**GEAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH**

**AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

**Jennifer Malainy 13244 Ravenna Road**

**Chairman of the Board Chardon, Ohio 44024**

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**Board Minutes August 23, 2021**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Carolee Lesyk, Jennifer Malainy, Linda Miller, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Martin Fay, Gregory O’Brien, Steven Oluic, Leila Vidmar

**GUESTS:** Jonathan Tiber, Claridon Township Trustee

**STAFF PRESENT:** Amie Martin-D’Arienzo, Teresa Slater

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Ms. Malainy called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Mr. Petruziello called the roll for attendance purposes: Ann Bagley, Alberta Chokshi, Walter Claypool, James Lee Holden, Kathy Johnson, Carolee Lesyk, Jennifer Malainy, Linda Miller, Michael Petruziello, Mary Ruth Shumway

1. **LETTER TO GEAUGA COUNTY HEALTH COMMISSIONER**

The most recent draft of the letter was distributed for review. Mr. Claypool said he sent out the Facebook postings of Mr. Quade that started the public outcry to the Board members. He said there will be a lot of people at the health board meeting on Wednesday. People are upset about some of the Facebook postings and many of his recommendations and mandates, including wearing masks in school. Geauga has a certain culture and is more independent minded. There are some questions as to whether Tom Quade fits with our county as to culture. His is the only office in all of Geauga that is locked down. Mr. Claypool has no problem with people choosing to wear masks, but Mr. Quade shouldn’t mandate that staff wear them. He said the letter is minimally acceptable. Mr. Quade is in a position where he should have higher standards and realize what he says may reflect negatively. He would like the letter to say something about seeing an increase in drug addiction, mental health issues, and suicides, that are reflective of Mr. Quade’s actions in our county. He feels the tone is very soft and would like it to be a little more direct. Mr. Claypool suggested directing the letter to the health board also, asking for some sort of reprimand.

Ms. Bagley asked what the statistics show regarding Mr. Claypool’s assertion that Mr. Quade is the cause of the increases mentioned above. Ms. Shumway said Mr. Claypool is talking specifically about Mr. Quade’s recommendations to the schools that people should wear masks. Ms. Chokshi said Mr. Quade is following the recommendations of the CDC and the Ohio Department of Health. She knows several individuals in education who have no problem with masks. Mr. Holden said as a 40 year law officer, he was held to a different standard and so is Mr. Quade. He is causing undue stress. Ms. Shumway also said stress is up in the county. Mr. Petruziello feels that people who represent the community should be held to higher standards and shouldn’t comment on what their personal beliefs are. Mr. Petruziello doesn’t think anyone should wear a mask unless they want to. Ms. Bagley commented that we have people in the room who have expressed their personal opinions.

Mr. Claypool said Ms. Bagley’s statement about evidence tying Mr. Quade’s recommendations to masking in schools will be a bunch of parents. The schools have to follow the health director if a recommendation is made. The previous health director had critical thinking skills. If a directive didn’t align with the county, he would make recommendations of the proper way to go. Mr. Claypool would like to be shown a peer reviewed study that masks work. He wants to see the science behind it. Mr. Quade can’t do that. A virus doesn’t stop at six feet. There is no science behind that. There was no rational reason for the comments coming through Mr. Quade’s office that led people to feel they are at higher risk, so they make decisions like what is being seen in the schools. Ms. Bagley said every medical facility requires you to wear a mask.

Ms. Shumway feels there is a direct correlation with the increase in suicides and mental health problems increasing tenfold and its affect overall. Ms. Miller asked if the precautions have saved lives. Ms. Bagley commented that we should do everything we can for that. Mr. Claypool said there is a .05% chance of someone dying from Covid. Ms. Shumway said 1 in 173 people in Geauga came down with Covid. Mr. Claypool said it is not about cases increasing, but about how many people have been hospitalized or died. The death rate was never significantly high. Over time, it was figured out to treat this virus and the death rate went down. The risk is very low but Mr. Quade keeps beating the drum about increased cases. Ms. Bagley said there had been an average of 250 cases a day in Ohio and now it is around 3,000. Mr. Petruziello asked how many of those 3,000 were hospitalized and how many deaths were there. Mr. Claypool said the number is extremely low.

Mr. Claypool said his objective is to send a message to Mr. Quade and/or the board, that if they continue to cry wolf they will destroy the people’s trust. We should be able to trust what is being said if the director makes comments that are backed up with evidence and makes reasoned recommendations that we can trust and are more likely to follow. Ms. Chokshi said he is presenting the CDC and state of Ohio’s recommendations. She doesn’t see that as damaging to the county. The hysteria started when people took sides 1.5 years ago about first amendment rights. She doesn’t want to be involved in a political issue. Mr. Claypool said the Board wants to send a letter. Ms. Chokshi responded that she did not vote to send a letter. Mr. Claypool said this is not about politics, but about causing harm to the county from Mr. Quade’s recommendations. Ms. Shumway said many people are upset with Mr. Quade because he made a recommendation of wearing masks in school and/or what he put out on his personal Facebook page. Ms. Bagley said Mr. Quade apologized for his posts and asked what more the Board wants. Mr. Claypool responded that Mr. Quade can’t change his values and beliefs which lead to recommendations that are out of line. You can’t even do business with the health department. His leadership is directly leading to actions which cause people in this county to not trust his department. This letter should address that they stop what they are doing and should either reprimand or fire Mr. Quade. Ms. Malainy said Mr. Quade did apologize for the last post about insurance, but he has been doing that for a while.

Ms. Bagley commented on Mr. Claypool saying that some feel the Board should send a letter and she has no problem with that. Mr. Claypool said the letter will represent the whole Board if there is a vote. Ms. Chokshi said the result of the vote should be included in the letter because she does not want to sign it. Mr. Claypool said if it was up to him, he would write a much sterner letter, but it at least puts Mr. Quade on notice that he is not good for this county and doesn’t fit. Mr. Petruziello said Mr. Quade’s actions are causing a burden on Ravenwood Health and this Board. He is the health director and when he speaks people are supposed to follow what he says. Mr. Claypool said if we are just following the state and CDC guidelines, then we don’t need Mr. Quade.

Ms. Johnson agrees that the letter should go to the health board in addition to Mr. Quade. There is a pattern to what he has written, although the vaccination post was taken down. The health department’s public Facebook page has disabled comments. Mr. Quade went to a school board meeting in Chardon, addressed the school board, wouldn’t take any questions, and then left.

Mr. Claypool moved to approve this letter to Mr. Quade and the health board under the name of the Chair. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. Ms. Bagley offered an amendment that the letter should reflect that not all Board members agree. Ms. Chokshi seconded that motion. Discussion: Mr. Claypool said relative to the amendment, the letter is going to come from the Board. Members are free to get a hold of whomever they want, but it is coming from the Board and signed by our Chairman. Ms. Bagley and Dr. Lesyk left at 6:30 PM because they did not want to be a part of this. Ms. Shumway said a vote should be taken on the amendment about having each Board member who agrees sign and not just the Chair signing as the representative of the Board. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-0; NAYS-7; ABSTENTIONS-1. THE AMENDMENT DID NOT PASS.** Mr. Petruziello then called the roll for the original motion. **ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES-6; NAYS-2; ABSTENTIONS-0. THE ORIGINAL MOTION PASSED.**

Mr. Tiber is a Claridon Township Trustee and on the Public Health Advisory Council. He was interested in this meeting because he has had residents corresponding with him about Mr. Quade to express their dismay and distrust. He said the letter is at most a rebuke and at the least constructive criticism.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Miller moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Claypool seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM.

**Respectfully submitted by:**

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**Ms. Teresa Slater**

**Secretary/Receptionist**

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**Ms. Jennifer Malainy**

**Chairman of the Board**

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**Mr. Michael Petruziello**

**Acting Secretary of the Board**