

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

SPECIAL MEETING

February 6, 2025

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Terry Alford, Daniel Antonius, Joan Baizer, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Max Donatelli, Emma Fabian, Maya Hu Morabito, Pastor George Nicholas, Stephanie Orlando, Elizabeth Smith, Erica Westphal

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: John Grieco, Shannon Stocker

EXCUSED: Charles Syms

ABSENT: BJ Stasio

Approval of Minutes:

- October, November, and January CSB Minutes were approved.

MH Assistant Commissioner Updates:

- The County Executive is working on interviews for the MH Commissioner position.
- There were 2 OMH procurements:
 - o An Adult CTI Program, primarily for folks returning from hospitals, perhaps having a long stay there or multiple admissions, or CPEP presentations and not really engaged in treatment. That RFP is due to OMH on March 26th.
 - o A Critical Time Transition Program, for youth ages 11-17, designed to address those that are boarding, CPEP, or psychiatric inpatient or pediatric units, but they are psychiatrically cleared, there's just no services for them, so they get stuck boarding in the hospital. That is due April 18th. That offers funding for both CTI staff, capital dollars, and money to operate the residential program component of that.
- Potential legislative activity for the remainder of the year:
 - o They are looking to increase access to Methadone and / or other controlled substances, like Buprenorphine, as an emergency treatment. It would authorize Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics to administer these medications and also to distribute up to a 3-day supply of Buprenorphine.
 - o There is a 2.1% inflationary Cost of Living increase on the table.
 - o They are looking to allow OASAS, OMH, and OPWDD to do demonstration projects, which is good because that would give them some flexibility when there are some issues to address; it would get around some of the regulatory issues.
 - o They are looking to allow OMH and OPWDD the permanent authority to appoint temporary operators to preserve limited resources. A good example of that would be when TSI took over Greenwood when Weinburg Campus wasn't able to operate it anymore. TSI took them over via a Temporary Operating Certificate; otherwise, that would have taken a lot longer and probably wouldn't have gotten done in time.
 - o They are proposing to extend a managed care statutes for OPWDD to implementing managed long-term care plans.

- There are a few bills within the Budget for AOT that would permit Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners to make one of the necessary commitment certifications. It would require clinicians to consider other specified factors related to involuntary commitments. It would allow the individual's domestic partner to request AOT. And there are standards for reentry into AOT after the order expires.
- There are AI (artificial intelligence) therapists out there right now. This bill would require operators of AI companions to refer users to mental health resources as appropriate and to remind users that they are interacting with a machine. Apparently, there was a case out there where somebody began to feel like they had a relationship with this AI companion and it caused them great harm and distress, not fully realizing what it was.
- We are working to address concerns with the lack of certainty around federal funding and how best to manage this with one of our HUD grants. Should that not be received, the outcome could well be quite detrimental to those recipients of services.

Chairperson Updates:

- We are looking to have Amy Rockwood come and discuss building a dashboard for us to get some data and about the Community Services Plan. We are hoping Amy can join our March meeting. We are thinking about the future and what is important to Erie County, so we want to get data relative to the impact that current funded programs are making. If you have ideas on that, now is the time to make a list so we can have a fruitful discussion when she comes.
- In terms of the 1115 Waiver, WNYICC, or Integrated Care as we are going by now, has been moving forward with implementation. We have onboarded over 40 organizations already who are in training, there are at least 100 organizations in process for contracting, and we have already started screenings ourselves. The Governance Committee had our meeting in January, and we approved reports and are moving forward with implementation of some workflows and different processes around grievance and conflict of interest. Things are really moving along.

Update of Bylaws to Include Secretary Position:

- This was a requirement we noticed was not matching with the County Charter and within our Bylaws. We have discussed this previously a few times and there is a draft of the revision to the Bylaws that was emailed out on 12-30-2024 and 2-4-2025.
- Motion was made by Max, seconded by Terri, and unanimously approved to accept the revisions to the Bylaws.

Election of the Secretary:

- Unanimously approved Max as the new Secretary.

Membership Terms and Recommendations:

- Katie Coric took another position and resigned from the CSB.
 - Katie recommended Christopher Ramnauth, whose resume is attached to the emails that went out on 2-4-2025 and on 12-31-2024. Max added that he has worked with Chris for probably 4 years, and he thinks Chris would offer a lot to this Board.
 - Nomination made by Max, seconded by Emma, and unanimously approved to ask the County Executive to consider and appoint Christopher Ramnauth, representing Veterans, to the CSB.
- Erica discussed the Mental Health Subcommittee's changes:
 - Erica is stepping down from the MH Subcommittee and the CSB. The Subcommittee voted in two co-chairs, Jane Mogavero and Jen Cervi.
 - In terms of membership of the Board, Jen is unable to attend these meetings, but Jane is able to. Jane's resume was emailed out to CSB members during this meeting. Jane

is currently with the Patrick Lee Foundation. Max stated he knows Jane very well, has worked with her on the Anti-Stigma Committee, and would highly recommend her. Dr. Antonius stated that he knows Jane very well, he is a proponent for adding her, and she is a huge advocate of mental health – the organization is as well.

- Nomination made by Max, seconded by Elizabeth, and unanimously approved to ask the County Executive to consider and appoint Jane Mogavero to the CSB.
- Erica was thanked for her leadership as the Chair of the MH Subcommittee and her involvement in the CSB, complimented her communication, and her efforts to make the transition of committee leadership go smoothly.

Subcommittee Updates:

- MH Subcommittee (Erica):
 - Last meeting was January 13th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - Erica said they talked about:
 - Amy Rockwood joined their meeting and talked about the Local Services Plan update, due in June this year.
 - Amy asked the group for recommendations for the monthly training sessions. One suggestion was The National Council on Mental Wellbeing – they have a piece on Trauma Informed Supervision. Another suggestion was the NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence, who also has a training. A third suggestion was reaching out to The American Association of Suicidology.
 - Amy is going to send the group the metrics that she currently uses for the programs and a list of the programs that are included.
 - They did a membership recommitment, with all members recommitting. They previously had Deanna Schaumloeffel and Katie Coric step down, and with Erica leaving, they will be down one member, so they are looking for new members. They have recommendations from LEAD (Liberating and Empowering All Defendants) and from housing.
 - Next meeting will be March 10th.
- PASS Subcommittee (Elizabeth):
 - Last meeting was January 23rd. Minutes could not be approved because they did not have a forum. They are hoping to approve them and the October minutes in the February meeting.
 - They had Jason Meurlin present on Opioid Overdose Data.
 - Next meeting will be February 27th.
- IDD Subcommittee (Max):
 - Last meeting was January 16th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - They discussed the workforce still being a major concern state-wide and that there are basically inadequate salaries. There will be the 2.1% COLA increase, and the Governor recently put out a press release that talked about over \$8 million being put into the DD services as an increase, but it is really not enough to keep pace with inflation. We are working with our legislators.
 - There was also a report that came out from Guide House on managed care. They did not necessarily recommend that the OPWDD services go into a managed care model, but they are saying that there needs to be some changes. As a result, there are some efforts that have been done statewide in another area, which has been what is called “Whole Person Supports.” The website will be given in the minutes (TheWholePerson.org). It initially was a provider-led group that was pushing for major

changes in the system, but they are creating an advisory committee, a selection committee, and a steering committee to include a diverse membership. They are trying to transform the entire DD system.

- They had a 2nd open house for the 1021 Broadway satellite office for OPWDD.
- They are still looking at their 2025 priorities to prepare to meet with Amy Rockwood.
- Next meeting will be March 20th.

Open Discussion:

- Is disability included in DEI and does anybody have any idea what the impact of the Federal rejection of DEI Initiatives might be, and how is that going to impact disability services at the State and Local levels?
 - There is a set of programs under federal review on the White House website and all federal independent living funding, as well as a lot of disability services, are on there. There is a lot of confusion about the wording of these initiatives, including “illegal DEIA.”
 - Discussion occurred on how this is an opportunity for us to educate the public about the importance of the DEI language that has been used to not only apply equity stuff as it relates to people of color, but people who have disabilities. It would be appropriate for us to pen a letter to the editor, or whoever, to express our concerns and the potential of, if these programs get cut, the people that are going to be hurt – some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Pastor George agreed to take the lead on drafting a letter and Max and Emma offered to assist with the specific issues as they relate to the disability community. Anyone else is welcome to join. Stephanie will be kept in the loop, and they will bring the letter to the group before distribution.

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, March 6, 2025, from 9:00-10:00am.