



### MINUTES of January 12, 2026

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Elizabeth (Liz) Atwell, Gretchen Behimer, Jara Bonner (Zoom), Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, Joe Ellison, Jeff Higgins, Mark Johnson, Joy Lytle, Nathan O’Der, Laura Perez, Tony Rees

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Patty Lawrence

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Raymond Bailey, Richard Chaney

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Scott Boone, Alicia Fine, Zoe Fiscus-Doss, Beth McManus, Kale Stewart, Laura Stith, Dale White

**STAFF PRESENT:** Marcie Keith, Cindy Knoblauch, Denny Moell, Erica Pursley, Lee Ann Watson

1. Call to Order: The January 12, 2026, Board of Directors’ meeting was conducted in person and virtually at 7:00 pm from the Board office at 2337 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia, Ohio, 45103. 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 January 12, 2026 Board of Directors’ meeting with the additions of: Item #III, Oath of Office-Mark Johnson; and Item #VIII. A. 11., RHP Grant Resolution. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Nathan O’Der).
3. Oath of Office: Mark Johnson of Batavia (Wayne Township), Ohio was sworn in as a member of the Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board of Directors by Notary, Cynthia Knoblauch.
4. Approval of the Minutes: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2025 Board of Directors’ meeting and the December 8, 2025 Emergency Board of Directors’ meeting. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Jeff Higgins).
5. Training: New Housing Ohio (NHO) -Felicity Project Update: Lee Ann Watson provided the Board members with an update on the NHO project. The Board and NHO have been partnering for over two years to develop a supportive permanent housing facility in Clermont County. After much searching, NHO purchased property in Felicity, Ohio for the facility. In late 2024, the Board began worked with NHO to secure capital funding from the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) in the amount of \$1 million to support the project. The DBH capital funding has been approved. NHO has also received other funding for the project, but progress on the facility was stalled in 2025 awaiting funding from Ohio Housing Funding Agency. Scott Boone and

Dale White of NHO were invited to provide a project update. Their presentation included an artistic rendering of what the completed facility will look like, as well as an update on the funding. The project is currently still in the design phase and construction is scheduled to start in Spring 2027. NHO is currently awaiting the opening of funding from the Ohio Housing Funding Agency and hopes to be able to apply for the additional needed funding in the next month. By the time the facility opens, NHO hopes to have Felicity connected to public transportation. Once complete, the facility will serve as the first permanent supportive housing located in Clermont County.

6. Executive Director and Staff Reports: Executive Director Lee Ann Watson said that her report stands.

Associate Director Denny Moell said that his report stands.

Community Engagement Manager Marcie Keith said that her report stands.

7. Committee Reports:

- A. Finance Committee: The Finance Committee met on January 12, 2026, at 6:00 pm. Board staff summarized that evening's meeting.

Review of Fiscal Reports: Erica Pursley said that the Finance Committee reviewed and approved the State Fiscal Year 2026 (SFY26) Profit and Loss Statement, final Levy Campaign expenditures, moving expenses, and the SOS 4.2 state opioid funding.

Calendar Year 2026 (CY26) Annual County Appropriations: Erica Pursley said that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted the 2026 Annual Appropriations Resolution #186-25 in Regular Session on December 10, 2025, appropriating \$10,812,569 to the Mental Health and Recovery Board for calendar year 2026. The Committee approved the CY2026 annual County appropriations as presented and recommended approval from the full Board. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the CY26 Annual County Appropriations to the Board in the amount of \$10,812,569. (Motion-Mark Johnson, second-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson).

8. Unfinished Business: Strategic Plan/Gillette Model Review: Lee Ann Watson asked the Board members if they were in agreement that the Board's Strategic Plan and the Gillette Model be viewed at the Board's annual Retreat on March 7, 2026. The Board agreed.

Crisis Receiving Center Update: Erica Pursley provided the Board members with an update on the Crisis Receiving Center. The Board received five (5) bids for the construction of the Crisis Receiving Center. The best and lowest bid was awarded to Perkins/Carmack Construction at \$1,385,000. Renovation of the Board's current building is to start February 3, 2026. Board staff will relocate to their temporary office space at 4357 Ferguson Drive, Suite 270, Cincinnati, Ohio 45245 on February 2, 2026.

Levy Data Review: Marcie Keith presented her data analyzation for the Board's levy that passed on November 4, 2025. Marcie collected data on completed ballots, voter turnout, "yes" vs. "no"

votes for the Board's levy by precinct, and overall support of the levy. Levy Committee Co-Chairs Jara Bonner and Laura Perez said that there is no need to hold a post-election Levy Committee meeting.

9. Agency Directors' Reports: Laura Stith of Child Focus said that her report stands. Laura added that Child Focus' FY26 agency budget utilization is low for mid-year due to vacant positions. However, Child Focus is in the process of filling staffing vacancies and expects its utilization numbers to increase. In addition, Child Focus is experiencing a lower volume of Crisis Response Team runs so far this year. In FY2025, they experienced a record year at twenty-two responses compared to five (5) so far in FY26. Hotline calls are at a record high, up 23.4% from last year, with 67% of calls coming from the local number, 528-SAVE. Lastly, Laura said that Child Focus has opened a Behavioral Health Urgent Care in Brown County.

Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services/Clermont Recovery Center's (GCB/CRC) report stands as corrected. Alicia Fine added that GCB's ACT Team recently received its Fidelity Review report and scored a 4.2 out of 5. In addition, GCB will be providing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) training to its staff on January 16, 2026. Lastly, Alicia said that GCB is preparing for its three-year CARF Survey review.

Hope Community Center's (HCC) report stands. Zoe Fiscus-Doss added that HCC has been implementing its "Clubhouse Model" for the last six (6) months and will soon have data outcomes to share with the Board. HCC will have their first CARF Survey on February 9, 2026. Once HCC is CARF certified, they can bill Medicaid. HCC will work with Managed Care companies for client Medicaid coverage. Lastly, Zoe said that HCC was awarded a marketing grant to redesign HCC's website and print updated brochures. Zoe shared the brochures with the Board members.

NAMI of SW Ohio's report stands.

10. New Business:

A. Action Items

1. 120-Day Notice for the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Purchase of Services (POS) Contract with Child Focus: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the FY27 POS 120-Day Notice to Child Focus and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the notice on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Jeff Higgins).
2. 120-Day Notice for the FY27 POS Contract with Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services/Clermont Recovery Center (GCB/CRC): A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the FY27 POS 120-Day Notice to GCB/CRC and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the notice on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Nathan O'Der).
3. 120-Day Notice for the FY27 POS Contract with Hope Community Center (HCC): A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the FY27 POS 120-Day Notice to HCC and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the notice on behalf of the Board: (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Jeff Higgins).

4. Calendar Year 2026 (CY26) Facilities Agreement with the Board of County Commissioners (BCC): The Board will only utilize the County Facilities Department services during January of 2026 due to the temporary closing of the Board's building for renovation into the Crisis Receiving Center. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the CY26 Facilities Agreement with the BCC for January only and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Jeff Higgins).
5. Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB) FY26 POS Addendum for Addiction Treatment Program (ATP) Funding from the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) for OVI Court: The Board received additional ATP funding from DBH in the amount of \$10,000. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the GCB FY26 POS Addendum for ATP funding from DBH in the amount of \$10,000 and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Addendum on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Tony Rees, second-Laura Perez).
6. GCB FY26 POS Addendum for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Outreach Funding from DBH: The Board received SUD outreach (formerly referred to as PATH) funding from DBH in the amount of \$76,173. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the GCB FY26 POS Addendum for SUD Outreach funding from DBH in the amount of \$76,173 and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Addendum on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Mark Johnson).
7. GCB FY26 POS Addendum for SOS 4.0 Year Two (SOS 4.2) Funding from DBH: The Board received SOS 4.2 funding from DBH in the amount of \$342,299. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the GCB FY26 POS Addendum for SOS 4.2 funding from DBH in the amount of \$342,299 and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Addendum on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Nathan O'Der, second-Joy Lytle).
8. Rescheduling the March 2026 Board Meeting to Date of the Board Retreat on Saturday March 7, 2026: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve rescheduling the March 2026 Board meeting to the date of the annual Board Retreat on March 7, 2026. (Motion-Tony Rees, second-Jeff Higgins).
9. Revised Holiday Schedule Policy: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the revised Holiday Schedule policy 13.02 to include Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson).
10. Office Space Lease for Temporary Relocation of Board Staff: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the office space lease with Union Township for the temporary relocation of Board staff during the renovation for the Crisis Receiving Center and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the lease on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Nathan O'Der).

11. Recovery Housing Program (RHP) Grant Application Resolution: In order to apply for the RHP grant from the Ohio Department of Development, Board staff must have a signed Resolution giving the Board of Director's formal authorization to apply for the funding. Board staff will be applying for the grant in the amount of \$80,000 which will be passed on to GCB and On Our Way Home, if awarded. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the RHP grant application Resolution and to authorize the Board Chair and Executive Director to sign the Resolution on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Joy Lytle, second-Tony Rees).

B. Discussion Items:

1. Board Member and Board Meeting Evaluation Forms: Board staff asked that members complete and submit their annual self-evaluations and Board meeting evaluations to review at the February 9, 2026 Board meeting.

2. Executive Director Evaluation Form: Board Chairperson Gretchen Behimer asked that the Board members complete the evaluation of the Executive Director and submit to her so that the Board of Directors can conduct the annual evaluation review of Lee Ann Watson at the February 9, 2026 Board meeting.

3. Review of Tentative CY26 Board Training Schedule: The Board reviewed and approved the 2026 Board meeting schedule. Board staff will distribute the schedule to all interested parties.

4. Board Succession Planning: Joy Lytle was appointed to the Board Succession Planning Committee. Gretchen Behimer, Nathan O'Der, Joy Lytle and Lee Ann Watson will meet virtually via Zoom to draft a formal procedure for Board succession planning. The draft plan will be completed by and presented at the Board Retreat on March 7, 2026. Mark Johnson was appointed to the Finance Committee.

5. Scheduling of Program Committee Meetings: Committee Chair Liz Atwell said she wanted to schedule two (2) Program Committee meetings in February 2026, preferably the first and third weeks of the month, to discuss Provider Agency mid-year programmatic needs. Board staff will send out a poll to choose the meeting dates based on majority availability.

Announcements/Comments from Public Attendees: There were no announcements or comments from public attendees at the January 12, 2026 Board of Directors' meeting.

12. Executive Session-Personnel Matter: A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to enter Executive Session. (Motion-Jeff Higgins, second-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson). Elizabeth Atwell-yea, Gretchen Behimer-yea, Jara Bonner-yea, Joe Ellison-yea, Mark Johnson-yea, Joy Lytle-yea, Nathan O'Der-yea, Laura Perez-yea, Tony Rees-yea. The Board moved into Executive Session at 7:57pm.

A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to move back into Regular Session. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Tony Rees). Elizabeth Atwell-yea, Gretchen Behimer-yea,

Jara Bonner-yea, Rebecca Cochran-Kasson-yea, Joe Ellison-yea, Jeff Higgins-yea, Mark Johnson-yea, Joy Lytle-yea, Nathan O'Der-yea, Laura Perez-yea, Tony Rees-yea. The Board moved back into Regular Session at 8:23 pm.

The Board discussed the matter of staff evaluations and salary actions. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to authorize the Executive Director to provide staff with a salary increase, based on their evaluation, with the amount of salary increases for all staff not to exceed a total of \$15,859.96 for the year. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Tony Rees).

13. Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made, and unanimously approved, to adjourn the January 12, 2026 Board of Directors' meeting. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran-Kasson, second-Tony Rees).



Gretchen Behimer, Chairperson



Lee Ann Watson, Executive Director