

**MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY BOARD OF ASHLAND COUNTY**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 22, 2025**

**PRESENT:**        Andrew Kinney                    David Ross, Executive Director  
                     Katie Wright                    Patty Pawlikowski, Associate Director  
                     Sara Battison                    Ashley Ackerman, Director of Programs, Training, and Education  
                     Connie Butler                    Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator  
                     Chad Brown  
                     Ed Kleper  
                     Nancy Udolph  
                     Cindy Kyser

**ABSENT:**        Tom Gaus  
                     Ben Key  
                     Shari Shafer\*  
                     \*Provided notice

**GUESTS:**        Mary Deeter, virtual  
                     Sheryl Villegas, CCS  
                     Rick Ford, ACCADA  
                     Jerry Strausbaugh, Appleseed  
                     Laura Beckett, NAMI Richland

Andrew Kinney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. (The Chair, Mary Deeter is attending the meeting virtually, due to taking care of her daughter after surgery) in Martha Jordan room, 1605 Co. Rd. 1095, Ashland.

**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 Chad Brown to recommend approval of March 25, 2025  
**25-04-01**            meeting minutes. Katie Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**III.        NEW BUSINESS**

**A.    Finance, Chad Brown, Chair**

**i.    April Warrants**

**RESOLUTION:**    A motion was made by Connie Butler to recommend approval of April 2025  
**25-04-02**            warrants for payment. Nancy Udolph seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**ii.    March Financials**

Patty reviewed the March Financials, reporting that \$50,000 received from the Urban Meadow project was placed in the general reserves and will go to the FY26 budget in the Carryover line. Overall revenues are trending on or above target of 75 percent, the second half of levy revenue was received in April and will be reflected in the financials next month. Non-Medicaid expenses are trending below target; agencies have until

the end of September 2025, to bill for this fiscal year. Board expenses are trending below target. Overall expenses are at 69 percent.

**RESOLUTION:** A motion was made by Connie Butler to recommend approval of March 2025 Financials. Cindy  
**25-04-03** Kyser seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**B. Levy Committee, Dwight McElfresh, Chair**

**i. Recommendation for Levy**

Dr. Dwight McElfresh gave the Levy Committee report, indicating the Committee met on April 1, where Dr. Oscar McKnight reviewed results of the levy survey that over 200 people completed, which is more than statistically adequate, and provided us with some good feedback from the community to help us move forward on the levy campaign. He indicated there are some good reasons to put a replacement versus a renewal on the ballot; a replacement will give us a more stable funding base and will help to expand important services. The survey showed that a replacement focused on outcomes can be passed and that we need to keep it simple and be transparent with cost and significant savings. Based on House Bill 28, if passed, a replacement will not be an option, therefore, the motion was made with an alternative.

David Ross, Executive Director, indicated that the Senate has been in recess and will resume next week. The intent of HB 28, if approved, is for it to go into effect October 1. David indicated that Board members are welcome to write a letter to the legislature to express concern about the timeframe. The Senate will complete their work in June.

Ballot timeframes were discussed. David explained that we will likely go before the Commissioners in May (possibly June), as we would like to allow time to come back with answers if they have questions.

There was discussion around the fact that bill sponsors want to do away with replacement levies due to confusion; people don't understand that a replacement includes new construction. However, in HB 28 they are not "replacing" the word replacement with anything else, it is just being eliminated. Therefore, making a new levy or a renewal with increase the only options available for increased revenue. A new levy would include new construction; however, new levies are very hard to pass. Going for a renewal with an increase of .3 mills would cost the taxpayer six cents more per day (on a \$100,000 home). It's been fifteen years since the Board last asked voters for an increase.

Oscar's survey will also be helpful after the levy for community educational purposes.

**RESOLUTION:** Mary Deeter made a motion to recommend to the full Board that it move forward with a ten-  
**25-04-04** year 1 mill Replacement Levy (if available) or, as an alternative, a ten-year 1 mill Renewal Levy with .3 mill Increase (1.3 mill total). Ed Kieper seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**C. Governance Committee, Mary Deeter, Chair**

**i. Four new/revised policies were discussed**

Last week Sara, Katie, and Mary met and discussed four policies: two new and two revised. The virtual meetings policy, the credit card policy, which was in response to some auditor recommendations, the cell phone policy that came from the commissioner's office, and the uniform guidance for federal grants policies which resulted from SORS and other federal grants.

Referring to the virtual meetings policy, David explained that the intention to continue to meet in-person and the virtual option would not be the norm, however, it would be for those who meet the policy requirements. A 48-hour notice is required for any Board members to meet virtually, members will be considered a guest if an emergency occurs after the 48-hour timeframe.

A form will be developed for the secretary in case they need to meet virtually.

**RESOLUTION:** A motion was made by Katie Wright to recommend to the Full Board approval of the virtual  
**25-04-05** meetings, personal phone use for county business, credit card, and uniform guidance for federal grants policies. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**D. Planning, Sara Battison, Chair**

- i. Agency Applications have all been submitted on time.** David, Ashley, and Patty will be meeting to review the applications. David expressed appreciation to the directors for their work on the applications and getting them turned in timely.
- ii. Opportunity to Collaborate with Sheriff on Attorney General's Office Grant**  
The Sheriff will hire someone for 29 hours for a new position to help with assessment screening, and linkage as a person enters/exits the jail. David and Rick Ford, ACCADA Director, will work together in collaborating with the Sheriff for these services.
- iii. A Guide for Survivors of Suicide Bereavement in Ashland County – Updated**  
Ashley Ackerman, Director of Programs, Training, and Education, did a great job updating the Suicide Bereavement document and reviewed it with the Board. This is a resource for those who have experienced a loss from suicide, as they then are at risk of suicide. Many resources are included such as the 24-hour helpline information, some self-care tips, a reading list, and information about how to talk to someone who is struggling. She pointed out that Chad Brown has expressed that he particularly likes the information about how to help someone who is struggling. The Griever's Support Group dates at the back of the booklet.

The document will be distributed to anyone in the community. Board members can let us know about places or people who might need the document, and we can get it out to them. An electronic version is available as well. David and Ashley will be reaching out to the Ministerial Association soon.

**Mobile Response and Stabilization Services or MRSS**

The Counseling Center (TCC) in Wayne County received the grant for MRSS implementation in "Region 12" which includes Ashland, Wayne, Holmes, and Richland counties. The Counseling Center will be sub-contracting with Appleseed in Ashland and Family Life in Richland to help administer the four-county regional program. Jerry Strausbaugh received some additional information and reported that he is trying to schedule a meeting with his internal team and TCC to figure out the logistics of the program which will be a "firehouse model." There are a lot of details to be sorted out, and the program is supposed to be up and running by July 1. The grant will be funding services for youth 20 and under and families experiencing a crisis (as defined by them) in their home, school, or other environment. The MRSS Team should respond to the crisis within 60 minutes and initially should be available M-F from 8 am to 8 pm. Both Wayne/Holmes and Richland counties have existing MRSS Teams and their experience is that many of the calls to activate the team come when the youth are in school.

**iv. Training & Event Updates**

- April 25<sup>th</sup> at Noon – Suicide Prevention Coalition is in-person with pizza
- April 26<sup>th</sup>, 10 am – 2 pm Drug Take Back Day- the drop box has been moved to the coroner's office as the lobby is open 24/7
- Reminder: **April 29<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm** – Levy Committee Meeting
- May 14<sup>th</sup>: Senior Health Fair from 9-noon.
- May 17<sup>th</sup>: 33 Forever Birthday Walk at the Richland Carousel

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

### Key Items of Focus

1. Pass the Levy in November 2025
  - a. OACBHA is assembling a "Levy Committee," which I will participate in.
  - b. It's now likely that "replacement" levies will not be available, and we will need to consider a "renewal with increase" in November.
2. Contract for Services for SFY 2026
  - a. House Passes Biennial Budget – HB 96  
The House on 4/9/25 voted 60-39 to pass the bill along to the Senate. The final vote was largely on party lines, with Republican Representatives Dean, Gross, Ferguson, Stephens, and Teska joining all of the Democrats in opposing the bill. The bill will now officially move to the Senate for consideration, where the Senate Finance Committee has already begun unofficial hearings on the measure. The Senate expects a floor vote on their version of the bill **by June 11**. A conference committee will follow, with a vote on the conference report expected **by June 25**. The General Assembly must complete their work, and the Governor must sign the bill, along with his veto message, by the end of the day on June 30, for the bill to be in place for the start of the new fiscal year on July 1.  
The full language of the House-passed bill is available at:  
<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/136/hb96>
3. Promote and Provide High-Quality Training and Events in SFY 2025 (Annual Luncheon, Awareness Walk, Fairs, RSVP).
  - a. Results from RSVP are in, with most feeling the conference was useful and well organized.
  - b. QPR Continues at AU Expanding to Students on a path to be coaches/trainers.
4. Continue to ensure effective Board Operations (Board Members & Staff)
  - a. The Executive Committee will be putting together the SFY 26 slate of officers soon. Please let Mary know if you have any interest in serving as a committee chair or officer.
  - b. Sandy returned from vacation!

### Highlights

- ✓ Successful RSVP Conference!
- ✓ Clarification that the new OhioMHAS Formula will not negatively impact Board funding in SFY 26/27.
- ✓ Helpful Presentation by Dr. McKnight to the Levy Committee about Community Attitudes.
- ✓ Potential opportunity to regain Medicaid data through the House-passed budget.

### Lowlights

- ✓ HB 28 gaining support in the Senate and likely to pass.

### What's Keeping Me Up at Night

- ✓ Workforce Challenges
- ✓ 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:** The Connection Between Mental Health & Finances
- **Handout:** Suicide Risk After a Natural Disaster
- **News Release:** Attorney General Dave Yost's Office: Eight Counties Awarded First of \$60M in Grants Targeting Inmate Addiction in Jails.

#### The Board Making News

- Thank you to all the Board members who volunteered and attended the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Pat Risser RSVP Conference! Special recognition to Ashley and Sandy, who worked behind the scenes to ensure all went smoothly.
- Sandy represented the Board at the first-ever "[Amish Women's Day](#)" event at UH-Samaritan on East Main Street.
- Dr. Ashley and David participated in ACCA's in-service day by training 15 teachers and administrators in ACEs, Trauma-Informed Care, and Resilience. Thanks to Tom Gaus for making the training possible.

Thank you to all the Board members who talk to the community about what the Board does. Connie and the farming community etc.

There was discussion about Board members sending a letter about House Bill 28.

\*\*\*David will send out the word version of the letter template to each member as requested by Andrew Kinney.

#### III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

Rick Ford, ACCADA- Expressed appreciation for the Board

Jerry Strausbaugh, Appleseed – Safe Haven has a 5K event on May 17 that all are invited to attend.

Sheryl Villeagas, CCS- Also expressed appreciation for the Board.

#### IV. ADJOURNMENT

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A motion was made by Connie Butler to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Udoph second the motion.  
The Board meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator

  
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David Ross, Executive Director  
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Mary Deeter, Board Chair

**Mental Health & Recovery Board**  
OF ASHLAND COUNTY