

MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY BOARD OF ASHLAND COUNTY
Board Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2026

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

ABSENT: None
*Provided notice

GUESTS: Jerry Strausbaugh, Appleseed
Sheryl Villegas, CCS
Rick Ford, ACCADA
Julie Donatini, Leadership Ashland
Pattie Geiser, CCS, Leadership Ashland

VIRTUAL: Jessica Tager, Appleseed
Pamela Lemaster, Appleseed

I. CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS

Andrew Kinney, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Martha Jordan Room, 1605 Co. Rd. 1095, Ashland.

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 January 27, 2026
26-02-01 Board meeting minutes. Mary Deeter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Finance, Ben Key, Chair

i. February Warrants

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Mary Deeter to approve the Warrants. Connie Butler seconded the
26-02-02 motion. The motion carried.

ii. January Financials

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Ed Kieper to approve the January financials. Mary Deeter
26-03-03 seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Patty reviewed the January financials reporting that target is 58 percent, revenues 66 percent based on timing. She reported that all three agencies are slightly behind target but higher than

the same time last year. Expenses are at 48 percent. Lastly, Patty discussed work being done at the Columbus Circle and Church street locations.

iii. **SFY 27 Second Look – Fiscal Parameters**

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Mary Deeter to recommend approval of the SFY 27 Agency Application 26-02-04 Guidelines- Fiscal Parameters. Katie Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Patty discussed a change to the fiscal parameters, she explained that originally when reviewing the first look Appleaseed was not applying for the HUD grant, however, this has changed and Appleaseed will be pursuing the grant.

David Ross, Executive Director, shared that the Municipal Court has supported jail-based services for many years through dedicated funding. In light of improved projected levy revenue, he suggested the Board consider waiving the \$15,000 fee beginning in fiscal year 2027. He noted that when the original funding request was made, the Board's financial capacity was more limited than it is today. Jail-based services continue to produce positive outcomes and are well regarded by both the Court and the Sheriff. Board members expressed support for the proposed change, while acknowledging that the issue may need to be revisited if the property tax elimination measure passes in November.

B. **Planning, Sara Battison**

i. **SFY 27 Second Look- Program & Services Priorities**

David explained that we reviewed the program and service priorities last week and no changes were made.

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Mary Deeter to recommend approval of the SFY27 Agency Program & 26-02-05 Service Priorities. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ii. **Agency Reports: MAT, Linkage, Forensic Monitoring, and Landing Zone Potential Health Officer**

David provided a review of four programs which the Board funds:

ACCADA's FY26 semi-annual report shows a continued decline in Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) participation, dropping to just 5 active clients—down significantly from prior years—likely reflecting a broader shift toward stimulant use in the community, which MAT does not effectively treat. Despite the smaller caseload, outcomes among those engaged **remain strong**, with the majority rated “good” or better and no clients categorized as having poor outcomes. Overall, the report indicates MAT remains effective for those who participate, but its reach is shrinking as local substance-use patterns change.

The Linkage Grant report shows strong reach and stabilization outcomes, with 227 individuals served and 215 having no new arrests during the reporting period. Most clients had housing at release (220), but follow-through with behavioral health and recovery services post-release was more limited, and 18 individuals returned to jail for new charges or violations. Overall, the program demonstrates **meaningful impact on reentry stability and public safety**, while highlighting ongoing challenges with engagement after release.

The quarterly forensic report indicates overall stability among individuals on conditional release, with several high-risk cases maintaining housing, employment, and treatment compliance in the community. One individual remains hospitalized for competency restoration, and another is awaiting placement for restoration services, reflecting ongoing system capacity pressures. The report also highlights challenges with stabilization for certain individuals due to repeated hospitalizations and the exhaustion of Medicare lifetime psychiatric bed days. Overall, the system is successfully supporting community stability for most forensic clients, while resource limitations and complex clinical needs continue to create pressure points.

The Landing Zone program continues to provide a consistent, supportive peer environment for local veterans, averaging about **22 participants per week** and welcoming eight new members during the reporting period. The group offers meaningful social connection, mutual support, and linkage to additional resources, with strong engagement reflected in ongoing attendance and community-building activities. Overall, the report highlights the program's role in reducing isolation and strengthening well-being among Ashland County veterans at relatively low cost.

iii. Potential Health Officer

David explained that he spoke with Andy Kinney, Chair, about the recommendation of Jessical Tager, LISW as a Health Officer. He indicated that Jessica worked at Appleseed before and did some crisis work in the Columbus area which will be helpful for this position. He reported that Jessica has completed all the orientation requirements and that she and Pam Lemaster were available on Zoom for questions. David recommended her to the Board.

Jessica introduced herself and commented that she is excited to be back at Appleseed and get into crisis work again. Pam expressed appreciation for having Jessica back and indicated she will be a valuable asset as a Health Officer.

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Mary Deeter to recommend approval of Jessica Tager as a Health Officer. Ed Kieper seconded the motion. The motion carried.
26-02-06

i. Training & Event Updates

- February 26- AU Mental Health Week Basketball Game- Sandy will have a table set up there
- March 6- QPR AU Ronk- David and Alyse will provide QPR training
- March 16 & 18 - QPR AU Dr Kruger's Class- David and Alyse will provide the training
- March 17- Nominating Committee Meeting at 9 am
- March 25 RSVP Conference – Registration flyer was distributed

David reminded everyone about the 30-minute Board training which is immediately after the Board meeting on March 24.

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

Key Items of Focus

1. Pass the Levy in November 2025
 - a. **Success!** Almost 60% passage rate is a strong indicator of the community's support of the Board! Congratulations to all!
2. Contract for Services for SFY 2027
 - a. Final funding from DBH is pending, but we anticipate some reduction in the Crisis Block Grant line.
 - b. Agency Applications will be distributed by March 2nd if the Board approves the "Second Look."
3. Promote and Provide High-Quality Training and Events in SFY 2026/27 (Annual Luncheon, Awareness Walk, Fairs, RSVP).
 - a. The next major event is the RSVP Conference on **March 25, 2026**
 - i. Our theme is "Making Ashland Healthy Again," and we will be leaning into nutrition, exercise/movement, and spirituality as ways to improve mental health and substance use.
4. Continue to ensure effective Board Operations (Board Members & Staff)

- a. **Alyse Schroeder** has started her work with the Board. Welcome Alyse! Alyse introduced herself and shared her appreciation and enthusiasm for being part of the Board that she noted is highly respected by the community and surrounding agencies. Alyse provided a brief overview of her background as a Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW) and her previous role as a supervisor at a residential facility. She also mentioned that her coursework in New York emphasized community-focused approaches, which she believes will serve her well in her new role with the Board.
- b. We currently have one open State appointment. The Nominating Committee met on December 18th to discuss that opening, as well as two members terming off after 2 full 4-year terms as county appointees (Connie & Nancy). Additionally, we have 3 members finishing their first terms that we will invite to continue (Cindy, Chad, and Ben). I'm pleased to report that **all three agreed to continue!** Thank you!

Highlights

- ✓ Meeting scheduled with gubernatorial candidate Dr. Amy Acton.
- ✓ Trade association moving ahead with finding a new Executive Director

Lowlights

- ✓ Property Tax Ballot Initiative will require sustained attention through at least July and possibly to November's vote and beyond, depending on the outcome.
- ✓ Persistent staffing/workforce issues at DBH.

What's Keeping Me Up at Night

- ✓ Governor Transition
- ✓ Ballot initiative to eliminate property taxes
- ✓ Workforce Challenges – In Ohio, 75 out of 88 counties are [mental health shortage areas](#).
- ✓ Suicide & Overdose Deaths (lower but still too high)

Knowledge of Note

- [The Intersection of AI & Mental Health](#) (handout)
 - Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming mental health care by expanding access, personalizing support, and improving efficiency, but it also introduces significant risks such as bias, over-medicalization of normal emotions, unclear liability, and the potential for vulnerable individuals to substitute AI tools for professional care. Experts emphasize that stronger regulation, ethical safeguards, and transparency are essential to ensure AI enhances—not undermines—safe, mental health support.
- HHS Secretary & Dr. Oz Unveil Plan to Fix US Mental Health, Addiction Crisis
 - HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Dr. Oz deliver an urgent, wide-ranging discussion on America's mental health and addiction crisis, calling it a \$900 billion burden. From outcome-based care and sober housing to faith-based recovery and prevention, leaders outline bold reforms to fix a "system designed to keep you sick." For more details, watch [HERE](#)
- **The Board Making News**
 - Connie, Katie, Sandy, and David represented the Board at this year's Farmer's Appreciation Breakfast on 2/7.

SFY 2026 Board Schedule & Important Dates

- **March 3rd** – OACBHA Meeting with Dr. Amy Acton
- **March 17th** – MHRB Nominating Committee Meeting (9 am)
- **March 24th** – **Board Meeting & 30 Minute Discussion on Dr. Gillette Slides**
- **March 25th** – 17th Annual Pat Risser RSVP Conference



V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS

Patty Geiser, CCS, Leadership Ashland, expressed thanks for being there as a Leadership Ashland participant
 Julie Donatini- Expressed thanks to be there as Leadership Ashland participant
 Rick Ford, ACCADA, expressed thanks for all the Board do
 Jerry Strausbaugh discussed the shortage of social workers in the field and need
 Sheryl Villegus, CCS, discussed the mentoring program/pen pal program

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4.59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator



 David Ross, Executive Director



 Andrew Kinney, Board Chair