

ERIE COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD MINUTES

November 6, 2025
Webex, 9:00am – 10:00am

COMMUNITY

SERVICES BOARD: Terry Alford, Daniel Antonius, Victoria Brooks, Sharon Cavanaugh, Max Donatelli (Secretary), Emma Fabian, Jane Mogavero, Pastor George Nicholas, Stephanie Orlando (Chair), Christopher Ramnauth

MENTAL HEALTH

DEPARTMENT: Sarah Bonk, Shannon Stocker

GUEST: Elda Pichardo (member pending County Executive appointment)

EXCUSED: Elizabeth Smith, BJ Stasio (Vice Chair)

ABSENT: Charles Syms

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
(a majority of the members of the Board)

Approval of Minutes:

- October Minutes were approved. Motion made by Max, seconded by Victoria, no discussion, all in favor, no one opposed, no abstentions.

Introductions:

- Elda Pichardo will be a new member to the CSB starting in December.

Subcommittee Updates:

- MH Subcommittee (Jane):
 - o Last meeting was September 8th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - o Discussed new members, the process, and what the composition of the group needs to be. It was decided that people with lived experience and youth / children are needed to join. There is a lot of interest, so we will review all of them, and the bylaws, and determine who we will have join the Subcommittee as a member or as a non-voting member.
 - o Next meeting will be November 10th.
- PASS Subcommittee (Elizabeth, excused from this meeting):
 - o Last meeting was October 23rd. Minutes will be sent out.
 - o Next meeting will be January 22nd.
- I/DD Subcommittee (Max):
 - o Last meeting was September 18th. Minutes will be sent out.
 - o Continued talks about Medicaid and the effects that will be on the system for people who serve people with I/DD.
 - o Trying to get early intervention the funding it needs since they are so underfunded.
 - o OPWDD Crisis Team has a new point person, Lindsay Caulfield.

- Housing continues to be a significant issue.
- Max will pass on information on a hearing that just happened this week.
- They are working on making self-direction the way of the future.
- The Ombuds Program has helped families when normal channels have not been responsive regarding services, etc.
- BJ is currently in Albany at the Self-Advocacy Association of NYS's statewide conference.
- Next meeting will be November 20th.

Department Updates:

- 2027 is going to be a rough year for us in the community and government. We are preparing for a 10% budget reduction scenario. What that means for us as a department is cutting 10% of less than \$10M, so we are being asked for potentially \$1M of staff cuts, that has to be in non-discretionary personnel spending lines.
 - What that means is, not necessarily that staff will be cut, but it means we have to reevaluate how we utilize our state aid letter.
 - We will be combing through scopes of services that we have with our local organizations to ensure that we know exactly what we are providing funding for and that services are being delivered in the best way.
 - We will be working with our legislature since the term "Local Government Unit" does not mean we can work independently of the County Executive, as previously interpreted as meaning.
 - We will look into how the Department utilizes the strength in this CSB to redesign our Requests for Proposals (RFPs) scoring rubrics.
- Staff in the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) are at the forefront internally in the County, in terms of emergencies. We are working behind the scenes to ensure that our access to data and contact with the clients in our system can be an asset to the Department of Social Services when it comes to the ability of having folks not have to come downtown for their recertification checks that the Federal government is insisting that we move to do every 6 months. That has the potential to scare people when it comes to exchanging client information.
- The other big scare is the Continuum of Care funding through the US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), that specifically goes to house some of our most seriously and persistently mentally ill individuals. The local counties share around \$22-25M. Our portion of that grant is \$7.5M which currently goes to house just under 500 individuals in our community. If everything continues to play out the way that the government is saying that it will, there is a very good potential that the total grant amount will shrink down to \$6.7M, which will then be divided up between all of us.
- We are at the level of seriousness that we are looking at what sort of client populations may need to be reprioritized so that those who are the most marginalized, trauma-exposed, and on Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), have the access they need. Our priority is not the viability of the agency.

Chairperson Updates:

- Discussions continue about holding public input sessions to help communication for the CSB.

Miscellaneous:

- Anti-Stigma Coalition is hosting "Healing from PTSD and Moral Injury: One Soldier's Story" on Friday 11/14/25 at 8am at WNED. The keynote speaker is Tom Voss.
- The Crisis to Care Collaborative held 2 listening sessions over the past couple of months. They are a group of stakeholders focused on improving the crisis response in Erie County. Here is the link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/healing-from-ptsd-and-moral-injury-one-soldiers-story-registration-1897125466339?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

- The Crisis to Care Collaborative is releasing a status report in the next couple of weeks with all of their initial data findings, focusing on the system response of Someone to Call, Someone to Respond, and Somewhere to Go. Jane will share this information.
- There is a virtual town hall that the Buffalo Center for Health Equity is doing in collaboration with the Erie County Department of Health on the issue of Autism. There are other partners from the autism community who will be participating. It is November 19th broadcasting from WNED.
- Regarding funding cuts, what is important for people to know is services that are being cut are Medicaid renewals. It is important to be timely and not on Public Partnership LLC's (PPL) list of your Medicaid status having trouble – they will drop you, then it's a big process to get back on and facilitators back on.

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, January 8, 2026, from 9:00-10:00am.