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MINUTES of January 11, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andy Bateman, Jacki Block, Carrie Brown, Karen Conrad, Laura Esslinger, Dorothy Glancy, John Kelly, Patty Lawrence, Geoff Schwerzler, Greg Varner

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Kelley Costello, Erica Koe-Krompecher

MEMBERS UNEXCUSED: Katie Shepherd

ASSOCIATE MEMBER EXCUSED: Richard Chaney

GUESTS PRESENT: Tammy Brewer, Heather Cokl, Alicia Fine, Amy Foley, Susan Graham, Pamela Lindeman, Jeff O'Neil, Julia Saldanha, Laura Stith

STAFF PRESENT: Cindy Knoblauch, Erica Pursley, Karen Scherra, Lee Ann Watson

1. The meeting was conducted on video conference via Zoom due to the State of Ohio "Shelter at Home" order and the changes in the Open Meetings regulations due to the coronavirus. Chairperson Karen Conrad welcomed the Board members and the meeting proceeded.
2. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the Agenda for the January 11, 2021 Board meeting with the addition of Discussion Item #7, the Update on the County's Accounting System known as Munis. (Motion-Dorothy Glancy, second-Greg Varner).
3. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020 Board of Directors' meeting. (Motion-Dorothy Glancy, second-Carrie Brown).
4. Executive Director's Report: Executive Director Karen Scherra shared a few highlights from her report. Regarding Hospital Update/Utilization, Karen said during December, Clermont had one civil client at the State hospital for part of the month, and a high of 12 and a low of 11 forensic clients. Admissions to the state hospitals in Northwest and Northeast Ohio were stopped due to several COVID cases at both hospitals.

Regarding the boards' state association, OACBHA, Karen said she continues to participate in the new OACBHA Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council, which meets every three weeks. The Council will be offering a diversity training to Board Directors, and Karen stated that the training can be uncomfortable for some people, as it focuses on biases people may not be aware that they have. Regional follow-up meetings have also been scheduled for the week after the training to help Board Directors process the training and deal with issues that were uncovered.

Karen also mentioned the “Future’s Group”, a group of OACBHA Directors and Ohio Council Directors, that met every two weeks to educate each other on the areas chosen as most problematic between Boards and providers to develop a better understanding of the issues regarding board/provider contracts and solutions that could be suggested. The last scheduled meeting occurred on December 14th. At that meeting, the group discussed continuing to hold meetings between the OACBHA Executive Council and the Ohio Council’s Board of Trustees. Members of the committee on the OACBHA side met on January 6 to discuss a Joint Statement of Continuation that will be provided to members of both associations and to also prepare a response to the Ohio Council group regarding the purpose and goals of continuing to meet, as well as topics, priorities, and ground rules. Karen said that OACBHA wants to focus more on the state budget and how it will affect the behavioral health system and less on board/agency contracts. Jeff O’Neil of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB) and Karen Scherra both said their board/provider relationship has been recognized as a role model and we may be able to assist other boards in achieving the same relationships with their agencies.

Regarding Opioids/Drug Issues, Karen said on December 7, Associate Director Lee Ann Watson met with the newly hired Injury Prevention Coordinator from Clermont County Public Health. Megan Davish will assist Lee Ann with the work of the Opiate Task Force (OTF). Public Health has also hired a Harm Reduction Coordinator for the syringe exchange program.

Karen added that she wanted to make a correction to her report. In the third paragraph of section 3 of her report, the word “Stimulus” was used and should have read “Stimulant”.

Karen also mentioned a rise in deaths due to stimulants that reveals there is more than just an opioid crisis. Although deaths from opioids continue to command the public’s attention, an alarming increase in deaths involving the stimulant drugs methamphetamine and cocaine are a stark illustration that the “fight” is no longer just against opioids. Clermont County faces a complex and ever-evolving addiction and overdose crisis characterized by the shifting use and availability of different substances and use of multiple drugs and drug classes together.

On a side note, Karen informed the Board that the Engage Project Director recently lost her father to COVID. She contracted the virus as well and is now recovering from pneumonia. Meetings related to the ENGAGE grant will be on hold until she recovers and is back to work.

Regarding mental health Issues, Karen said in mid-December, the Suicide Prevention Coalition received notice that they were awarded the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation Strategic Planning grant, which will provide the Coalition with \$5,000 for social media marketing and various other marketing materials. The grant also includes participation in trainings offered by Ohio University focused on the development/improvement of a strategic plan for the Coalition. Even though the Coalition is currently already working on its strategic plan, the grant opportunity will provide Coalition leaders with an opportunity to improve its strategic plan.

Karen also brought attention to the section of her report titled “Federal Activities/Legislation” and advised there were several interesting new legislations passed. She specifically mentioned the Health and Human Services proposed changes to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The changes aim to improve care coordination and give patients greater access to their own health information.

Karen's report also included an update on the priorities for 2021 from the National Council, the leading national association representing provider agencies and others in the behavioral health system. The team released a report ensuring their efforts to continue to connect everyone in need to life-saving care and to help clients overcome the impacts of COVID-19. Their goals for 2021 include bringing Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) to all 50 states by promoting their success and role in responding to the mental health and substance use disorder crisis. Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB) recently received federal funding to implement a CCBHC in Clermont County. Other 2021 goals of the National Council are investing in the workforce, sustaining telehealth services, growing Mental Health First Aid training, implementing suicide hotlines and crisis response systems, and launching an online training portal for partners to access virtually.

Karen wrapped up by mentioning the articles attached to her report. The first article was titled "Ohio House Won't Vote on Senate Bill 3 to Divert Drug Possession Offenders to Treatment Instead of Prison". Karen said getting that bill signed is important to the mental health system. It would allow for prosecution of high-end offenders while helping the low-level offenders get into treatment rather than serve jail time. The next article was titled "We're Entering Year Two of the Pandemic, Here's What Happens Next". Karen said the article discussed the negative impact the pandemic has had on mental health and addiction. The article even mentions that dentists are seeing more cracked teeth and are attributing it to pandemic stress. The final article was titled "Overdose Deaths Soar in Butler County and Kentucky During 2020 Pandemic". Karen said that although overdose deaths rose in some SW Ohio counties, they are down in Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren counties. Karen attributes the success in Clermont County to the strong partnerships between the County, the Board, and the Agencies.

5. Action Items: The first action item was the CY2021 Board Budget as presented to the Clermont Board of County Commissioners (BCC). Finance Committee did not meet prior to the January meeting due to issues with the County accounting system, which has prevented the processing of invoices and the Board's ability to have up-to-date fiscal information.

Since the County operates on a calendar year, the Board must submit an annual calendar year budget to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), even though our Board follows the state fiscal year budget period of July 1 – June 30. The CY2021 County Appropriations Budget was approved by the BCC on December 16th, which included the Board's budget in the amount of \$8,415,562. Board staff advised that this amount is up \$27,678 from our CY2020 budget. The Board's calendar year budget is based on the SFY21 state budget allocation from January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021, plus an estimate of the budget for the first six months of SFY22. The BCC approved an across-the-board 2.5% raise for county employees in the CY2021 budget, so those funds were also included in the Board's budget. A discussion on potential raises for Board staff will be on the February Board meeting agenda after Board staff have reviewed the status of funding being used by the Board's provider agencies and any gaps projected between funding and spending levels for services. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the CY2021 Board Budget as presented to the Clermont Board of County Commissioners. (Motion-Greg Varner, second-Dorothy Glancy).

The second and final action item was the FFY2021 MOU with Butler County for the SOR 2.0 funded Harm Reduction Program. Beginning with the SOR 1.0 grant, Collaboratives were provided with an opportunity to pool funding to support a shared project. Several of the boards in the Southwest Collaborative, including Clermont, proposed funding for harm reduction services, specifically syringe exchange programs. The counties all already had programs in place, but the funding allowed for the continuation and possible expansion of the programs. Public Health provides the syringe exchange program in Clermont County through a contract with Hamilton County Public Health. Public Health's goal is to terminate the contract with Hamilton County and operate their own program. The new funds from SOR 2.0 should allow that to occur. CCMHRB's involvement in this project is limited, as it does not operate the program or hire staff and the funds flow directly to Public Health from the Butler County Board, which is the fiscal agency for the program.

CCMHRB's role in the project is detailed in the MOU with Butler County that includes all the participating boards. In short, we agree to meet at regular intervals with the Project Director; identify appropriate harm reduction initiatives within Clermont County; facilitate communication between the Project Director and the Clermont County Health Commissioner; and communicate successes and any concerns to the Butler County Board to facilitate problem solving and celebrate accomplishments. A motion was made, and unanimously approved, to approve the FFY2021 MOU with the Butler County Board for the SOR 2.0 Funded Collaborative Harm Reduction Program and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the MOU on behalf of the Board. (Motion-Dorothy Glancy, second-Andy Bateman).

6. Discussion Items: The first discussion item was the Award of SOR 2.0 funds. Karen Scherra said the Board received its SOR 2.0 allocation in the amount of \$1,174,041. The allocation is approximately \$50,000 less than the requested amount. However, most Boards only received 90% of their requested budgets. The original proposal also included an allowable \$75,000 for renovation of recovery housing, but OMHAS is now stating that the \$75,000 for recovery housing is statewide, not per county. The Board's OMHAS SOR Liaison suggested using the \$75,000 SOR 2.0 funding for other items, such as rent subsidies, and utilizing Board funding for the proposed recovery housing renovations. Karen stated that she is not comfortable with utilizing Board funding for recovery housing renovations as it would set a precedent. Karen stated that there are two other projects that might be good options for the extra SOR 2.0 funding. Lee Ann Watson stated that she has been in discussion with the Sheriff's Office and GCB about starting a pre-diversion program similar to the national LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) model. The Sheriff's Office contacted Lee Ann about the possibility of starting a LEAD program, which consists of diverting individuals with a substance use disorder and/or mental illness to treatment instead of pressing charges. Lee Ann, GCB and the Sheriff's Office will be meeting with Hamilton County next week to discuss their LEAD program. Karen also mentioned another program idea for the SOR 2.0 funding, contingency management, which is a best practice for treatment of stimulant misuse disorders. Heather Cokl from GCB explained the concept of contingency management and stated that GCB is currently doing a pilot contingency management project. Karen also stated that it is important to be mindful of sustainability of new projects that might be started with SOR 2.0 funding.

Board member Andy Bateman stated he was not behind the recovery housing renovation idea but rather liked the other two options, especially the LEAD diversity program. Board members Jacki Block, Karen Conrad, and Greg Varner concurred and said they are leaning more towards the LEAD program. Karen Scherra said what makes this option most appealing is that it was the Sheriff's Office that first approached Board staff with the idea. Karen reminded the Board members that we will need to consider sustainability of any new program started with SOR 2.0 funding, as the SOR 2.0 grant is only a two-year grant.

Karen said the deadline for the SOR 2.0 budget revisions was last Friday, but OMHAS extended the deadline an additional two weeks due to the confusing nature of the allowable expenses. Karen said there has been multiple conflicting answers from the state regarding the grant.

The second discussion item was OACBHA Legislative Week. Karen Scherra scheduling meetings with Ohio legislators for OACBHA's Legislative Week which is the last week in January. She plans to meet with Senator Johnson, Representative Bird, and Representative Schmidt. The meetings will be held virtually via Zoom and other Ohio county boards who share our legislators will also be on the call-in order to cut down on the number of meetings for them. Karen said the Board members are also welcomed to participate in the zoom calls. Board staff will convey the meeting times and dates as they become available to Board members.

The third discussion item was the 2021 Board Retreat. Karen said based on the December Board meeting discussion, most Board members wanted the annual Board retreat in person. Board staff will search for a venue that will allow social distancing space for attendees. Karen said she would like to hold the retreat after the State budget is released sometime in February. After discussion, it was decided the retreat will be held on either March 6th or 13th. Board staff will send out retreat details once they are available. Karen reminded Board members that in the event there is a COVID-19 surge, the retreat may need to be conducted virtually via Zoom.

The fourth discussion item was the Board In-Service training for 2021. As discussed at the December Board meeting, Karen Scherra would like to hold a Board in-service training, preferably sometime in February. The training will focus on ethics around budgeting. The training will be a summary of a similar presentation sponsored by OACBHA and previously attended by Board staff. The training will be held virtually via Zoom and is expected to last about 2 hours. Once Karen reviews staff schedules, she will have Board staff send a Doodle Poll to Board members to choose an appropriate date and time.

The fifth discussion item was the State Budget Update. Karen Scherra said the most important State budget update to mention is the 2021 implementation of the OhioRISE program, (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence), a specialized Medicaid managed care program for youth with complex behavioral health and multi-system needs. This program is important to Clermont County because it could allow for the sustainability and possible expansion of Clermont's MRSS program (Mobile Response and Stabilization Services). MRSS, a part of Mobile Crisis, is a program that allows families with children and youth through the age of 21 who are experiencing difficulties or distress to get immediate assistance. MRSS will respond to distressful situations such as emotional or escalated behaviors, mental health issues, substance use concerns, grief and loss, trauma, suicidal thoughts, running away from home, and parent/child conflict. Karen said this is a successful program in Clermont County, but the grant funding is set to expire on September 30, 2021. Under OhioRISE, MRSS

is planned to be a billable service; depending on a sufficient allocation in the State budget, our MRSS program could be sustained primarily through Medicaid once OhioRISE is implemented. Karen said there will be further discussion on this topic at the Board retreat.

The sixth discussion item was the status of COVID-19 vaccine distribution for the Clermont County behavioral health system. Karen said the Governor and OMHAS have both stated that behavioral healthcare workers are considered to be part of the frontline health care group that was prioritized for receiving the vaccine during the phase 1A rollout. Based on a discussion that Karen had with Clermont's Public Health Commissioner Julianne Nesbitt, behavioral health workers are not actually listed as State of Ohio's phase 1A recipients. Also, according to their conversation, Clermont has only received small amounts of the vaccine. Karen said she has heard that much smaller counties have received more doses than Clermont. Karen said this is particularly frustrating since Clermont is now the seventh most COVID-19 penetrated county in Ohio and the rate has been increasing for weeks. According to Julianne, phase 1B of the distribution is supposed to start in two weeks and the Public Health Department is inundated with calls from people who are in the phase 1A group who have still not received their vaccine.

Pamela Lindeman with Child Focus, Inc. (CFI) said at first, she got resistance to her requests for the vaccine for her staff because they were not considered primary health care. However, CFI has since been approved and are scheduled to receive vaccines later this week. Pamela said 100 eligible staff members have already signed up. CFI's Early Learning employees will not be eligible until the phase 1B rollout. Jeff O'Neil of GCB said he received similar resistance to his first request as well but has also since been approved to receive doses for eligible GCB employees. Jeff said 25-30% of GCB employees have expressed interest in receiving the vaccine and about 15% of clients have also expressed interest.

The seventh and final discussion item was an update on issues with the County accounting system. Fiscal Officer Erica Pursley said the County's accounting system, Munis, has been down since December 23 due to a malware attack. To avoid the malware from infiltrating Munis, the County intentionally shut down the system. The Auditor's Office is the only department currently able to access the system. Erica explained that this has created a challenge, since Munis is the system used for payroll, requisitions, and invoice payments. Currently all items which are normally entered into Munis are having to be sent down to the Auditor's Office in hard copy form. Erica said this has caused a delay in payments, reports, and any other tasks that are usually performed through Munis. The county has not provided a date as to when the system will be back up, but the county hopes Munis will be running again by the end of January.

7. Agency Directors' Reports: Pamela Lindeman of Child Focus, Inc. (CFI), said her report stands. Pamela added that CFI is making strides to overcome challenges in re-engaging clients in services through telehealth, particularly clients involved in school-based mental health. Although the telehealth strategies have been very successful and necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still some people falling through the cracks. Pamela said these can be clients who lack technology or technological know-how, among other things. Pamela fears there is a large part of the population that is missing out on needed services. Lee Ann Watson added that the Suicide Prevention Coalition, which CFI is involved in, is also ramping up its efforts to reach out to that same corner of the population. Pamela believes that the MRSS initiatives will be an important piece in closing that gap for the population becoming disconnected.

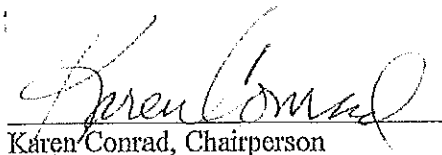
Alicia Fine of Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCB)/Clermont Recovery Center (CRC), a division of GCB said her report stands. Alicia added that Clermont Public Health has been helpful in assuring that GCB receives the COVID-19 vaccine. Alicia also said GCB has held several wellness events that were very successful. The wellness events included free Naloxone kits and training and 85 people at the Batavia event and 15 people at the Felicity event received the kits. The events also featured family care baskets including food and kid's activities. The events were funded through a grant GCB received.

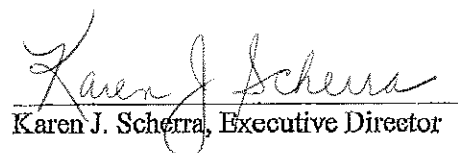
Amy Foley of Hope Community Center (HCC) said her report stands. Amy added that HCC's mental health consumers meet for 2 hours in-person on Tuesdays. In December, there were 53 consumers who attended the Hope Center. Amy also said HCC's AA support group is back to in-person meetings and currently meets on Fridays, with 5-7 participants. Unfortunately, HCC has a Parent Support Partner (PSP) out with Covid-19, but she is on the mend and her cases are being covered in her absence. HCC also hired a new part-time PSP worker who used to work for GCB in the resilience program. The new PSP will be doing work on a new grant project, as well as holding Zoom calls with families who have more advanced needs. Amy closed by saying HCC received its second Byrne grant to assist with the law enforcement peer program.

Julia Saldanha of NAMI SW Ohio said her report stands. Julia added that NAMI's support group sessions are going well, and attendance is good. NAMI recently held a presentation for Loveland Schools via Zoom. Julia said holding classes and presentations virtually via Zoom have been quite successful and effective and possibly a better medium for attendance.

Karen Scherra mentioned an article that was on the front page of the Enquirer about a Police Officer who came forward to tell his story of recovery after he witnessed the death of his colleague. The officer suffered from PTSD from the ordeal and owes his recovery to the mental health treatment he received. Karen said she was struck by his courage to share his story. Karen stated that this is a prime example of how valuable mental health services are. Karen also mentioned that she was impressed with how the Clermont County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) handled the situation when Detective Brewer was killed in the line of duty. The CCSO immediately reached out to the mental health agencies in Clermont for help.

8. Comments from Public Attendees: There were no public attendees at the January 11, 2021 Board of Directors' meeting.
9. Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made, and unanimously approved, to adjourn the January 11, 2021 Board of Directors meeting. (Motion-Greg Varner, second-John Kelly).


Karen Conrad, Chairperson


Karen J. Scherra, Executive Director