

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

Dr. Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board

13244 Ravenna Road
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Christine Lakomiak
Executive Director

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Board Minutes

February 18, 2026

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

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

GUESTS: Melanie Blasko (Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers), Kathy Franz (Geauga League of Women Voters), Paul Bolino (Ravenwood Health), Michelle Bertman (Catholic Charities), Andrea Gutka (WomenSafe), Kristy Mowry (Red Tulip Project), Mary Wynne-Peaspanen (Signature Health), Tia Lawrence (Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance), Shane McKelvey (Generations Behavioral Health)

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, Patricia Varanese. Mary Ruth Shumway arrived at 6:04 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES FROM JANUARY 28, 2026

Mr. Holden moved to waive the reading of the minutes and approve them as presented. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

VOICE VOTE: AYES-8; NAYS-0; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Oluic welcomed everyone and reported the following:

- There are no resolutions that need Board action this evening.
- There was a construction meeting for the Transitional Living Center expansion that went very well. Both wings have been completed and the crew is working on the kitchen. Everything being done is first class. When finished, bed capacity will increase from 9 to 16. A ribbon cutting ceremony has tentatively been scheduled for May 1st.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Lakomiak provided the following updates:

Statewide -

Board Association: The most recent director of the Board Association was promoted approximately 18 months ago; she submitted her resignation in January. The Board Association hopes to have someone hired by April and start in June. Two staff members are acting as interim co-directors until the search process is complete. The Association plays a critical role by providing advocacy for behavioral health and representing boards at the state level.

Local -

Transitional Living Center: As referenced by Chairman Oluic, the project is close to completion. Director Lakomiak will send more detail once the opening ceremony date is set and hopes everyone can attend.

RFP/RFI for SFY2027: RFP/RFI was discussed briefly at last month's meeting. A Request for Information (RFI) for SFY2027 will be available on March 2nd. The difference between the RFP and RFI is that a Request for Proposal (RFP) opens up the process to allow anyone to request funding; an RFI reviews agency funding and programs that are currently in place. Director Lakomiak recommended issuing an RFI and not opening the bidding process to additional agencies at this time. Budget, program and agency information will be gathered to help make funding decisions. Often final budget figures are not received from the state until June/July, and the agency contracts with the Board begin July 1st. If additional funding is received from the state, and there is a gap in services, a competitive bid can be posted.

Opiate Settlement Fund: The Commissioners asked Director Lakomiak to issue an RFP for the Opiate Settlement Funds, review the proposals submitted, and make funding recommendations. The proposals are due February 27, 2026.

988 & Townships: Township presentations, since the last board meeting, included Auburn and Huntsburg. Auburn really liked the idea of the 988 signs and plan to vote on sign placement at their next meeting. Huntsburg said the presentation was very educational and offered to pay for their signs. Chardon and Munson townships will also be posting signs in their communities. It was noted that all townships may not have the funding to pay for the signs; in lieu of that, the Board has set aside funding for this purpose. Director Lakomiak met with John Oros from Geauga Park District about placing signs throughout the park system. Mr. Oros requested 34 signs, which will also include their logo. At this point, everyone who received presentations has agreed to install/display the signs. The signs are being made by a local company.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training: CIT is a 40-hour training for law enforcement and first responders. The next training session is being held March 23rd to March 27th. Sheriff Hildenbrand, and many other organizations in the community, support having officers trained in CIT. Though the officers are not patrolling during this time, the Sheriff continues to pay their salaries while they are learning this critical information. There has been discussion about promoting the last day of training, which is graduation day, so that it is better attended and has more community involvement. Board members are welcome to attend and represent the Board. Director Lakomiak will send more detail.

Suicides/Overdoses: There was one suicide in January and one overdose is pending the toxicology report.

Faith-Based Initiative: NAMI Geauga County presented another QPR training for the faith-based community. Nine people were trained as gatekeepers – a gatekeeper is a person who is in a position to recognize when someone is in a crisis. Another QPR training is scheduled on March 31st; it will include how to look for warning signs, what resources are available, and how to reach out.

Suicide Prevention Coalition: Gun safety is one of the Coalition's initiatives. During the February meeting Lieutenant Jonovich presented a gun safety demonstration. He presented helpful information regarding what he sees in the field and how the Coalition can help. This was the second part of a training. The first part included counseling and client access to lethal means.

V. BOARD REVIEW AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Mausser reported on the following for January 2026:

- 54.6% of the Board's SFY2026 administrative budget has been expended.
- Geauga County calendar year expenses through January were just over \$757,000.
- The Auditor's Fund Balance at the end of January was just over \$2.29 million.
- Voucher Recap #715 for January: \$757,537.71.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

The Board has discussed moving funds into the salary line for staff pay and benefits. The subject was addressed in length during Executive Session. There are several different opinions on what to do, and how to do it. Chairman Oluic asked for a motion to move forward with this action. It was noted that a lot has been accomplished over the last three years since Director Lakomiak was hired. Ms. Johnson moved to transfer \$9,000.00 into the salary account, which is to be distributed to staff for merit pay increases at the discretion of the Executive Director. Ms. Dykes seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: AYES-6; NAYS-2; ABSTENTIONS-0. MOTION APPROVED.

Chairman Oluic is starting the process for Director Lakomiak's evaluation. He will be reaching out to Board members for input and would like to have this completed by April.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acknowledgement of 2026 Insurance Overview

Director Lakomiak is required to let the Board know, on a yearly basis, that there is director and officer liability insurance coverage. A \$2 million policy has been procured to cover board

members in case of a lawsuit or legal action in the administration of their role. The Board must also make a formal acknowledgement of this type of coverage. Mr. Petruziello feels Board members and staff should be bonded by the county. He questioned why we are not, since several members are appointed by the Commissioners. Mr. Lundblad commented that not all members are county appointed and asked if state appointees would be included. Ms. Shumway feels the state should pay for their appointees. Mr. Petruziello stated that when he was appointed to serve on the Geauga Parks District board he was automatically enrolled and bonded through the county along with the staff. Chairman Oluic suggested it may have to do with regulations in the Ohio Revised Code or Ohio Administrative Code. Director Lakomiak will look into whether the county and/or state will pick up this cost and why the board is not already bonded by the county.

B. Acknowledgement of 120-Day Notice

This topic was discussed briefly at last month's meeting. Due to legislative requirements, 120-day notices regarding funding for SFY2027 will be sent out by March 2nd. In light of recent legislative changes, that take effect at the end of March, boards will only need to give a 60-day notice regarding funding for the next fiscal year.

Dr. Oluic reiterated the need to have plans in place for financial sustainability, and referenced the turmoil caused when the federal government cancelled SAMHSA funding, which was ultimately reinstated.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Holden moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Petruziello seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 PM.

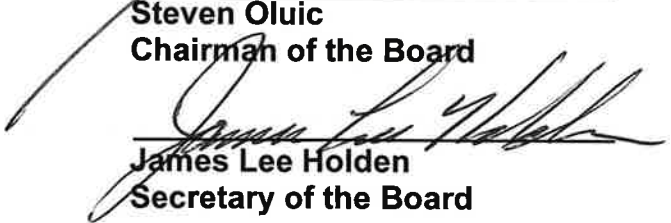
Respectfully submitted by:



Teresa Slater
Administrative/Office Manager



Steven Oluic
Chairman of the Board



James Lee Holden
Secretary of the Board