

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

January 5, 2023

## **COMMUNITY**

**SERVICES BOARD:** Terry Alford, Michele Brooks, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Kathryne Coric, Max Donatelli, Maya Hu Morabito, Stephanie Orlando, Dawn Skowronski, Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

**DEPARTMENT:** Mark O'Brien, Tammy Comerate, Shannon Stocker

**EXCUSED:** Daniel Antonius, Joan Baizer, Charles Syms, Erica Westphal

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### **Approval of Minutes:**

- October and November Minutes were approved.
- Reminder, Minutes are FOIL-able (Freedom of Information Law) and get sent out to the 3 Subcommittees and the Sheriff's office after CSB approval.
- The importance was stressed again to have family involvement in the new CPEP group that is being formed.

### **Chairperson Update:**

- There is an opening for a CSB Vice Chair. Our By-Laws require this position to be filled. Please let Mark or Max know if you would like to volunteer for this position.

### **MH Commissioner Updates:**

- Thank you all for your service on this Board.
- FOIL does apply to Boards / Advisory Boards of the County, so final versions of CSB and Subcommittee Meeting minutes are FOIL-able. We have 2 FOIL requests related to CPEP. Our County Attorney is in consultation with ECDMH about these requests. Emails and text send to / from ECDMH staff with CPEP in the subject line and / or body of the email are also FOIL-able.
- The meeting related to CPEP has been pushed back from January 18<sup>th</sup> to January 25<sup>th</sup> mostly because the attorney General will be in town. ECMC leadership will be at this meeting. Ben Swanekamp, the Chief of Staff to the County Executive and the County Executive's representative, is planning to attend. We are planning on having family, consumer, provider (probably a couple of the community-based outpatients, specifically the ones involved in diversion activities), ECDMH, and OMH there to meet with ECMC. Mark has been working with Melinda DuBois from Mental Health Advocates. Michele Brooks has been working with Melinda as well. Our plan is to have a renewed commitment to have CPEP meet on a very regular basis with only families and consumers. We plan to have this big group meet every other month, allowing time for focus taskforce workgroups to meet and be productive between these meetings. The

goal is to create the best possible experience for patients and families while interacting with CPEP, with the agenda of identifying the issues and form groups that will target and prioritize what is needed and construct this.

- The Attorney General is coming in on January 18<sup>th</sup> from 11am-3pm at the Downtown Library for a hearing. It is an open meeting; you do not need an invitation to go. If you want to provide written or oral testimony, the deadline for submissions is January 11<sup>th</sup>.
- The RPC meeting that was supposed to be on January 18<sup>th</sup> has been rescheduled to February 1<sup>st</sup> at 10am. We are looking to sunset that group as the Health Equity Regional Organization (HERO) steps up.
- We continue to try to get an answer for the substance abuse treatment providers and prevention providers who were eligible for County related opioid settlement funds. We informed about 12 agencies that they were going to get a portion, but then it got messed up when there was either a hold on it through the Attorney General's office or confusion as to how much is coming. We continue to press the County Executive's office to see where that money is so we can get it out to the providers as quickly as possible.
- We are working with our partners at OMH about resources for post-blizzard assistance including Crisis Services, law enforcement, first responders, Buffalo HOPE, etc.
- Erie County Emergency Services Dept. is working on putting together a pre-blizzard checklist and other things to assist the community to better prepare for future weather emergencies.
- ECDMH put in our budget for this year a Disaster Coordinator position, but it did not make it in as a County employee. We are still advocating for it.
- A "Train the Trainer" course, videos, and other educational tools could be valuable to providers to help the community prepare. ECDMH is hoping to work with Emergency Services to research and provide resources for future emergencies.

### **Subcommittee Updates:**

- IDD Subcommittee (BJ):
  - o Maria Torgalski, who has been co-chairing this Subcommittee with BJ, has gotten an appointment to be the Regional Director for the DDRO (Developmental Disabilities Regional Office). She is replacing Ellen Hardy.
  - o BJ is going to be the Advocacy Coordinator for the State.
  - o On January 21<sup>st</sup>, we will be having a WNY Delegation Meeting, called the Disability Roundtable, with all members of the disability community we could invite to build a bridge between all members of the disability community, not just IDD.
  - o The City of Buffalo will have an ADA Coordinator, finally, thank you to all advocates who came to Common Council Chamber and spoke up. Also, a thank you to Council Member Mitch Nowakowski. If you know anyone who would be interested in this ADA Coordinator position, the deadline has been extended due to the blizzard. Salary has been posted at about \$63,000. Candidates must live in the City of Buffalo.
  - o Dave Whalen does some emergency preparedness for agencies and people with disabilities, so he would be a good person to reach out to if needed.
  - o Next meeting will be January 19<sup>th</sup>.
- ASA Subcommittee (Liz):
  - o No updates. No November or December meetings.

- Next meeting will be January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- MH Subcommittee (Erica):
  - No updates.
  - Next meeting will be January 9<sup>th</sup>.

**NAMI Updates (Michele):**

- Michele will send an email out with their updates.
- They moved; they are now in the same building as Save the Michaels

**CPEP:**

- No other updates.

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

- Max circulated some information.

**Opiate Task Force (Mark):**

- Working to try to get funds out. No other updates.

**Forensic Mental Health (Daniel):**

- No updates.

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

- Continuing to have Facebook Live sessions. Max will continue to forward other information.

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

- Having their first meeting in January and will be selecting officers.

**Veterans Administration (Katie):**

- There have been a couple new pieces of legislation through the VA. One is called the PACT Act, which expands eligibility for veterans who may have presumptive health or mental health conditions that are connected to toxic substance exposure like burn pits, agent orange, etc. Also, post-911 combat veterans have had 5 years of automatic VA healthcare eligibility. Through the PACT Act, that was expanded to 10 years. Any post-911 combat veterans who are past that 10-year mark, the Act gives them 1 year of healthcare eligibility to be screened for different toxic exposures to see if they qualify for other sources of healthcare.

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

- Terry can share a flier with the committee.
- They are planning some events for Martin Luther King Jr's birthday.
  - They connected with 4 historic churches within the corridor, something Terry loosely calls "The Faith Connection," for the primary purpose of doing a day of service activities – cleanup within or outside the church, maybe some painting, etc. They will be engaging volunteers to be divvied out to the 4 churches. Planning to kick this off on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:45am at the Historic Michigan Street Baptist Church at 511 Michigan St.

- Later in the morning on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am, we will be opening the Historic Michigan Street Baptist Church at 511 Michigan St. to conduct a press event with the main thrust around celebrating the capital construction projects they've completed up to now – they spent the entire summer stabilizing the interior rafters and foundation of that church, which is close to 200 years old. This event will kick off the next phase of capital improvements at that particular church. The public is invited to this event.
- We will be partnering with WUFO radio to run some radio specials, namely running some speeches of Martin Luther King, specifically interviews where he came to Buffalo.
- We will be having an MLK Day of Caring Blanket Drive, in light of the weather-related events we've had in the last couple weeks. Starting this past Monday, we have been accepting donations of blankets, comforters, and quilts that will be dispersed to needy families at Historic Michigan Street Baptist Church at 511 Michigan St. on Monday January 16<sup>th</sup>. We have already garnered close to 200 blankets.

**Next Meeting:**

- Thursday, February 2, 2023 @ 9:00am