

**The Blair County Department of Social Services  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, June 2, 2022 at 11:30 AM  
BlueJeans Conference Line Only**

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

**Board Members Absent:** T. Grant Phillips, Mike Stubler, Commissioner Erb and Amber Hatfield

**Others Present:** Theresa Rudy, Jamie Henry, Melissa Gordon, Kelly Popich, Aimee Burns, Erin Kay, Maria Brandt and Jennifer Kensinger

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*MINUTES*

**Welcome and Call to Order**

- Steve Martynuska gave a “shout out” to board member, Matt Dumm and his wife for organizing an afterglow party at Lakemont Park for Altoona High School seniors.

**1. Public Comment**

- No public comments were received.

**2. Approval of April 7, 2022 Minutes**

- *Motion by Bob Smith to accept the April 7, 2022 minutes. Susanna Tomlinson seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.*

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

- No updates
- Steve reported that on April 12, he signed a letter of support, in regards to HRSA funding being used for a proposed EmPATH Unit at UPMC Altoona. The Social Services Advisory Board approved the letter of support at the April 7, 2022 board meeting. The letter was sent to Congressman John Joyce. Theresa is to check with Tim Balconi (UPMC Foundation) for any updates. Also, Theresa asked Jen to email a copy of the letter out to all advisory board members.

**4. Mental Health Committee Report – Theresa Rudy**

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Theresa stated that May was MH month. A few MH events were held: “Light It Up Green” and a MH Awareness night was held at the Altoona Curve on May 21.
- The Altoona Mirror, also, featured an article the MH Awareness events.
- Theresa also gave a “shout out” to the County Commissioners. The County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) has made appropriate funding for mental health a priority for 2022.

**5. Developmental Programs Committee Report – Susanna Tomlinson**

- A report was included with the agenda packet.
- Susanna pointed out that the Blair County ID system supports nearly 800 people.
- SASMG continues to monitor staffing issues. Four Residential providers have had to consolidate several homes due to the lack of staff.
- 2022/2023 contract process has begun.

**8. County Reports**

*Social Services Executive Director – Theresa Rudy*

- A Legislative Breakfast was held Friday, May 13, 2022.
- The guidelines for the 2022/2023 Human Services Block Grant (HSBG) have not been released yet.

### *MH/COD –Theresa Rudy*

- Theresa reported that Social Services’ Fiscal Officer, Lindsay Dempsie, resigned in May 2022. Jean Cupp, Fiscal Specialist, is taking on several of the Fiscal Officer duties. Interviews are being conducted to fill that vacant position.
- Melissa Gillin, Quality Assurance & Housing Coordinator, is currently on medical leave.
- Theresa sent out 60-day contract amendments for 16 Social Services contracts.
- Ken Dean, Social Services Mental Health Program Specialist, will be retiring the beginning of July 2022. Social Services will be looking to hire two program specialists, due to added job responsibilities.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing for the HSBG Annual Plan was held Wednesday, June 1, 2022. The 2nd Public Hearing will be Wednesday, July 6, 2022 at 1:00 pm at the H.O.P.E. Drop-In.
- Theresa hosted a successful Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training last month. 21 people attended. CISM training will resume in September 2022.

### *Mental Health – Ken Dean*

- Ken was not in attendance.
- Steve extended a ‘thank you’, from the Board, for Ken’s many years of service dedicated to Blair County residents.

### *Intellectual Disabilities – Melissa Gordon*

- A report was included in the packet.
- Melissa reported that SASMG is updating their Quality Management (QM) Plan.
  - Focuses are:
    - Transition age youth
    - Communication with families and stakeholders
    - Services rendered to meet the definition outlined by the Office of Development Disabilities (ODP)
- SASMG is contracting out investigations with Advocacy Alliance. This will alleviate some of the workload for SASMG staff.
- Melissa reported that eight providers needed requalified. The providers successfully completed the requalification process and can continue services in Blair County.
- SASMG’s Summer Employment Initiative had one provider response from The Learning Community. They were awarded that opportunity.

### *Early Intervention – Kelly Popich*

- A report was included in the packet.
- Kelly reported that EI received three assessment tools purchased by the State. Two copies (1 each) will go to EI evaluators. Also, there is an additional social-emotional assessment tool.
- EI’s Family Survey return rate sits at 26.89%, which surpasses the 25% requirement. The survey closes on June 30, 2022. Incentives are being offered to staff and families.
- Child Find referrals are up. EI received 440 referrals through May 31. March, alone, saw 56 referrals. Last fiscal year saw a total of 445 referrals.
- EI is, also, going through the 2022/2023 contract process. Two providers are having issues with insurance requirements.
- Week of the Young Child was rescheduled for May 7 to May 21 due to the weather.
- EI has a Behavioral Health training, which was opened up to Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC), preschool partners, and EI provider staff. It is a two-day training, consisting of 3 hours each day. The training takes place on June 7 and is focused on behaviors and autism.

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

- Missy was not in attendance.

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

### *CONTACT Altoona – Erin Kay*

- A report was included in the packet.
- Erin reported that the April 30 edition of the Altoona Mirror featured an article on a CONTACT Altoona volunteer.
- Erin and CONTACT Altoona were featured in the Altoona Mirror on May 23 for the Non-Profit Spotlight.
- CONTACT Altoona will have a kids' game table at the Duncansville Community Days in mid-July, as well as, Hollidaysburg's PumpkinFest in October.
- CONTACT Altoona's annual volunteer recognition dinner will coincide with CONTACT Altoona's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 1. The Mayor of Altoona will proclaim September 1 as "CONTACT Altoona Day".
- In November/December 2022, CONTACT Altoona will, once again, have its 12 Days of CONTACT Christmas fundraiser.
- Three volunteers participated in Spring training and are, currently, in apprenticeship.
- COVID calls are nearly non-existent.

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

- A report was included in the agenda packet.
- Aimee has been asked to speak at a couple support groups about NAMI.
- NAMI membership is increasing.
- NAMI is looking for program facilitators. A list can be found in the agenda packet.
- Overflow Church donated a tracking system to aid with the NAMI lending library.
- NAMI is discussing strategies on how to get into more schools (Altoona, Tyrone & Bellwood) to present "In Our Own Voice" and "Ending the Silence" programs. "Ending the Silence" will also have a virtual option.
- Aimee is looking forward to learning more about an early intervention mental health coloring and activity book called, "Meet Little Monster".

### *The Arc – Maria Brandt*

- Maria was contacted by the State to conduct Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST) training, which is basically planning for disasters and emergencies. The training will be held in July. Focus will be on shelters.
- Also, the ARC will be having another activity involving power tools in July. Maria will get the word out, if she needs items donated for that project.

### *ID Providers – Lorrie Hetager*

- Lorrie was not in attendance.

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

- Amy was not in attendance.

### Open Forum:

- Theresa stated, perhaps, another public comment period should be added to the agenda, prior to the close of the meeting. Steve suggested asking Jim Hudack about that recommendation.

**The next Social Services Advisory Board meeting will be held on Thursday, August, 4, 2022 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 September 1, 2022 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, September 1, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. at SASMG training room, 157 Lakemont Park Blvd. or Virtual Meeting**