

MINUTES
Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board
June 12, 2023

The Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services (MHRS) Board met in a special session on Monday, June 12, 2023, at 5:00 PM. This meeting was held in person with a Zoom option for the public.

Acting Board President Rev. John Werner called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and asked for a roll call of members and staff in attendance.

Board Members in attendance: Ms. Susan Deak, Board Secretary; Ms. Shonene McLaughlin; Mr. Alan Block; Rev. John Werner, Acting Board President; Ms. Megan Brunarski and Ms. Deborah King; Mr. Joe Loftus.

The following Board Members were not in attendance: Mr. Matthew Crawford, Board President on Leave; Ms. Pat DuPuy.

MHRS Board Staff in Attendance: Ms. Miriam Walton, Director; Ms. Kaitie Park Hart; and Ms. Bridget Sherman. Board contractor Ms. Mary Ann Hill.

Visitors: Ms. Kalee Peterson, Signature Health.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: The Minutes of the April 2023 MHRS Board meeting were reviewed. After some review, Ms. Brunarski moved that the minutes be approved as submitted. Mr. Block seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote.

Seven Yes; Zero No; None Abstained. Motion passed.

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

FISCAL REPORTS— Ms. Walton reviewed the April and May 2023 fiscal reports. After further discussion, Rev. Werner called for a motion to approve. Ms. Deak moved that the Board accept the April 2023 financial reports as submitted. Mr. Block seconded the motion.

Motion to Accept Financials:

Ms. Deak moved that the Board accept the April 2023 financial reports as submitted. Mr. Block seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote.

Seven Yes; Zero No; No Abstentions. Motion passed.

Mr. Block moved that the Board accept the May 2023 financial reports as submitted. Ms. King seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote.

Seven Yes; Zero No; No Abstentions. Motion passed.

REPORTS:

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

1. Rev. Werner stated that Miriam's review is almost completed, will get that completed soon. Rev. Werner announced that he has received a call to a church in Barnesville, Minnesota, and will be leaving in July. The Board will need a new President. Ms. Walton explained the roles of the officers and that it was time to choose new officers for the next two state fiscal years. After some discussion Ms. Deak moved that the Board elect Ms. Brunarski President; Mr. Block as Secretary; and Ms. King as Vice-President. Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. Rev. Werner asked if there were any nominations from the floor or anyone else who wanted to be considered. Hearing none, Rev. Werner called for a vote.

Seven Yes; Zero No; No Abstentions. Motion passed.

2. Executive Director Search Committee: Ms. Brunarski reported that there have been 13 applicants responded, 3 were found qualified under the ORC 340 minimal standards. The position was also extended and sent directly to licensed individuals in Ashtabula County and surrounding counties. The current deadline for submission of a cover letter and resume is July 3rd.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Ms. Walton asked if anyone had any questions regarding her Executive Director's Report. There were none.
2. Ms. Walton discussed the sliding fee scale and the changes in the Federal Poverty Guidelines. These rates went up in March 2023. Currently Ms. Walton and Ms. Battaglioli are looking into what other Partner Solutions Boards are doing regarding updates. Hopefully have something for July but most likely August.
3. Ms. Walton informed the Board that we will be moving to the Key Bank building as announced by the County Commissioners. Juvenile Court is also moving into the building. We will be occupying the space currently occupied by the Ashtabula City Health Department. Ms. Walton then felt that any lease discussion should most likely be done in Executive Session. Ms. Burnarski moved that the Board go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing property acquisition. Mr. Block seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a roll call vote. Ms. McLaughlin, yes; Rev. Werner, yes; Ms. Brunarski, yes; Ms. Deak, yes; Mr. Loftus, yes; Ms. King, yes; and Mr. Block, yes. The Board moved into Executive Session at 5:42 p.m. The Board came out of Executive Session at 5:54 p.m. At that time Ms. King moved that the Board give Ms. Walton the authority to continue to negotiate a lease for the offices at Key Bank on Main Avenue in Ashtabula, Ohio. Ms. Deak seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote. Seven Yes; Zero No; No Abstentions. Motion passed.
4. Ms. Brunarski and Mr. Loftus mentioned the closing of the Common Please Specialized Dockets. This action is of great concern to both, and several other Board members were also upset by the action. Ms. Walton mentioned that, about two weeks

ago, the Common Pleas Judges announced that they would not be taking in any new referrals for participants into MH or Drug Court. Last Wednesday they announced that they would be closing the Common Pleas Drug Court and MH Court. The process is to phase participants toward graduation or other services. According to the Judges, decreased positive outcomes and staffing have contributed to the situation. Lengthy discussion ensued with the Board members. Ultimately, the Board members directed Ms. Walton to reach out to the Court and make it clear that the Board is not in favor of this move and is upset that this is taking a valuable option for Ashtabula County residents struggling with a substance use disorder and is now involved with the criminal justice system. Ms. Walton stated that she would contact the Court tomorrow. Ms. Walton also reviewed the past work with the Common Pleas court and the continued work with the Municipal Courts.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. GRANT SEARCHES—Ms. Walton stated that we have submitted the OCJS grant for the Conneaut Renewal Court. It is considered a Substance Abuse/Mental Health Court (SAMI) by the Ohio Supreme Court. We will not here if the Court will be awarded the grant until November. The Board’s SOS and SOR NCE grants were approved by the state. We should be able to spend the No Cost Extension by the end of September.

B. COALITIONS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

1. **Suicide Prevention**— Ms. Sherman reported that registration for the One Life race is on Stasny Road Racing web page. There is a new venue and route this year beginning at the Lampson Road Staging Area of the Greenway Trail.
2. **Prevention Coalition**— None.
3. **Housing Continuum of Care**—None.

C. QUARTERLY REPORTS—Ms. Walton stated that the end-of-the-Year quarterly reports will be available in August or September.

D. CRISIS EXPANSION WORK—No Report.

E. OFFICE SPACE—See above in Executive Director’s Report

F. SFY 2024 BOARD BUDGET-PURCHASE OF SERVICES—Ms. Walton walked the Board members through the SFY 2024 Budget documents. The Providers are alphabetized. Ms. Walton reviewed the projected revenues and Provider funding. Ms. Walton pointed out the addition of Family Pride as a new Provider. They will be delivering services for seniors who are struggling with depression, anxiety, etc. and in need of referrals to services. This fills an identified need in our Community Assessment and Plan. Ms. Walton reviewed the other funding including grants and regional collaborations. Ms. Walton also explained the color coding as a tool to follow the funding streams. After additional discussion by the Board, Mr. Block commended the staff on the development of the budget and moved that the Board approve the SFY 2024 budget for purchase of services. Ms. Deak seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote. Seven Yes. Zero No. No Abstentions. The motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. HUD CONTINUUM OF CARE GRANT REVIEW AND AMHA REQUEST**— Ms. Walton told the Board the review of the grant by HUD is complete and that there were no findings. During the process the Board did ask for technical assistance with administrative payments to the Ashtabula Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA). The grant only allows 9% of what is expended on actual rent. The Housing Authority does a tremendous amount of work prior to someone leasing up and during every stage of the process. The leadership at AMHA are asking the Board to consider a per voucher payment from the time the person is accepted into the program. They are asking \$53/voucher. This is the manner and amount HUD pays AMHA for their other housing grants. When you calculate the cost of this per month and subtract the 9% of the actual rent paid, this increase could cost the Board between \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year depending on the number of individuals in the program. Ms. Walton believes for the amount of work the AMHA does in this program for the Board the cost is reason able. After a few questions from the Board members, Ms. Deak moved that the Board pay AMHA on a per voucher basis as outlined by Ms. Walton. Ms. McLaughlin seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote. Seven Yes. Zero No. No Abstentions. The motion passed.
- B. STATE BUDGET AND PENDING LEGISLATION**--Ms. Walton presented a brief overview of the budget process still going on at the state level. Ms. Walton reviewed the areas of concern like the acquisition of the complete Medicaid data, possible changes in Board size, etc.
- C. JULY BOARD MEETING**-- Ms. Walton asked about a July Board meeting. Ms. Brunarski moved that the July Board meeting be cancelled. Ms. King seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote. Seven Yes. Zero No. No Abstentions. The motion passed.

COMMUNICATION: None

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. King moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Deak seconded the motion. Rev. Werner called for a vote.

Seven Yes; Zero No; No Abstentions. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is set for August 21, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Rev. John Werner, Acting Board President

Rev. Werner moved out of state before signing the minutes

Minutes Prepared by Miriam Walton

MW 8/22/2023