

**The Blair County Department of Social Services  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 11:30 AM  
Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg**

**Board Members Present:** Steve Martynuska, Donna Gority, Chris Cohn, Susanna Tomlinson, Matthew Dumm, Bob Smith, James Stratton, Rick Petroski, Mike Stubler, Becky Aungst and Commissioner Erb

**Newly Appointed 2023 Board Members Present:** Sue Franco and Dana Melton

**Board Members Absent:** T. Grant Phillips and Amber Hatfield

**Others Present:** Jim Hudack, Tricia Maceno, Theresa Rudy, Ken Dean, Tracy Fitzpatrick, Ginny Christy, Missy Gillin, Melissa Gordon, Kelly Popich, Lorrie Hetager, Erin Kay, Maria Brandt, Steve Wicks and Jennifer Kensingner

---

**MINUTES**

**Welcome and Call to Order**

- Steve Martynuska welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
- Self-Introductions were made.

**1. Public Comment**

- No public comments were received.

**2. Approval of October 6, 2022 Minutes**

- *Motion by Bob Smith to accept the October 6, 2022 minutes. Mike Stubler seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

**3. Board Operations – Jim Hudack, Executive Director, Department of Social Services (DSS)**

- Jim thanked Dave and Paula Binus for today's catering. He also thanked Jen for her time involved in preparing for the meeting.
- Jim reminded the attendees that, today, the Advisory Board would be accepting voluntary monetary donations for the Family Services Emergency Shelter.
- Tricia Maceno, who will be the new Social Services Executive Director starting on January 7, 2023, spoke briefly about herself to the attendees.
- Jim Hudack reported that Social Services' new Fiscal Specialist is Amy Jo Myers.
- Jim thanked Sue Franco and Dana Melton for becoming 2023 Social Services Advisory Board members.

**Annual Board Report**

- The 2021/2022 Social Services Annual Board Report was distributed at today's meeting.

**Recognition of Retiring Board Members ~ Jim Hudack**

- Jim thanked James Stratton and Dr. T. Grant Phillips for their service on the Board. Dr. Phillips was not in attendance. Jim presented Jim Stratton with a Certificate of Appreciation.

**4. Mental Health Committee Report (Mike Stubler)**

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Theresa will give updates during her report to the Board.

**5. Developmental Programs Committee Report (Susanna Tomlinson)**

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Susanna reported that the Developmental Programs Committee has been having guest speakers give presentations at their meetings. Monica Miller, Regional Director of CARES of Central PA, was the most recent speaker.

## 8. County Reports

### *Social Services Executive Director – James Hudack*

- Jim reported the 2022/2023 DSS Human Services Block Grant Annual Plan was approved by the State without any revision requests, making that approval the first, without revisions, in Jim's twelve years with DSS.
- Due to the delays from the State, the Income & Expense (I&E) report, which is normally submitted by the end of October, will probably have a submission date sometime in January 2023.
- DSS will have retained funds. Projects have been chosen for those funds to be reallocated to.
- Jim reported that the State vote on the 100 million dollars, to be distributed throughout the Commonwealth, is on hold until the new Legislators take office. Some of funding, which will be a one-time payment, will be distributed to the county level.

### *MH/COD –Theresa Rudy*

- Theresa stated that the Mental Health (MH) Safety Net has been advocating for a cost of living increase and restoration of the 10% MH budget cut from 2012.
- Theresa added that Western Behavioral of the Alleghenies had to make some hard choices in the past two years by closing their children/adolescent and adult partial hospitalization programs. UPMC closed its family based MH service. Tyler Hall had to close due to not being able to afford the cost of repairs.
- Theresa reported to help providers sustain core services, Blair HealthChoices increased their rates for outpatient psychiatric clinic and other services.
- Theresa provided updates of the Community Mental Health Service Block Grant (CMHSBG) in the annual board report. That funding helped expand the Student Assistance Program (SAP) and Mobile Crisis. Those funds will run out in March or April of 2023. Theresa is working on a sustainability program, especially for SAP.
- Theresa reminded the Board that the Crisis Center opened in its new location. As of now, walk-in hours are 8:00 am – 8:00 pm until staffing is increased. Mobile crisis and telephone service are still 24/7 year round. Anyone who would like to tour the new facility should call ahead.

### *Mental Health – Tracy Fitzpatrick*

- Tracy stated that Ginny Christy, new MH Program Specialist, is a nice complement to the DSS staff.
- Tracy is working on expanding the Emergency Behavioral Health (EBH) program, as well as the Stepping Up Initiative and Forensic Reentry Coalition.
- Ginny will be cross trained by learning some of Cindy James duties as CASSP Coordinator.

### *Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon*

- Melissa reported SASMG has a new provider, Applied Counseling and Consulting Services (ACCS). ACCS will provide Employment, Behavior Support, Community and Companion services. The Regional Director is local, but the company itself is not.
- SASMG and its thirty plus providers are meeting with Chris Farrell, Penn Highlands Community College Director, to discuss offering a Direct Support Professional (DSP) program that is tailored to the needs of SASMG providers. Currently, Penn Highlands offers a DSP program, but it doesn't cover all of what the Office of Developmental Programs (OPD) requires.
- Melissa announced that SASMG is adding a new position: Community Coordinator Project Manager. This person will be more involved in the community.

### *Early Intervention – Kelly Popich*

- Kelly talked about some of the highlights in the EI section of the annual board report. On the pie graph located on page 35, the blue shaded area should read 351, not 426.
- EI referrals, eligibility and family follow through has increased.
- EI has changed using independent evaluators, for annuals, as of the new fiscal year.
- EI uses the Request for Proposals (RFP) database for referrals for families who have no preference for service providers. In January, EI will use this system for all services to be able to track easier.
- EI data results were listed in the agenda packet.
- Annual EI provider monitoring has started.

- This year, EI Child Find Efforts involved reaching out to Children, Youth and Families (CYF), Pregnancy Care Clinic and hospitals about a referrals/referral process.

#### *Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator – Missy Gillin*

- Missy stated that the Emergency Rental Assistance Program 2 (ERAP 2) is ongoing with approximately 1,900 applications being processed by Center for Community Action. The funding is to last through 2025, but it is predicted to run out by the end of 2023.
- Family Services’ Emergency Shelter opening is now delayed until mid to late December 2022.
- Four applicants applied for The Affordable Housing Trust Fund “AHTF” Sustainable Housing Program. The AHTF Board members approved two applications to present to the Commissioners. Those projects, located in Claysburg (Greenfield Township) and Tyrone, were approved by the Commissioners.
- Missy reported that another group taking hold in the area is HOPE for the Homeless. This group is meeting to discuss ways to help the area homeless. Since the HOPE Drop-In Center has been seeing a lot of the homeless population, they will be the host of this initiative.

### **9. Ex-Officio Reports**

#### *CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay*

- A report was included in the packet.
- Erin Kay reported that total calls for October 2022 were 2,212.
- Over the past 4 months, CONTACT Altoona only had 1 missed shift.
- 3 new volunteers completed Fall training.
- CONTACT Altoona only has two staff members, Erin Kay as the full-time Executive Director and a part-time Administrative Assistant.
- Erin presented at the Blind Association and AMBUCS.
- 12 Days of CONTACT Christmas fundraiser is currently going on.

#### *NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) – Aimee Burns*

- A report was included in the agenda packet.

#### *The Arc – Maria Brandt*

- Maria is planning Spring trainings.
- The ARC is doing a series of cooking classes.
- The ARC has a waiting list.

#### *ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager*

- Lorrie reported that the Quality and Risk Management teams are thinking of consolidating the groups. They will meet monthly for a longer period of time. This may help time and resources. It will take coordination outside of this meeting for subgroups to meet and work on projects.
- Lorrie will email Jen the Health Care Quality Unit (HCQU) newsletter for her to forward out to everyone.

#### *Blair HealthChoices/Community Cares – Amy Marten-Shanafelt*

- Amy was not in attendance.

#### Open Forum:

- Steve Martynuska, Chairperson, presented Jim Hudack with a Certificate of Recognition for his twelve years of service with the Department of Social Services.

**The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA (Formerly 120 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg)**

**The next Mental Health Committee meeting will be held on January 5, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Blair HealthChoices, 81 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg, PA (Formerly 120 Holliday Hills Drive, Hollidaysburg)**

**The next Developmental Programs Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting**