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MINUTES of February 28, 2022

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Andy Bateman, Barbara Bird, Jacki Block, Rebecca Cochran, Kelley Costello, Richard Costello, Erica Koe-Krompecher, Patricia Lawrence, Greg Varner
- MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Jenifer Binder, Laura Esslinger, John Kelly
- ASSOCIATE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Raymond Bailey, Richard Chaney
- GUESTS PRESENT:** Jara Bonner, Heather Cokl, Alicia Fine, Amy Foley, Susan Graham, Patty Hassel, Laura Stith
- STAFF PRESENT:** Cindy Knoblauch, Erica Pursley, Karen Scherra, Lee Ann Watson

1. The February 28, 2022 Board meeting was a rescheduled meeting since the February 14, 2022 Board meeting was cancelled due to quorum not being met. The February 28, 2022 meeting was conducted virtually, via Zoom, in adherence with the emergency legislation signed by the Governor on February 17, 2022 which allows temporary authority for public bodies to meet by means of teleconference or video conference. Executive Director Karen Scherra introduced guest Jara Bonner as a new potential Board member. Karen said Jara has submitted her application to the Board of County Commissioners. Jara gave a brief description of her background, education, and home life. In turn, all attendees made brief introductions as well. Chairperson Patricia Lawrence welcomed the attendees and the meeting proceeded.
2. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the Agenda for the February 28, 2022 Board meeting with the following changes: A. Business item "Judge Mary Lynne Birck" will be moved to the March 14, 2022 meeting; B. the Finance Committee did not meet and therefore will not present a report; and C. the 120-day notices for FY2023 POS Contracts will be moved to Action Item 1. (Motion-Barbara Bird, second-Greg Varner).
3. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2022 Board of Directors' meeting. (Motion-Rebecca Cochran, second-Barbara Bird).
4. Executive Director's Report: Executive Director Karen Scherra shared a few highlights from her report. Karen stated that Associate Director Lee Ann Watson continues to work on the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant. The BJA grant will sustain and expand the Quick Response Teams (QRT) in the County. Lee Ann and Erica Pursley have been working on getting the budget approved by BJA. The grant cannot start until the budget is approved. The grant will

provide funding to hire two new positions: a part-time Handle with Care (HWC) Coordinator at Child Focus (CFI) who will assist with implementing the project in Clermont, and a full-time Mental Health professional at Clermont Recovery Center (CRC) who will assist with assessment and crisis intervention during QRT runs. Lee Ann has met with CFI and CRC to discuss the new positions and has also met with the Sheriff's Office to discuss the expansion of QRT to two days a week.

Karen Scherra mentioned that on January 24, the participating boards in ENGAGE met with Joyce Calland, who was named by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) as of January 1, 2022 to oversee the ENGAGE grant until it ends on 9/30/22. The main concern of the Boards involved is their role in the grant project since the funds are now controlled by Aetna. The group will reconvene in March to hopefully get specifics on the closeout of the grant and the transition of MRSS services to OhioRISE.

Karen Scherra also shared that she attended a meeting of the OhioRISE Implementation and Operations Workgroup on February 3. Karen said that the meeting consisted of a viewing of a draft power point presentation that will be used to educate others on OhioRISE. The group provided feedback and suggestions on the information presented and areas that were not addressed. There will be several "listening sessions" and presentations over the next two months for stakeholders to learn about OhioRISE. Karen plans to participate in as many meetings as possible to get a full understanding of the plans as this transition will have an impact on Clermont's MRSS program as well as the Peer Support Partners at Hope Community Center. Karen also mentioned that agencies are experiencing delays with communication from Aetna, the managed care company that is responsible for OhioRISE and for contracting with agencies for MRSS funding. Laura Stith confirmed that CFI has had limited communication with Aetna but did recently receive the contract from Aetna for the funding in the amount of \$124,000.

Karen Scherra mentioned a few federal activities and legislations. Karen said that there will be at least another 90 days of the Public Health Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On January 14th, the Department of Health and Human Services extended the Public Health Emergency, which was set to expire January 16, 2022, for an additional 90 days. The Public Health Emergency, which has been renewed nine times, will now expire on April 14, 2022.

Karen also added that deaths due to drug overdose have substantially increased during COVID-19. The number of drug overdose deaths topped a million for the first time since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began collecting data on the problem more than two decades ago. A study released by the National Center for Health Statistics found that 932,364 people died in the U.S. from fatal overdoses between 1999 and 2020. Separate data from the CDC estimates an additional 100,000 fatal overdoses in 2021. Opioid-related overdose deaths among U.S. adults 55 and older rose tenfold between 1999 and 2019. In addition, according to the CDC, encounters with benzimidazole-opioids (including metonitazine) and para-fluorofentanyl are increasing in the U.S. Para-fluorofentanyl, a substance from research efforts in the 1960s and classified as a schedule I substance in 1986, has begun to re-emerge on the illicit substance market.

5. Action Items: The only action item was the 120-Day Notices for FY2023 Purchase of Services (POS) Contracts. Karen Scherra reminded the Board members that over the past couple of years, there have been several lawsuits concerning contract issues that have been filed by providers against their local Boards. The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) has been keeping Board Directors informed about the issues related to the various lawsuits and has advised Boards of actions they should take in working on contracts with their providers. Boards are statutorily required by Chapter 340 of the Ohio Revised Code to annually provide 120-day notices to their contract mental health and addiction services providers. However, many Boards, including Clermont, do not issue annual 120-day notices when no changes in allocations are expected, especially if providers were part of the planning process, as they are here in Clermont. Even if there are no changes in allocations or contract language, OACBHA has advised all Boards to issue the 120-day notices this year. OACBHA also advised that the 120-day notices should be reviewed and approved by both the Board of Directors and legal counsel (the Prosecutor's Office).

Karen Scherra added that QMHAS has formed a committee, which includes Ohio Council, OACBHA and Boards, and many stakeholders, to review Chapter 340 of the Ohio Revised Code and suggest updates. The Committee's first meeting will be March 4, 2022.

A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the 120-Day Notices for the FY2023 POS Contracts for GCB, CFI, and HCC as presented. (Motion-Greg Varner, second-Barbara Bird).

6. Discussion Items: The first discussion item was the Board Search Committee Report. Patty Lawrence reported that the Search Committee had met twice to develop the job description for the new Executive Director and the job posting. The position was posted in mid-February. To date, the Committee has received 17 applications, nine of which met the minimum qualifications. During the month of March, the Committee plans to meet with Board staff and key staff from the provider agencies to review what expectations and characteristics are required for the new Executive Director. Interviewing will begin in April. The Search Committee plans to conduct each chosen candidate's first interview via Zoom and the second interview in person. The Committee is receiving guidance from OACBHA for the process of selecting a new Executive Director.

The second discussion item was the Board Retreat. Karen Scherra asked the Board members for input on dates and location for the annual Board retreat. The Board members stated that they prefer that the retreat take place in-person, with the option of joining by Zoom, on a Saturday in April. Karen Scherra said the April Board meeting would immediately precede the retreat. The entire event will be from 9:00am to 3:00 pm. Board staff will send a Doodle Poll to the Board members to select a Saturday date. Susan Graham of CFI stated that the Board is welcome to use the Carter Center for the retreat as they did last year. The retreat will give Board members an opportunity to delve deeper into topics of their choice as well as an opportunity to discuss the anticipated change in the Executive Director position. Karen suggested that the Board members think about topics they would be interested in exploring further at the retreat and bring them to the table at the March Board meeting.

The third discussion item was the Planning for 988 Implementation and Crisis Services. The 988 national crisis hotline will go live on July 16, 2022. Calls to the crisis hotline will be directed to Lifeline Centers and then to local crisis hotlines concurrent with the caller's area code. Karen Scherra said CFI, which staffs the local Clermont crisis hotline, is also a Lifeline Center. As of now, the 988 hotline operators in Ohio will not have access to a directory of call centers or the local resources connected with those call centers, and no geo tracking will be available to aid in helping callers get connected to crisis centers in their area. Callers will be directed based only on their area code. However, many people have a different area code for their cell phones than the area where they reside. Laura Stith of CFI said that the Clermont crisis hotline often receives calls from callers out of the area. The standard procedure is to first address the caller's crisis and then get them connected to services where they live. Karen Scherra said the extra step in getting callers connected to services and many other aspects of the 988 implementation have prompted 18 committees to be formed by OMHAS to address the issues. OMHAS has also agreed to provide funding to Lifeline Centers to hire one or two additional staff to assist with the increase in call volume for a one-year period. Karen stated that since Clermont's catchment area is thankfully only Clermont and Brown, the amount of funding from OMHAS will probably be for one staff position.

The fourth discussion item was the Ohio Council Behavioral Health Workforce Crisis Report. In December 2021, the Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers released "Breaking Point: Ohio's Behavioral Health Workforce Crisis," an in-depth report on the employee recruitment and retention challenges faced by mental health and addiction services provider organizations. Based on original research, "Breaking Point" outlines how front-line clinical and medical staff are proving difficult to find, easy to lose, and costly to replace. As the report explains, the consequences could be grave for many Ohioans in need. Karen Scherra stated that she wanted to share this report with the Board members so they could understand why our provider agencies had asked for additional funding from the Board to address workforce issues. Karen also said that the report contained a federal map of Ohio counties and their level of health professional shortage. Clermont was listed as "part of county is shortage area". Karen said she plans to investigate where the data for this map was obtained as she disagrees that Clermont is only "part" short. Karen stated that she will share more of the report at the Board Retreat.

The fifth and final discussion item was the OMHAS Changes to Prevention Services. Karen Scherra said that OMHAS has decided to change the rules governing prevention services, including funding. If implemented, prevention services will have to be certified by OMHAS in order to receive federal, state, or local levy funding. The concern for Clermont is the potential impact on its Coalitions, such as the Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Addiction and Recovery Partnership (CARP, formally the Opiate Task Force). These types of prevention services are not able to be certified as they are not services provided by an agency. This could result in Board staff, who currently chair the prevention coalitions, not being able to lead the coalitions. In addition, Karen stated that another concern is that historically OMHAS has not been able to dictate how Boards utilize their local levy dollars. Yet, the proposed changes to the Prevention Services rule suggest otherwise. If this change is approved, local voters may not want to support our mental health levy if the use of the funding is not locally controlled.

Exceptions to this new rule are schools, faith-based services, the Board of Health, and coalitions that are less than two years old.

Karen Scherra also mentioned that she would like the Board's "go ahead" to proceed with current prevention activities that may be affected by this new rule if it is approved. These activities include mini grant funding and suicide prevention activities. The Board had no objections.

7. Agency Directors' Reports: Laura Stith of Child Focus said her report stands. Laura added that Child Focus is working with the Mental Health Coalition to advocate at the state level against the new prevention credentialing requirement. Laura said that the requirement of having certified staff for prevention would add more strain on hiring and maintaining staff, since staff with a prevention certification are difficult to find. Staff at CFI have already been spending a very large amount of time trying to find training for staff to obtain and maintain prevention certification. Erica Koe-Krompecher said that she understands the struggles that CFI is having trying to obtain and maintain credentialing; as an OCPS (Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist) herself, Erica said that she has difficulty finding trainings that meet the criteria needed for her to maintain her certification.

Heather Cokl of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services/Clermont Recovery Center (GCB/CRC) said GCB has OCPSs on staff if Child Focus needs assistance with maintaining credentials. Heather added that GCB is returning more fully to in-person services following the COVID pandemic. Heather also said that GCB prevention staff recently attended the annual CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Forum in Washington DC. The Forum provides participants with opportunities to learn the latest strategies to prevent substance misuse and hear from nationally-known experts and policymakers. Heather further mentioned that the GCB prevention staff attending the Forum had personal contact with three legislators, and one of the staff, who received CRC prevention services as a youth, was able to tell her story.

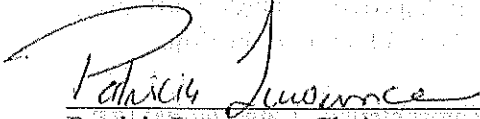
Amy Foley of Hope Community Center (HCC) said her report stands. Amy added that HCC has been focused on funding sources for its Peer Support Partners (PSPs). Amy also said that Becky Mostellar will be taking over for Amy at HCC at the end of June. Becky also plans to attend the April CCMHRB meeting. Amy closed by saying HCC's PSPs are at full client capacity.

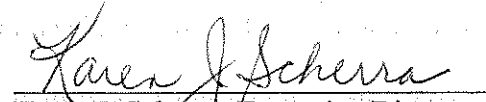
8. Comments from Public Attendees: There were no public attendees at the February 28, 2022 Board of Directors meeting.

Karen Scherra wished Patty Hassel of GCB good luck in her new endeavor. Patty will be leaving GCB for a position as Chief Fiscal Officer of the YWCA. Patty said that she has been with GCB for four years and has learned so much working for GCB. Patty also wished Karen good luck in her retirement.

Karen closed by reminding the Board that the next meeting is March 14, 2022 and will be virtual via Zoom.

9. Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made, and unanimously approved, to adjourn the February 28, 2022 Board of Directors meeting. (Motion-Greg Varner, second-Erica Koe-Krompecher).


Patricia Lawrence, Chairperson


Karen J. Scherra, Executive Director