

**MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY BOARD OF ASHLAND COUNTY**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 25, 2025**

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

**ABSENT:** Shari Shafer\*  
Nancy Udolph\*  
\*Provided notice

**GUESTS:** Sheryl Villegas, CCS  
Rick Ford, ACCADA  
Jerry Strausbaugh, Appleseed  
Laura Beckett, NAMI Richland  
Stacy Merryweather, Appleseed  
Diana Sharp, CCS

Mary Deeter called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Martha Jordan room, 1605 Co. Rd. 1095, Ashland.

David thanked Mary for her kindness in providing Board members and staff the notepad and pen distributed this evening which both say "May you be proud of the work you do, the person you are, and the difference you make."

**I. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS**

Roll Call -Secretary Katie Wright took the roll call and noted that a quorum was present.

Pass Warrants- There was a quorum to pass the warrants.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY MINUTES**

**RESOLUTION:** A motion was made by Connie Butler to recommend approval of February 25, 2025  
**25-03-01 meeting minutes. Tom Gaus seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. FINANCE,** Chad Brown, Chair

**I. March Warrants**

**RESOLUTION:** A motion was made by Tom Gaus to recommend approval of the March 2025  
**25-03-02 warrants for payment. Ed Kieper seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

## **II. February Financials**

**RESOLUTION: 25-03-03**     **A motion was made by Connie Buter to recommend approval of the February Financials. Tom Gaus seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

Patty reviewed the February Financials, reporting that the target is 67percent. There were no updates regarding reserves. Revenues are tracking on target. Regarding non-Medicaid, the agencies are all trending below target; ACCADA and CCS may end the fiscal year below target.

Board expenses will begin to increase as we enter the last quarter of the fiscal year due to the RSVP conference and purchases for IT. Overall expenses are 61 percent, a little below target. We've seen a slight increase in utility costs and more snow removal due to the harsher winter.

## **III. Urban Meadow Funding Received**

Patty indicated that we requested the money back for the Urban Meadow and received a check within the week. David Ross, Executive Director, indicated he talked with Mayor Matt Miller, and the mayor was fine with the Board's decision.

## **B. PLANNING, Sara Battison, Chair**

### **I. Agency Programming Reports**

- David indicated the Appleseed Transitional-Aged Youth Report is done by Samantha Thiemens. During the reporting period 34 TAY clients were served through community collaboration by many local organizations. David noted that the program is getting good results and young people are receiving the support they need. He talked about some of the successes in the program and that fact that many youth are learning about real world challenges, such as seeing how hard it is to save money with all the expenses there are.

Stacy Merryweather indicated they are looking to fill a position. A Board member asked if there is a school liaison dedicated to Ashland High School. Stacy explained there are fourteen school liaisons that are distributed throughout all of the schools in the Ashland County School District, including the Career Center, and Crestview.

- Catholic Charities Resilient Family Project- David explained that the focus of the program to increase parenting skills and provide parenting education. The program is very practical and involves walking along families and young people who are struggling. Diana Sharp from Catholic Charities Services is the Program Coordinator and shared some of her experiences with the program over the last six months, and indicated the program is funded by the Ohio Children's Trust Funds and the Mental Health and Recovery Board which has allowed them to serve 21 families this quarter. She expressed appreciation to the Board for their support in being able to provide these services for the families. Diana talked about discussion groups where families can learn from one another. The program has the flexibility to allow parents to bond during the triple P groups.

### **II. Overdose and Suicide Fatality Review Committee**

David and Ashley attended the overdose and suicide fatality meetings, the committee is made up of the Health Department and many community agencies to prevent and eliminate deaths by overdose and suicide.

- Additional information needed. The group is working to try and secure increased cooperation from the coroner's office. David explained that the committee is missing key information from the families, as no one is interviewing them and getting their perspective. We are a small county and the authority for that would need to come from the coroner. This information would allow us to know what the families were struggling with. Franklin County is currently doing this type of interview with the family, which is relatively a new process. We are hoping to get this process in Ashland County. There are some patterns that can be seen when talking with families such as, chronic medical conditions, relationship triggers, financial burdens, etc.
- Fatalities are down from last year, but still not at zero. We are glad to see that the numbers are lower. There was discussion regarding the timeframe that an interview piece would be done with the family. David indicated we don't want to retraumatize family members so that would be an important piece of the process. He indicated the Suicide Prevention Coalition will be meeting April 18 at the Board office (Pizza provided) and we will talk more about this at that meeting. Ashley has been working to update the Suicide Griever's Packets which have information for families after a suicide loss. Packets will be distributed at the April 18 Suicide Prevention Coalition Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to understand situations and see if there are things we can do to help.

### III. FCFC Updates (New Admin Agent & New Coordinator)

David reported that the new admin agent for FCFC is the Ashland County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and the new coordinator is Patti Baumgartner. They had their first meeting last week, and there was a good turnout, with many agencies in attendance.

### IV. Training & Events Updates

- Join us tomorrow at 9 am for the RSVP Conference. It will be recorded and will be released later. The focus of the
- Reminder: April 1<sup>st</sup> at 4 pm- Levy Committee Meeting- Oscar will be reviewing the survey results.
- March 27-Amish Women's Health Day
- April 18 at noon- Suicide Prevention Coalition will be at the office with Pizza.

### V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT, David Ross, Executive Director.

A. The Governance Committee needs to meet on April 15 from 4-5 pm (Volunteers?)

Mary Deeter, Chair, indicated we need a policy to legally allow members to zoom and be able to vote. David explained that this would be an Ad Hoc committee, and we have other draft policies to review as well. Sara, Ben, Mary, and Katie volunteered to sit on the committee.

### Key Items of Focus

- . Pass the Levy in November 2025 OACBHA is assembling a "Levy Committee," which I will participate in.
- . Contract for Services for SFY 2026 Possible Need to Revise Budgets Earlier in the Year due to any OhioMHAS Formula Changes
- . Directors are aware of the situation. Our 120-day notices, application guidelines, and contracts all state that our ability to fund depends on actual revenues received.
- . Advocate for Increased Revenue and/or Increased Flexibility (fewer lines) in the SFY 2026-27 Budget New "Block-Grant" funding in the Governor's budget
- . Additional details have been provided. It appears more flexibility is intended.

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

### Highlights

- . Productive meetings with Senator Romanchuk and Rep. Miller. The level of knowledge and involvement of Rep. Miller and the experience of Romanchuk is so good to be able to have.
- . Good Response to this year's RSVP Conference
- . Great turnout for FCFC re-start

### Lowlights

- . We've yet to meet with OhioMHAS Leadership on the proposed funding formula for Board allocations in SFY 2026.

### What's Keeping Me Up at Night

- . **HB 28** Made it out of the House (Bill to Eliminate Property Tax **Replacement** Levies). Talked with Senator Romanchuk to see if he thinks will happen with the senate. The thought is that the word replacement is confusing. Bill sponsors are saying go for a new levy or a renewal with an increase. Not sure what's going to happen at the senate level. This will be discussed at the Levy Committee, and David has a couple of suggestions.
- . Workforce Challenges
- . Flat Funding & Potential Formula Changes!
- . Suicide & Overdose Deaths (lower but still too high)
- . Pattern of Regionalization and Top-Down Decision Making in Columbus (Legacy Focus vs. Local Needs Focus)

### Knowledge of Note

- Handout: Ohio's Behavioral Health Workforce Crisis: The Missing Link to Economic Growth
- **Handout:** Building Resilient Ohioans: Prevention Services
- Handout: [Policy Considerations](#) – The Future of Group VIII (Expansion) Medicaid Coverage in Ohio

### The Board Making News

- David represented the Board in key meetings with Rep. Miller and Senator Romanchuk. We discussed the budget, formula, possible changes to Medicaid, and legislation to remove replacement levies.
- Board Chair Mary Deeter and David represented the board at the Chamber's Annual Awards Dinner on March 6.
- David represented the Board at the Ashland Library for a book discussion on 'May Cause Side Effects.'

## VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

Jerry Strausbaugh, Appleseed- Rotary meeting on April 1, Jerry invited Board members to the meeting which is at 11 am at the Ashland Theater.

Sheryl Villegas, CCS, Looking forward to the RSVP Conference.

Rick Ford, ACCADA, Thanks for all the Board does.

Laura Beckett, Richland NAMI- Family-to-Family class starts Tuesday, April 1 for anyone who has a family member with a mental illness. You can register on line or contact Laura.

Stacy Merryweather, Appleseed

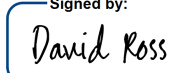
Diana Sharp, CCS

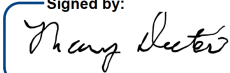
Mary announced that Andy will Chair the April Board meeting as her daughter is having surgery. Prayers for Mary's daughter.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**The Board meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator

Signed by:  
  
SF656E4015C34E9...  
David Ross, Executive Director

Signed by:  
  
AAEDDFC18BA34A2...  
Mary Deeter, Board Chair