

## MINUTES

### Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board October 16, 2023

The Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services (MHRS) Board met in a special session on Monday, October 16, 2023, at 5:00 PM. This meeting was held in person with a Zoom option for the public.

Board President Ms. Brunarski called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. and asked for a roll call of members and staff in attendance.

**Board Members in attendance:** Ms. Susan Deak; Mr. Alan Block, Board Secretary; Ms. Megan Brunarski, Board President, Ms. Deborah King, Board Vice-President; Mr. Matthew Crawford; Mr. Joe Loftus; and Ms. Pat DuPuy.

**The following Board Members were not in attendance:** None

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

**Visitors:** Mr. Paul Bolino, Community Counseling Center; and Ms. Sheri Sullivan, Family Pride; Kalee Peterson, Signature Health; and Commissioner Kathryn Whittington.

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

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

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

**FISCAL REPORTS—** Ms. Walton reviewed the August and September Draft final financial reports. Ms. Walton walked the Board through the report and discussed why the report does not show a full quarter of revenue. There are funds still not realized from OhioMHAS. These funds are being sent through the OAKS system but have not yet been received by the Board. Mr. Loftus moved that the Board approve the August and September 2023 financial reports as submitted. Ms. Deak seconded the motion. Brunarski called for a vote. Seven Yes; Zero No; Zero Abstained. Motion passed.

### **REPORTS:**

#### **BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

1. Ms. Brunarski stated that the Board will go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting to complete the Board Executive Director's evaluation. Ms. Brunarski introduced Commissioner Whittington who joined the meeting to discuss possible changes to Board composition based on HB 33.

2. Commissioner Whittington addressed the Board and presented information of concern to the County Commissioners and why the Commissioners were considering the possible reduction in the number of MHRS Board members. Commissioner Whittington listened to Board member input and addressed any concerns brought forward by the MHRS Board members. Discussion included thoughts about 9 being too few as has been witnessed in the past when there has been a sudden loss of MHRS Board members due to term limits and resignations. Members were reassured that any changes would happen through attrition. Commissioner Whittington stated that Commissioners are leaning to 9, because they are having difficulty filling local and state appointments. 9 may be a more reasonable number given the challenges of filling empty slots. MS. Walton reviewed the required representation for MHRS Board members, which can also pose challenges. After further discussion it appeared that most members were comfortable with the move to 9. Commissioners Whittington stated that the Commissioners will most likely act tomorrow in session to establish the number of Board members, but the final resolution will come later.

## **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 reviewed the Culture of Quality reviewers' recommendation to have more documentation concerning the Board member ethics information and Board member training. Although each Board member receives the Ohio Ethics Law information with their Board manual when they join the Board, the reviewers suggested that we give Board members the information again and have a written statement signed that you received the information. Each Board member was given a new copy of the Ethics Law and an acknowledgement form to sign and return. Ms. Walton also explained the new sign-in sheet for Board member attendance. This was also a COQ review recommendation.
3. Ms. Walton reviewed the state increases in Medicaid rates (12.5%) which, if mirrored by the Board, will increase what the Board pays for some services. Ms. Walton informed the Board that PartnerSolutions ran some estimate reports, and it appears that the mirroring of the changes could cost the Board an additional \$45,000 in treatment service costs increase. If we need to increase allocations, we can review it later, but Ms. Walton recommended following the state's lead and continuing to mirror the state Medicaid rates. Since some providers are not billing out all their contracts, this should help them realize some additional revenue while dealing with workforce shortages.
4. Ms. Walton informed the Board that SOS was approved by OhioMHAS for the same amount as last federal fiscal year. The plan is to use the funding to continue to support the programs the Board started when the funding began 3 years ago. These programs are the CCC Lighthouse Recovery Housing, LARC Eubanks House recovery Housing, and the Common Pleas Court Adult Probation Behavioral Health Navigator.
5. Ms. Walton informed the Board of the changes to recovery housing that were passed in HB 33. Recovery houses must now be registered with OhioMHAS and must be certified by Ohio Recovery Housing or Oxford House. Facilities that are not in the process of certification now will not be able to receive local, state, and federal dollars. Houses that do not complete the work by the state deadline will not receive funding from the Board.
6. Ms. Walton explained that the new Prevention rule will force Coalitions to be certified by January 1, 2025. Prevention Coalition, Suicide Prevention Coalition, SALT, and Housing Coalition may need to be certified. Board staff are working on the language and working with

our Board Association to see how this rule will affect our work locally.

7. Ms. Walton told the Board that the first Law Enforcement training was on Wednesday. There were 10 officers trained and the evaluations were very positive. Ms. Walton will meet with the Crime Clinic and see about scheduling another training.
8. Ms. Walton asked if Board members had read the Washington Post article. Some of the Board members read it. Ms. Walton wanted the Board members to be aware of it. At this point it is online only. The paper addition will be out later this month.
9. Ms. Walton let Board members know that we have ordered two new laptops for new staff coming on during the transition.
10. Ms. Walton pointed out the tabs in the Board member binders. Hopefully this will assist members in finding all their materials during the meeting. Ms. Battaglioli will also be taking old materials out of binders, so if there is something members would like to keep in hard copy, please take it with you or leave a note in your binder so we keep it for you. Inside the binders tonight are the results of the communication plan (tab 6), the annual report, and the quality improvement plan. Board members asked if the Board had any plans to use any social media besides Facebook. Ms. Hart explained that she and Ms. Sherman have met with Youth LEADership to promote some things on social media and get their suggestions on what would work best to reach a younger audience.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**A. GRANT SEARCHES**— Ms. Walton stated that we are still awaiting notification on the OCJS grant for Judge Iarocci and the new HUD grant.

#### **B. COALITIONS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:**

1. **Suicide Prevention**— Ms. Sherman reported the One Life race and the awesome turnout for the day. The new venue at the Lampson Road Staging Area of the Greenway Trail may have been the draw. Ms. Sherman also reminded Board members that the art show is scheduled for November. There are also plans for November Mental Health First Aid and QPR training.
2. **Prevention Coalition**— Ms. Hart informed Board members that we had about 150 individuals attend the PART conference.
3. **Housing Continuum of Care**—See Above.
4. **Substance Abuse Leadership Team**—Ms. Hart reported on the Maternal Health Hotline as a stigma reduction activity. The Board was given the Tungsten information on the social media ads. Ms. Hart also discussed the interest the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation has in this collaborative work we are doing through our HRSA grant.

**C. QUARTERLY REPORTS**—None.

**D. CRISIS EXPANSION WORK**—Ms. Walton updated the Board on the crisis expansion work. Feedback from both the crisis staff and the law enforcement officers is very positive. Folks are learning a lot from each other. Ms. Deak suggested that professionals and others are missing out on the wisdom of the family members. Ms. Walton agreed but explained that privacy laws got in the way. Providers cannot even confirm that they see the client without a release. Lengthy discussion ensued around how best to get information from family members. Ms. Wagner spoke and reminded everyone that the Board does have our Family and Consumer feedback survey on our website. This is a way for some of that general

knowledge to be shared with us for us in planning.

**E. OFFICE SPACE**—No Report.

**F. CULTURE OF QUALITY**—Ms. Walton updated the Board on the review. The Board staff are hoping for a three-year certification.

**G. BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION**—Mr. Block asked when the Board will complete Ms. Walton's evaluation. Ms. Brunarski stated that with the departure of Rev. Werner she will need to meet with Ms. Wagner and review the evaluation. This includes the Board self-evaluation as well. Ms. Brunarski stated that she hopes to have everything finished during the September Board meeting.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. REGIONAL ADAM AND AMANDA HOUSE DEVELOPMENT**—Ms. Walton explained that the state has dropped funding opportunities to the hospital catchment areas to work together on the development of shared stepdown housing for individuals in need of further stabilization after a hospitalization or stabilization instead of a hospitalization. As part of this process OhioMHAS is requiring all the counties that will use the facilities developed to enter an MOU to show our support of the regional approach. There will be one in Cuyahoga County, two in Lake County and one in Geauga County. After some discussion, Ms. King proposed the resolution to enter the MOU with our other NBH hospital boards for the purpose of the Adam and Amanda project (attached). Ms. Deak seconded the motion. Ms. Brunarski asked for a vote. Seven Yes; Zero No; Zero Abstained. Motion passed.
- B. CRISIS STABILIZATION CENTER**—Ms. Walton updated the Board on the ongoing work with Lake and Geauga Counties around developing a possible crisis stabilization center. The work is still very much in the planning stages, but it was suggested that entering an MOU to show our commitment to the process would be a positive step. The MOU will only commit the partner Boards to continuing our efforts to plan to better meet the crisis needs of our adjoining counties through this work. After some discussion Ms. Deak presented the resolution (attached) to enter the MOU with Lake and Geauga ADAMH Board for the purpose of further exploration of a crisis stabilization center. Ms. DuPuy seconded the motion. Ms. Brunarski asked for a vote. Seven Yes; Zero No; Zero Abstained. Motion passed.
- C. BOARD DIRECTOR SICK LEAVE**— Ms. Walton reviewed the plans for Board operations during her recovery from surgery. Ms. Walton wanted the Board to be fully aware of what was happening and how the Board would continue to function.
- D. UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS**—The Board discussed the Board meeting schedule for the next few months. After some discussion Ms. Brunarski moved that the November Board meeting be moved to November 27<sup>th</sup>. Ms. King seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Brunarski also moved that the December Board meeting be cancelled. Ms. Deak seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Ms. Walton stated that the January meeting will need to be scheduled to avoid the MLK Jr. holiday and she suggested January 22<sup>nd</sup>, which seemed to work for the members.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**—Ms. Brunarski moved that the Board go into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing personnel matters. Mr. Block seconded the motion. Ms. Brunarski called for a roll call vote: Ms. Deak, yes; Mr. Block, yes; Ms. King, yes; Mr. Crawford, yes; Ms. Brunarski, yes; Mr. Loftus, yes and Ms. DuPuy, yes. The Board entered Executive Session at 6:33 p.m. Ms. Walton asked if any staff or visitors attending virtually wanted to rejoin after the Board came back from Executive Session and all persons declined.

On a motion from Mr. Block and a seconded by Mr. Brunarski the Board returned from Executive Session at 6:44 pm.

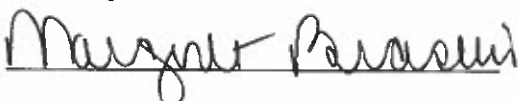
**ACTION AS A RESULT OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The Board reported that they reviewed Ms. Walton’s job performance and that they are very pleased with her work and look forward to continuing to work with her through the transition process. Ms. Walton thanked the Board for all their hard work and oversight.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Block moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. King seconded the motion. Ms. Brunarski called for a vote.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting is set for November 27, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Megan Brunarski, Board President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Margaret Brunarski", written over a horizontal line.

Minutes Prepared by Miriam Walton