MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY BOARD OF ASHLAND COUNTY
DRAFT- Board Meeting Minutes
August 25, 2026

Andrew Kinney, Chair	David Ross, Executive Director
Mary Deeter	Patty Pawilkowski, Associate Director
Sara Battison	Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator
Chad Brown	Alyse Shroeder, Director of Programs, Training and Education
Ben Key	Jenn English, Director of Wellness and Community Engagement
Tom Gaus	
Cindy Kyser	
Katie Wright	
Ed Kieper	
Connie Butler	
Dwight McElfresh	
Carly George	

ABSENT:

GUESTS:
Jerry Strausbuagh, Appleseed
Sheryl Villegas, CCS- Virtual
Rick Ford- ACCADA
Mackenzie Parsons- ACCADA Summer Intern- Virtual
Melissa Simbower- Community Member

I. **CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME –** Andy Kinney called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.. He read a card from Nancy Udolph, who expressed her appreciation for the celebration the Board gave for her at her last Board meeting.

II.
   - **I.** Roll Call- Katie Wright called the roll and noted there was a quorum.
   - **II.** Pass Warrants

III. **APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 23rd BOARD MINUTES**

RESOLUTION: A motion was made by Ed Kieper to approve the June 23 Board Minutes.
26.08.01 Cindy Kyser seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

   I. Policy Ad Hoc, Mary Deeter, Chair

   a. Bylaw and Policy Changes

   Mary Deeter reported that the Policy and Ad Hoc Committee met and is recommending some language changes to the Bylaws and Board Policies due to the name change of the Department of Behavior Health (DBH) and alcohol and drug use to substance use. She pointed out that the policy and bylaws changes were emailed to Board members 15 days prior to the Board meeting as required. A roll call vote was called:

   Sara Battison- Yes
   Chad Brown-Yes
   Connie Butler- Yes
   Mary Deeter-Yes
   Tom Gaus-Yes
   Carly George-Yes
   Ben Key-Yes
   Ed Kieper-Yes
   Andrew Kinney-Yes
   Cindy Kyser-Yes

Dwight McElfresh-Yes
Katie Wright-Yes

Mary reported that the Policy Ad Hoc Committee will be scheduling another meeting to review job titles as they do not match the Board's policy.

RESOLUTION: 26.08.02 **A motion was made by Chad Brown to approve the staff recommended language changes to the Bylaws. Ben Key seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

RESOLUTION: 26.08.03 **A motion was made by Ed Kieper to approve the staff recommended language updates to the Board Policies. Mary Deeter seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

RESOLUTION: 26.08.04 **A motion was made by Tom Guas to approve the new policy, Contract Agency Good Standing. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

II. **Finance,** Ben Key, Chair

a. July & August Warrants – Action: ***Recommendation***

RESOLUTION: 26.08.05 **A motion was made by Mary Deeter to approve the July & August warrants. Sara Battison seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

b. June & July Financials – Action: ***Recommendation***

Patty reviewed the June financials reporting target at 100 percent. She indicated, during FY26.we've used reserves for emergency repairs: roof repairs at the professional building, septic/water lines at Columbus Circle, elevator repairs at the professional building, mold issue at MHRB office, and garage walls at the professional building. She reported revenues of 101 percent. Referring to Non-Medicaid: CCS has used their full allocation; Appleseed is at 96 percent and ACCADA is at 59 percent. We still have two months to accept non-Medicaid billings. Overall expenses are 83 percent.

Reviewing July financials, Patty reported target at 8 percent. Reserves will be looked at when the books close. Revenues are at 27 percent (this number is mainly the carryover). Referring to non-Medicaid; ACCADA is at 4 percent, Appleseed 7 percent, CCS 4 percent. Overall expenses are 6 percent. She noted that Church Street expenses look high due to the insurance payment.

Patty distributed a new updated proposed budget – there was a correction made to box 4, line 2, it included an overdose grant that was not part of the approved budget. The second correction was in box 4, line one, FY27 updated proposed budget which now includes the actual numbers, not estimated. The final change includes the difference of 86,982, which will be pulled from carryover.

We were notified that we are receiving new SOR dollars, the Board will be using the dollars for iHeart/media as the funds need to be expensed by the end of September 2026.

Patty pointed out the box 4, line 1 difference is for the additional staff position.

RESOLUTION: 26-08-06 **A motion was made by Sara Battison to approve the June financials. Connie Butler seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

RESOLUTION: 26-08-07 **A motion was made by Tom Gaus to approve the July Financials. Dwight McElfresh seconded the motion. Mary Deeter voted no.**

c. Announcement of Board Assistance Review (BAR) in November 2026.

Patty reported that the State is doing an audit on us, she explained it's been over 5 years since we had a State audit. The audit is requiring a lot of her time. She pointed out that we are regularly audited by the County.

d. Recent Round of SOR/SOS 4.1 Carryover Grant Funding

Patty reported that the SOR 4.1 dollars need to be expended by September 2026.

III. **Planning,** Cindy Kyser, Chair

a. ACCADA Student – Capstone Project

Machenzie Parsons, Summer Intern at ACCADA through the Capstone Project, talked about her experience. She noted the best take away was the leadership she gained and growing her network in Ashland, which has been a wonderful partnership. She tabled at several different events with Rick during her internship.

b. ACCADA & CCS Partner on New Program

1. Families Finding Hope: Supporting Wellness & Resilience

The article is hyperlinked. Our agencies are wonderful partners, and we see that with this program. Starts September from 6-8. Kudos to Rick and Sheryl. Formed due to a need, Connie Butler brought up the need. Machenzie wrote the press release.

c. Updates on New Staff Position- David Ross, Executive Director reported the position was approved at the June 23 meeting and the position began in July. Twenty-three "meet and greets" with organizations around Ashland County have been done. He discussed the difference between Alyse's position, which is the clinical piece David did, and the "why" this position will be highlighting about programs like the Art Therapy program and "why" it's important.

David reported that staff and Board member, Tom Gaus attended the Equine Program at Rosie C. last week. He explained that we want to showcase these programs and other programs that we don't fund like the libraries, parks, YMCA etc.

Martha at the Ashland Symphany once again giving tickets to our agencies to share with clients because she recognizes the benefits of music and mental health.

d. Program Reports

1. Griever's Group – 2nd Half

Alyse Schroeder provided the Griever's Group 2nd half report indicating Pam LeMaster leads the group and does an amazing job. There are anywhere between 4 to 7 people in attendance each month. Hope Alcantar has been attending the group and has agreed to be our Keynote speaker for the Suicide Prevention & Awareness Walk Sept. 27.

2. Golden Center/Pen Pal – Year-End

Alyse gave a report on the Golden Center/Pen Pal program indicating this incredible program had 355 elementary students write letters as part of the pen pal program to adults in the community creating invaluable connections between students and older adults.

e. Training & Event Updates

1. September 1, Recovery Rally
2. September 19, Mohican Bigfoot Festival (2nd Annual)
3. September 19, Connie will be attending the Farm Bureau dinner and have items to distribute on behalf of the MHRB.
4. September 20-26, Ashland County Fair
5. September 27, Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk
6. October 6-10, Loudonville Street Fair
7. October 21, MHRB Annual Lunch- Speaker, Dan Mager from the Ashland County Park District.

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

a. **1-hour Board Training on 9/15/26 at 4 pm**

Mandatory Board Training, Sept 15 at 4:00 p.m. at the Board Office was approved today for 1 hour training- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT- this was provided to Board members via video before the Board meeting.

Key Items of Focus

Ensure Responsible & Effective Stewardship of Levy Revenue in Service of the Board's Mission Begin working on projects/services/activities that will achieve the Board's mission. Anticipated Board Staff Recommendations by September/October, 2026.

Use of Carryover/Reserve Funding in SFY 27 The Board will need to focus on strategically investing our SFY 2026 carryovers and reserve amounts in light of recent developments.

Promote and Provide High-Quality Training and Events in SFY 2027/28 (Annual Luncheon, Awareness Walk, Fairs, RSVP). The next major event is the Suicide Prevention & Awareness Walk on **September 27, 2026**

Continue to ensure effective Board Operations (Board Members & Staff) The Nominating Committee will continue to "build a bench" of potential Board members.

Highlights

. Nice piece in the Ashland Source and from Commissioner Justice about the Board acquiring an additional TAY/Crisis Unit. If Board members have any furniture or donations that they would like to make, please let Sandy or any staff member know.

. Additionally, a nice article spotlighting a new program collaboration between CCS and ACCADA will be discussed during the Planning Committee report out.

Lowlights

. Gubernatorial race is up in the air with limited inroads made in dialogue about behavioral health issues.

. Persistent staffing/workforce issues at DBH.

What's Keeping Me Up at Night

. Governor Transition

. Ballot initiative to eliminate property taxes & HB 309 Implications (Budget Commissions)

. Economic challenges (affordability, housing, stress on our farmers, etc.)

Knowledge of Note

- Exercise is Medicine!. Argues that regular physical activity is one of the most accessible and effective ways to prevent illness and improve overall health.
- Want to feel better? Go for a walk! Even relatively small amounts of nature exposure can produce measurable mental-health benefits, particularly for people living in urban areas.

SFY 2027 Board Schedule & Important Dates

- Note that former member Dennis Dyer is now staying at Brethren Care Room #400
- September 1, 2026 – Recovery Rally at Brookside West
- September 19, 2026 – Mohican Bigfoot Festival
- September 22, 2026 – Full Board Meeting
- September 20-26, 2026 – Ashland County Fair

September 27, 2026 – Suicide Prevention & Awareness Walk United Way Stuff the Bus

Veterans Appreciation Day – Thank you, Ed!!

Appleseed Summer Art Therapy Program Recognition

Recovery Arrows "Cast the Stress Away"

Equine Therapy – Visit to Rosie C Ranch

Ed leads effort on free educational event to help fellow veterans navigate disability claims

VI. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS**

Jerry Strausbaugh- Commented there are a lot of events coming up. He noted that Stacy Merryweather would like to have the Liaisons work the fair Friday.

Rick Ford- is excited about the support group coming up with Sheryl and appreciative of the Board to be able to provide that.

Sheryl Villegas- Looking forward to the group and the creativity. Thanked the Board.

VII. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,** Chad Brown, Chair

Chad Brown indicated the Executive Committee met Aug. 11, and discussion was tabled until another meeting on Aug. 17. The Committee approved a new policy which was provided in the packet. The policy also applies to Board members as well. The Committee entered executive session, and the after the motion to return to open session a recommendation for a reprimand was made to the full board.

RESOLUTION: 26.08.08 **Andrew Kinney made a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22 (G)** To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual, unless the employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual requests a public hearing by division (G) (1) of section 121.22 of the Revised Code. **Mary Deeter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was done:**

Sara Battison- Yes
Cindy Kyser- Yes
Katie Wright- Yes
Connie Butler- Yes
Chad Brown- Yes
Tom Gaus- Yes
Ben Key- Yes
Andrew Kinney- Yes
Ed Kieper- Yes
Mary Deeter- Yes
Dwight McElfresh- Yes
Carley George-Yes

Unanimous, 12 yes votes

RESOLUTION: 26.08.09 **A motion was made by Tom Guas to return to open session. Ed Kieper seconded the motion. The motion carried. A roll call vote was done:**

Sara Battison- Yes
Cindy Kyser-Yes
Katie Wright-Yes
Connie Butler-Yes
Chad Brown-Yes
Tom Gaus-Yes
Ben Key-Yes
Andrew Kinney-Yes
Ed Kieper-Yes
Mary Deeter-Yes
Dwight McElfresh-Yes
Carley George-Yes

Unanimous, 12 yes votes

VIII. Recommendation to full Board

RESOLUTION: 26.08.10 A motion was made by Andrew Kinney to accept disciplinary actions as presented. Tom Gaus seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was done:
Sara Battison- abstained
Chad Brown-Yes
Connie Butler-Yes
Mary Deeter-Yes
Tom Gaus-Yes
Carly George-Yes
Ben Key-Yes
Ed Kieper-Yes
Andrew Kinney-Yes
Cindy Kyser-Yes
Dwight McElfresh-Yes
Katie Wright-Yes

There is a quorum. 11 Yes/1 abstention

RESOLUTION: 26.08.11 A motion was made by Tom Gaus to retract/rescind the new board staff position, as regards RESOLUTION 26.06.04 of the June 23, 2026, Board minutes, effective immediately. Ed Kieper seconded the motion.

Sara Battison-abstain
Chad Brown- yes
Connie Butler-Yes
Mary Deeter-Yes
Tom Guas-Yes
Carly George-Yes
Ben Key -Yes
Ed Kieper-Yes
Andrew Kinney-Yes
Cindy Kyser- Yes
Dwight McElfresh- Yes
Katie-Wright Yes

There is a quorum. 11 Yes/ 1 abstention

IX. ADJOURNMENT

RESOLUTION: 26.08.12 A motion was made by Tom Gaus to adjourn the meeting; Ed Kieper seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Hoffman, Community Relations Coordinator

David Ross, Executive Director
Interim Director

Andrew Kinney, Board Chair

Mental Health & Recovery Board
OF ASHLAND COUNTY