



Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services

2 Oak Street • Norwalk, Ohio 44857 • 419-681-6268

Huron County MHAS Advisory Committee Meeting Notes - April 3, 2024

Attendees: Ashley Morrow, Tim Hollinger, Nicole Marks, Dave Ditz, Deanna England, Bree Mantz, Nicole Klimas-Morris, Sue Wilson, Roger Wilkenson, Kari Smith, Lauren Robinson, Lindsey Ingram, Julie Landoll, Kim Eberle, Troy Wetzal, Cari Williamson, Kristen Kaple-Jones, Kristen Cardone, Mary Valentine

The purpose of this meeting is to inform our contracted agencies, community partners, and community members that the MHAS Board's levy will be going on the ballot in Spring of 2025 for either a renewal, replacement or increase in levy funds. The decision regarding what direction to go with our levy needs to be driven by our community partners and community, since they are the ones who are affected and who serve the behavioral health population. The Board is seeking feedback as to what you would like us to do.

This is the first levy for Board staff, any guidance is appreciated. The Board has formed a Levy Committee, which will meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month starting in May.

Kristen reviewed the levy overview handout explaining that the \$584,000.00 that is currently received in levy funding is only approximately 18% of the Board's overall budget. Most funds come from OhioMHAS through state and federal funds with some grants. The challenge is the state has not increased their allocations in years. Last year, Kristen requested all the current contracted agencies to submit a 10-year budget plan detailing funding needed to sustain services over that time frame. The amount needed to sustain services increases by \$670,000, meaning the Board needs to collect approximately \$1.25 million from its levy to sustain current services being provided, not including any additional services.

- The Board has been funding the agencies with a flat funding amount for the past couple of years.
- Every dollar received is being allocated.

Increase, renewal, or replacement of the levy.

- There has been a lot of push back to say no to increases.
- A renewal would increase the levy amount approximately \$100,000. This would not be a significant increase in tax amount to homeowners, however, this will also not help us sustain services.

Strategies:

- Put levy on as quickly as possible, giving as many chances to pass as possible.
 - The Board has decided to have their first attempt be Spring 2025.
- Look at the programs that are being funded by levy and analyze the right time to put on the levy.
- The Board requests contracted agencies to attend levy committee meetings and encourages them to help with campaigning.
- When campaigning, explain how much of the levy funds are being given back to the community and what those funds are being used for.
- Look at the communities that have voted against the levy in the past, focus on those communities.
 - Willard-3, North Fairfield, New London, and Greenwich were the largest areas that voted no in 2014.
- Look to other Mental Health Boards for levy guidance.
- Meeting with local politicians and stakeholders to ensure they understand what the MHAS Board does and ask for their support.
 - The Board has and will continue to inform community members about who MHAS is and what behavioral health services are available in the county.



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- Understanding that everyone's perception is different than reality and to work off their perception.
- Explaining that MHAS services are available 24/7.
- Crisis services should not be tied with the hospital or law enforcement. Many people perceive that they already receive too much money.
- Visibility is a key to a successful levy. Campaigning should start two years before the levy is on the ballot.
 - The Board has billboards, Facebook posts, and attends many events to help the community know what services are available.
- Ensuring the wording on the ballot is easy to read and comprehend.

Greatest needs and/or challenges:

- Transportation
 - A concern with this is that the Commissioners already have their program, and the community may see this as duplicating funding for services.
- Housing
 - Could be very beneficial and give a higher probability of passing.
 - MHAS Board can only fund certain behavioral health housing.
- Youth
 - Explaining the prevention process and that the treatment and recovery services will still be available but if we can prevent behavioral health issues from occurring then there will not be the higher need for treatment and recovery services.
- School services
 - Educating the community about the difference between school levies and MHAS levy. What value MHAS levy can add to the schools.
- Waitlist
 - This can apply to hospitals also. The ability to have a crisis team report to the hospital will help with the wait time in the Emergency Department.
- Outside Funding
 - The Board is continuously attempting to secure funding from other sources such as grants.

Ms. Cardone shared that going forward there will be monthly meetings and she strongly encourages someone from agencies to attend. The levy affects each agency, so their continued feedback would be greatly appreciated.