**ERIE COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD  
MINUTES**

May 4, 2023

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Terry Alford, Joan Baizer, Michele Brooks, Victoria Brooks, Kathryne Coric, Max Donatelli, Maya Hu Morabito, Dawn Skowronski, Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio, Charles Syms, Erica Westphal

GUEST: Sarah Bonk, Erie County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Special Assistant

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Mark O’Brien, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: Daniel Antonius, Sharon Cavanaugh, Stephanie Orlando

**Approval of Minutes:** - April Minutes not approved. A few clarifications / corrections need to be made and will   
 be sent out. Will approve with updates at next meeting.  
  
**Introductions:**

- Dawn Skowronski and Michele Brooks’ last meeting on CSB.  
  
**MH Commissioner Updates:**

* Congratulations to Dawn and Michele for stepping down from the CSB.
* Introduction to Sarah Bonk who may be joining the CSB.
* As of yesterday, we got approval from the County Executive for a MH Disaster Coordinator. It still has to go through the legislature and budget, but will be OMH and Federal Medicaid salary sharing funded, so we have the funds for it. Our vision for this position is to:
  + Prepare and Educate – what can we do to help agencies and community to prepare for any emergency or disaster
  + Respond – be part of the response as it happens, on the ground
  + Heal – help communities heal following emergencies or disasters
* Kirsten Vincent Center, as of today, is fully opened. This will be a good part of the diversion system we have going forward.
* By the end of this year, we are looking to have done our Diversion Continuum map, including everything from getting information through getting support to going to CPEP.
* CPEP improvements are going very well. The hospital leadership has even been involved.
* The Governor’s budget is coming out, which includes 12 new CPEPs.
* We are working on getting out the Opioid Settlement dollars that we have in so far.
* There will be a $1M public education campaign that an RFP will go out for. There is also another $6M RFP that will come out.
* We did a walkthrough of the Clearview Treatment facility at Sister’s Hospital, St. Joe’s Campus. It is state-of-the-art, beautiful, all new, with 40 beds (25 male, 15 female). Ribbon cutting is next week.
* An RFP for home-based crisis intervention programs will go out. It is a best practice model. One of the teams will be a combination of MH and DD.
* Amy Rockwood from ECDMH will be coming to our next meeting to talk about the Local Services Plan.
* ECDMH will be hosting and sponsoring a Career Fair again on June 7th at the Convention Center.

**Chairperson Update:**

* We need to consider Sarah Bonk as an incoming member of the CSB. Her bio was sent to the group this morning.
* Sara spoke about why she would like to join the CSB. Shortly before May 14th, she stepped down from Endeavor Health Services and stepped back from providing and supervising direct clinical services mostly because of the impact the previous 10 years of working crisis MH had on her. She also had a desire to learn more about how to scale programs up because she learned in her graduate program that she is interested in the macro level systems. So, she decided to get her doctoral degree. She is also learning the County and legislature processes as well as how to effectively communicate through government and the community. She hopes to return to MH fully. To her, this is a really unique opportunity to learn about the system. She is looking forward to learning and seeing how this group works collaboratively with government to make sure that we are actually providing the services that the community needs.
* Sarah was excused from and left the meeting.
* Max asked to have a motion to have Sarah join the CSB. Maya motioned. Elizabeth seconded. Several people spoke highly of her. No one opposed. Accepted. Her name will be sent to the Erie County Executive to final approve her to join the CSB.
* There is still one other position on the CSB open. If anyone has any suggestions, please let Max know.
* Jennifer Levesque is a candidate for the MH Subcommittee. Her bio was sent to the group this morning. She is the Director of Clinical Programs with Recovery Options Made Easy and also the Program Director of the Kirsten Vincent Center. She will be representing that organization instead of Shannon Higbee, who has left the MH Subcommittee.
* Max asked to have a motion to have Jennifer join the MH Subcommittee. Erica motioned, Terry seconded. No one opposed. Accepted. This does not need the approval of the County Executive, so she is officially a member.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

* MH Subcommittee (Erica):
  + Last meeting was March 13th, so they have not met since our last CSB Meeting. Minutes were sent out.
  + Next meeting will be this Monday, May 8th.
* ASA Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
  + Last meeting was April 27th, but only half the members were there.
  + Working on changing their name. At the next meeting, we will get the rest of the member input. Our proposed name is “Prevention and Addiction Services and Support Subcommittee.” The purpose of changing the name is trying to take out the stigmatizing language of abuse.
  + Once the ASA Subcommittee passes the name change, the CSB will vote on it, then it will have to go to the County Executive’s office and possibly to the legislature for final approval since the name change impacts the bylaws. Mark will double check the process.
  + We also talked about the workforce.
  + Minutes will be sent out.
  + Next meeting will be May 25th.
* IDD Subcommittee (BJ):
  + Last meeting was March 16th, so they have not met since our last CSB Meeting. Minutes will be sent out.
  + Unfortunately for those with DDs, the budget outcome was disappointing. NYS only put in a Cost of Living Adjustment for the DD agencies at 4%, which is far less than the 8.5% COLA that was requested. This will really burden the agencies trying to recruit and keep good staff members. The good side is, it was only going to be a 2.5% COLA, so that’s a partial victory.
  + BJ met with Endeavor Health and they will be exploring a disability support group for those who are dually diagnosed. Endeavor will be hosting the group and providing a facilitator.
  + The Self-Advocacy Association’s Conference is coming up in June and will be in-person again.
  + BJ testified in front of Congress recently as well. They are hoping to get a federal code for the wages for the direct support professionals. The code could help recruit and keep good staff members down the road.
  + Next meeting will be May 18th.

**NAMI Updates (Michele):**

* Information was emailed out from NAMI.
* NAMI is going through a name change to reflect its services. They will be called NAMI Buffalo and WNY and will officially cover 6 counties (Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Erie). The programs are going to be expanded.

**Anti-Stigma Coalition (Max):**

* Going to be presenting a Facebook Live this month celebrating May as MH Awareness Month. It is going to be on grief and loss.

**Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor (Terry):**

* We’ve been asked what we are looking to do to commemorate the 5/14 event. We made the decision not to take away from the commemorations that are happening closer to Jefferson Avenue. So, we will mostly be partnering with activities and discussions.
* We are currently focusing on health and wellness, improving people’s quality of life, addressing food insecurities in these areas as well.
* We just finished our 1st bike expo last Saturday.
* We’re continuing to take steps to launch our 1st Mrs. Frances Nash Community Garden Basket Farmer’s Market in our space in the corridor of Broadway and Michigan. Beginning in early June, we will roll out a weekly Farmer’s Market every Tuesday, run by the community.
* This Saturday, May 6th beginning at 6:00 at Durham Memorial Opry Center, we are celebrating the birthday of Rev. J. Edward Nash, who was the longest serving pastor of the historic Michigan Street Baptist Church, serving for over 60 years. Terry will forward information.

**Bridges from Borders**:

* No updates given.

**Personal Care Aid Issue**

* No updates given.

**Forensic Mental Health (Daniel):**

* No updates given.

**CPEP:**

* No updates given.

**Building Careers in Human Services (Max):**

* No updates given.

**Opiate Task Force (Mark):**

* No updates given.

**SANYS (Self-Advocates of NY State) (BJ):**

* No updates given.

**Veterans Administration (Katie):**

* No updates given.

**Other Updates:**

* No updates given.

**Next Meeting:**

* Thursday, June 1, 2023 @ 9:00am