- Voucher Recap #706 for April: \$663,619.00.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business discussed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Slate of Officers for SFY2026

Chairman Oluic appointed Kathy Johnson as Chair of the Nominating Committee. One person from each committee is then chosen to serve. Ms. Dykes asked Mr. Petruziello to represent the Fiscal & Capital Committee. Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Varanese to represent the Programs & Policies Committee.

Ms. Shumway was made aware there is a bill moving forward in the legislature to allow online gambling. This is the number one reason for suicide in Ohio. She would like staff to send a

letter on behalf of the Board opposing online gambling. She will send Director Lakomiak information to craft a letter.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Angela North introduced herself as the Executive Director of NAMI Geauga. Those in the audience then introduced themselves and who they represent.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Petruziello moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Holden seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Teresa Slater
Administrative/Office Manager

Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

James Lee Holden
Secretary of the Board