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MINUTES of March 7, 2026

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Elizabeth (Liz) Atwell, Gretchen Behimer, Jara Bonner, Joe Ellison, Jeff Higgins, Mark Johnson, Patty Lawrence, Nathan O’Der, Laura Perez, Tony Rees
- MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, Joy Lytle
- ASSOCIATE MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Raymond Bailey, Richard Chaney
- GUESTS PRESENT:** NONE
- STAFF PRESENT:** Marcie Keith, Cindy Knoblauch, Denny Moell, Erica Pursley, Lee Ann Watson

1. Call to Order: The March 7, 2026, Board of Directors’ meeting was conducted in person and virtually at 9:00 am at 4357 Ferguson Drive, Suite 230, Cincinnati, Ohio 45245. Chairperson Gretchen Behimer welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order.
2. Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the Agenda for the March 7, 2026 Board of Directors’ meeting. (Motion-Nathan O’Der, second-Jara Bonner).
3. Approval of the Minutes: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2026 Board of Directors’ meeting. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Nathan O’Der).
4. Training: NONE
5. Executive Director and Staff Reports: Executive Director Lee Ann Watson said her report stands.

Associate Director Denny Moell’s report stands.

Community Engagement Manager Marcie Keith’s report stands.
6. Committee Reports:
 - A. Program Committee-Review of February 17, 2026 Committee Meeting: Program Committee Chair Liz Atwell summarized the Committee’s meetings with the Board’s contract Provider Agencies, Child Focus and Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB). Liz said both meetings had a positive tone.

Both agencies reported budget concerns for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) relating to the Medicaid changes. Both agencies also asked that the Board make their budgets “whole” for FY27. Child Focus’ presentation included a fund depletion summary; a review of the current outcomes of the School-Based Mental Health redesign; a request for continued funding for the Active Parenting Support Group; sustaining the Adult Mobile Crisis pilot project after the grant funding ends; and a review of early childhood mental health needs.

GCB’s presentation included an overview of the services provided at GCB as well as the increase in clients served; the FY26 budget overage of \$175,000, \$150,000 for SUD services and \$25,000 for mental health services; Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) costs; and a decrease in clients on Medicaid.

The Program Committee Chair requested that both agencies provide a specific priority listing of their services to prepare for any possible upcoming state funding cuts. Those priorities will be discussed at the Board Retreat.

7. Unfinished Business:

A. Funding for Services for Non-United States Citizens: At the February 9, 2026 Board of Directors’ meeting, Board staff reported that other Mental Health and Recovery Boards do not fund services for non-U.S. residents. Board members discussed adding a requirement of being a legal U.S. resident to the Board’s Purchase of Services (POS) Contract Standards. The Board tabled the item until a legal opinion was obtained. Board staff were able to get a legal opinion from the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) and were informed that this was a “grey area” and was ultimately up to the Board as to whether to have a specific policy on the subject. After discussion, a motion was made, and unanimously approved, to leave the POS Contract Standards “as is” with no specific requirement for client’s to be legal residents of the United States. (Motion-Jara Bonner, second-Mark Johnson).

8. Agency Directors’ Reports: Child Focus’ report stands.

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services’ report stands.

Hope Community Center’s report stands.

NAMI of Southwest Ohio’s report stands.

9. New Business:

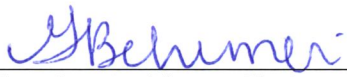
A. Action Items

1. Addendum to the FY26 Purchase of Services (POS) Contract with Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB) for the Supportive Housing Program Funding from the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH): A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the Addendum in the amount of \$50,000 to the FY26 POS Contract with GCB as presented and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Addendum on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Laura Perez, second-Jara Bonner).

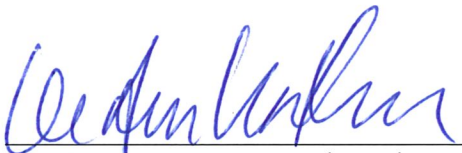
2. FY27 Mini Grants Budget: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the FY27 Mini Grants budget in the amount of \$30,000 and to authorize Board staff to publicly announce the funding opportunity. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Laura Perez).

B. Discussion Items: NONE

10. Announcements/Comments from Public Attendees: There were no announcements or comments from public attendees at the March 7, 2026 Board of Directors' meeting.
11. Executive Session-Personnel Matter: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to enter Executive Session. (Motion-Tony Rees, second-Nathan O'Der). Elizabeth Atwell-yea, Gretchen Behimer-yea, Jara Bonner-yea, Joe Ellison-yea, Jeff Higgins-yea, Mark Johnson-yea, Patty Lawrence-yea, Laura Perez-yea. The Board moved into Executive Session at 9:45 a.m.
A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to move back into Regular Session. (Motion-Patty Lawrence, second-Jeff Higgins). Elizabeth Atwell-yea, Gretchen Behimer-yea, Jara Bonner-yea, Joe Ellison-yea, Jeff Higgins-yea, Mark Johnson-yea, Patty Lawrence-yea, Nathan O'Der-yea, Laura Perez-yea. The Board moved back into Regular Session at 9:52 a.m.
The Board voted on the maximum amount for the Executive Director's pay increase for 2026.
12. Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made, and unanimously approved, to adjourn the March 7, 2026 Board of Directors' meeting. (Motion-Nathan O'Der, second-Mark Johnson).



Gretchen Behimer, Chairperson



Lee Ann Watson, Executive Director