

MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY BOARD OF ASHLAND COUNTY
Board Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2025

PRESENT: Mary Deeter David Ross, Executive Director
Sara Battison Patty Walton, Associate Director
Chad Brown Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator
Connie Butler Ashley Ackerman, Director of Programs, Training & Education
Andrew Kinney
Tom Gaus
Katie Wright
Ed Kieper
Cindy Kyser
Ben Key

ABSENT: Dennis Dyer*
Nancy Udolph*
Shari Shafer*
*Provided notice

Mary Deeter, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Martha Jorden room at 1605 County Road 1095, Ashland. Mary read a card addressed to David and the Board that was received from the Impact Youth Council after a meeting David had with them. The group expressed appreciation for the time David took with them, for the valuable services the Board funds, and support for our upcoming levy. And the group enjoyed their stress cows!

I. CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME

A. Roll Call- Secretary Katie Wright took roll call, and a quorum was present to pass the warrants.

II. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 10, 2024, BOARD MINUTES

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Ed Keiper to recommend approval of December 10, 2024, Board meeting minutes. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried.
25-01-01

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. LEVY COMMITTEE, Dwight McElfresh, Chair

- I. Update on Committee Activities-** Dr. McElfresh told the Board it was his privilege to serve this Board as levy chair, he has served over 30 years on the Board. Through the years he and Dr. Lucille Ford have co-chaired the Mental Health levies together, Dr. Ford is greatly missed. Continuing, Dr. McElfresh indicated we've started the work for the levy in good time and explained that a replacement or renewal is one of our biggest decisions. It's been fifteen years since we've passed a replacement, therefore the levy committee is recommending we work with Oscar McKnight again to gain understanding from the community 1) to determine the conceptual level of public support for a potential mental health levy, and 2) to identify key concepts or concerns influencing citizen support or opposition. Oscar does a great job collecting data and his surveys have been key in our past levies; his roll will be to shape the levy campaign based on community feedback. The cost to perform the survey is not to exceed \$10,000.

II. Consulting Agreement with Dr. McKnight

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Chad Brown to recommend to the Board that it enter into an agreement with Oscar McKnight to perform a survey, not to exceed \$10,000. Sara Battison seconded the motion. The motion carried.
25-01-02

Dr. McKnight indicated results of the survey should be back by April 1, which is the date of the next Levy Committee meeting. He explained that survey questions will be sent electronically to Board members who will complete the survey and then pass it along to ten others.

III. Levy Budget

Dr. McElfresh indicated the levy committee reviewed a budget for the campaign of \$50,000 which includes promotion and Oscar's survey.

RESOLUTION: 25-01-03 **A motion was made by Sara Battison to recommend to the Board approval of the proposed 2025 levy budget. Cindy Kyser seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

David Ross explained that levy promotion will be done differently than in the past due to the growth of social media. We will still do signs and billboards; however, postcards are no longer effective. Other promotions include digital ads, radio/social media, Oscar's survey and a kickoff event.

Dr. McElfresh finished by stressing the importance of registering to vote and helping with the campaign by placing signs and other materials. It's critical that we let people know the importance of the levy and the programs funded by the levy.

B. FINANCE, Chad Brown, Chair

I. December & January Warrants

RESOLUTION: 25-01-04 **A motion was made by Connie Butler to recommend approval of the December 2024 and January 2025 warrants for payment. Tom Guas seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

II. November & December Financials

RESOLUTION: 25-01-05 **Mary Deeter made a motion to recommend approval of November & December Financials. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

Patty reported that the target is 50 percent and revenues are a little over target. Referring to expenditures, she indicated that non-Medicaid for Appleseed and CCS are trending higher than last year at this time and ACCADA is at the same level as last year at this time. She reported that staff have just finished mid-year reviews with the agencies; if there are any requests, they will be brought to the board next month.

Patty noted that staff are keeping an eye on issues with billing and working with the agencies.

Overall expenses are at 48 percent, same as last year at this time.

Work has begun on the projects identified in the budget; 1) the flooring in this building is almost complete; it should be done in February. 2) Materials for the Professional Building have been ordered.

SOS 4.0 was approved in December, \$359,925.50 for October1 2024 to September 30, 2025.

The Board was made aware today that we've received additional Recovery House dollars for in the amount of \$7,620. The funds must be expended by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2025).

iii. SFY 26 First Look- Fiscal Parameters

Referring to the first-look fiscal parameters, Patty explained the process indicating once the parameters are approved in February the information will be incorporated into the agency guidelines and provided to the agencies; approvals will be made in May. Tonight, we will be reviewing the parameters, and no vote is required. As we prepared the FY26 budget, we did not include new SOR funds. In reviewing the fiscal parameters for Catholic Charities, she pointed out

a difference in SORS funding in the amount of \$13,240 (-3%). Referring to Appleseed, differences include a reduction of \$40,000 (-3%) in carve outs that are one-time funds for the Juvenile Court advocate that go away. Central Pharmacy \$195 (-100%), and CTP \$10,000 (-33%) are funds that are not being replenished as they are used, and SORS dollars by \$53,727 (-55%). Looking at ACCADA, she noted an additional \$5,851 (2%) for carve outs as we told them we would replace these dollars as SORS goes away, and SORS reduced by \$56,045 (-68 %).

Referring to box four, MHRB, the operating budget is reduced by \$4,486 (-1%), programmatic reduced by \$45,818 (-27%), other restricted funds reduced by \$9,000 (-8 %), and Church St/Columbus Circle reduced \$28,500 (-28%) for a total reduction in budget of -9%.

Box 5 is our levy, which we discussed. Box 6 represents our anticipated revenue, local is reduced \$125,500 (-7%), a reduction of \$36,195 (-2%) in State, and \$153,077 (-26%) in Federal, for a total reduction in revenue of \$314,772 (-8%). Overall, the FY26 budget shows a net negative of eight percent.

David indicated flat funding over the years is the reason for the negative budget. The agencies are getting a flat budget as well. He pointed out our health insurance line saw a double digit increase for the first time.

Mary reminded the Board that levy expenses are spread across two fiscal years (2025 & 2026).

iv. Grant Funding Updates

David noted that Patty talked about the grant funding in her report; SORS and Recovery House.

C. PLANNING, Sara Battison, Chair

i. FSY 26 First Look-Program & Service Priorities

David indicated the first look priorities will also be incorporated into the agency guidelines. There are a couple of highlighted areas, which he reviewed. He does not see any big changes needed as we go into FY26, except for the levy which is noted.

Sara indicated Loudonville is a small community, she suggested someone write a quarterly article about the fact we are here and what we do. Provide a framework and increase knowledge about the Board as we go into a levy.

CCS and ACCADA have made an effort to get more services into Loudonville by renting office space in the village.

ii. Agency Mid-Year Reviews Update

David explained that agency billings can lag due to challenges with Managed Care and Medicaid, Appleseed's non-MCD line is trending higher than anticipated. We continue to keep our eye on that as Patty said, and we will come back to the Board if necessary. This is the reason we do mid-year reviews.

iii. Agency Reports

- **ACCADA- MAT Mid-Year Report**

David reported that there is a modest number of people in that program; fifteen folks. The program is down 67% from two years ago, and down from two years before that. The good news is that the fifteen participants reported benefits from services. Before Medication Assisted Treatment, we didn't see much success. The program works.

- **Appleseed – School-Community Liaison Report – 1st Quarter**

David indicated the first quarter July- September 2024 reflects 923 unduplicated students served. The program consistently shows good outcomes. During this quarter 93% followed through. Some of the important pieces of the report include success stories. Furthermore, Liaisons are supporting mentoring programs and others that are considered preventative services. He discussed programming that engages people, so they are not isolated, and Family Engagement Committees Liaisons are involved with 437 referrals which reflect engagement and good relationships. This report is done every quarter. The School Community Liaison Program is one of the most visible programs that the Mental health Levy funds.

Stacy Merryweather talked about advocates for families and partnerships between agencies.

- **CCS- Healthy Kids Strong Families- Mid-Year Report**

David indicated Healthy Kids Strong Families is a dynamic parenting program to strengthen families. There were 27 referrals, and 23 children served. David read a testimonial shared by a parent, "Diana, I will be honest with you. When I came here today, I didn't think you had anything to teach me about parenting. I thought I wouldn't learn anything, and I have." Now nearly six months later with regular contacts and engagement with the curriculum, he and his family have been reunited with their son. The matter now with child protective services is close to being officially closed. HKSF remains a part of the care team offering support for this family as they journey their experience with sobriety and the healing resiliency that they have been able to thrive under.

Sheryl Villegas commented that it's important to know that we don't do anything in a vacuum, it's a team effort. Catholic Charities receives a lot of referrals from JFS, and it takes collaboration with other agencies.

iv. Training & Event Updates

- Dec. 16 Brethren Care appreciation for suicide griever's group space
- March 18- Board Training Scheduled with Tanya Mounts, past board member.
- Registration is LIVE for 16th Annual R.S.V.P. Conference- please take some of the flyers and distribute. Trying to fill the room, we are hoping to have 100 in attendance. Let Sandy know if you want to attend (no charge for Board members)

The conference focuses on Medication Optimization (part of the three leg's philosophy)- Brooke talks about her personal journey of coming off medication and her mother is part of the conference as well. Brooke's Mother has a powerful story from her perspective as she was left with a decision to put a child on medication or not. We rely on experts' knowledge, in some cases, you get children blaming the parents for putting them in a situation, but they have a great relationship and work together to tell their story to help others. We need the Boards help to get parents and educators to the conference. Sara suggested working this in the Loudonville articles.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT, David Ross, Executive Director

Executive Director's Evaluation- please complete and return or complete the online version. Cookies will be provided by the Vice Chair at the February Board meeting if we have 100 percent participation. Thank you, Andrew!

Key Items of Focus

1. Pass the Levy in November 2025
2. Contract for Services for SFY 2026
3. Advocate for Increased Revenue and/or Increased Flexibility (fewer lines) in the SFY 2026-27 Budget

4. Promote and Provide High-Quality Training & Events in SFY 2025 (Annual Luncheon, Awareness Walk, Fairs, RSVP.)
5. Continue to ensure effective Board Operations (Board Members & Staff)

Highlights

- ✓ Our multi-year advocacy efforts paid off with the passage of H.B. 257! Beginning in early April, our Board will be able to take advantage of technology and conduct business virtually. Implementation guidance is forthcoming. The Board will likely need to convene the Governance Committee to update our bylaws to allow this change.
- ✓ We successfully secured SOS 4.0 Funding for all three Board contract partners.
- ✓ Collaboration with the Juvenile Court continues with Judge Kellogg desiring to partner on submitting a Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice grant application for Ashland County.
- ✓ Disability Rights Ohio will continue to support the RSVP Conference but will no longer be a co-sponsor.

Lowlights

- ✓ We were unsuccessful (outbid) in purchasing the house next door.
- ✓ We are still looking for an alternative downtown location for the 'urban meadow.' Please continue to send me your ideas.
- ✓ The recent tragedy in Columbiana County reminds us all that human nature is unpredictable, and systems of care aren't perfect, and they have gaps.

What's Keeping Me Up at Night

- ✓ Workforce Challenges
- ✓ Flat Funding
 - **OhioMHAS:**
 - In the cover letter, Director Cornyn highlights investments in children, multi-system adults, and the behavioral health system.
 - The top line numbers show a proposed increase in the 421-line item. The details for the line item are not included in this submission, so it is unclear at this stage what exactly this could mean for Board allocations.
 - There is also a proposed increase for hospital operations and the criminal justice services line.
 - Several notes reference restructuring line items, but the details of the proposed restructuring are not included.
 - **Ohio Department of Medicaid:**
 - The cover letter highlights the importance of maintaining the rate increases that were included in the SFY 2024/2025 budget.
 - The letter also addresses continued support for behavioral health conditions, with specific areas of focus including MRSS, peer recovery supports, and capacity building.
- ✓ Suicide & Overdose Deaths
- ✓ Pattern of Regionalization and Top-Down Decision Making in Columbus (Legacy Focus vs. Local Needs Focus)

Upcoming Events & Training

- February 22nd – Farmer Appreciation Breakfast (Ashland City Schools)
- **March 26th – RSVP Conference**

Knowledge of Note

- Handout: Compliance in a Nutshell: Health Officers & Pink Slips
- Handout: Addressing Suicide in the Construction Industry

The Board Making News

- Dr. Ashley and David represented the Board at our local EMA & LEPC Table-top Disaster Drill on January 16th. The exercise included up to 8 other county EMAs (virtually).
- Presentation to Leadership Ashland on January 9th
- Support offered to Annette Ward and ACCADA at the calling hours for her husband Rick on December 18th
- Dr. Ashley and David represented the Board at the Health Department and UH-Samaritans Community Health Needs event on December 17th

V. Acknowledgement of Guests:

Laura Beckett, NAMI Richland County

Jerry Strausbaugh, Appleseed Director, Jerry is looking forward to helping with the levy.

Rick Ford, ACCADA Director, thanks for all the Board does, he looks forward to working with the Board on the levy.

Stacy Merryweather, Appleseed, expressed appreciation for continued support from the Board and is willing to help with the Levy when the time comes.

Sheryl Villegas, CCS Director, thank you for the work on the levy through the levy committee.

Liz Hosfeld, Member of Leadership Ashland and Community Communication Specialist at the Community Foundation.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Tom Gaus to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:10 p.m. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator

Signed by:

David Ross

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David Ross, Executive Director

Signed by:

Mary Deeter

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Mary Deeter, Board Chair