

Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities
2606 Brady Lake Road
Ravenna, Ohio 44266

January 21, 2026
Regular Meeting
Via TEAMS and open to in-person attendance
Beverly J. Puleo Board Room
Happy Day Services Building

MINUTES

Michelle Sahr, President, called the regular meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Knights of Columbus Basketball Shoot Out Participants and Board Members and those in attendance

Board Members present by Roll Call:

Kelly Butler, Babette Cameron, Thomas Grist, Maureen Haska, Christina Krister, Michelle Sahr, William Tarver

A quorum is present.

Administrative Staff Present

J. Vennetti, Supt., T. Beatty, J. Derthick, absent, L. Leslie, G. Slapnicker, G. Gabriel, Vince Valerio, M. Dolensky.

Staff/Guests:

Please note: those noted *via teams* were identified through streaming through *TEAMS* as an attendee

Public Comment: none at this time

Adopted a motion to approve minutes from the Regular Meeting held via 'Teams' and in-person December 17, 2025.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by T. Grist

Motion carried by voice vote.

Motioned to approve the agenda for January 21, 2026, Regular Meeting.

Motion by T. Grist

Second by K. Butler

Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion for the Ratification of the December 2025 Invoice Payments and Financial Reports as authorized by the Superintendent.

Motion by M. Haska

Second by W. Tarver

Motion carried by voice vote.

Board committee report: Finance/HR Committee met prior to this board meeting. There will be an executive session in February 2026.

Motion to approval Resolution 26-01-01 for approval of gifts, memorials, grants and donations for the month of December 2025.

RESOLUTION 26-01-01

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, MEMORIALS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2025

WHEREAS, the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities has received, gifts, memorials, grants and donations during the month of December 2025

To:	From:	
Board of DD	Cheri Michael Mileage Reimbursement	\$229.44
	Jennifer Williams, toy donation to children in need	
	Total	\$229.44

WHEREAS, Board Policy 1.17 requires that all gifts, memorials and donations valued at more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) be reported to the Board at each regular meeting; and

WHEREAS, Policy 1.17 further requires the Board to accept or reject such gifts, memorials, donations, and grants by resolution with a roll call; now; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities accepts with appreciation the aforementioned named gifts, memorials, grants and donations

Submitted by: John Vennetti, Superintendent, Tara Beatty, Director Business Management

The resolution was moved by **Maureen Haska** and seconded by **William Tarver**

It is found and determined that all formal actions of the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities concerning and relative to the adoption of this resolution were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The aforesaid resolution having been put to a roll call vote, the result of which is as follows:

Kelly Butler, aye
Thomas Grist, aye
Michelle Sahr, aye

Babette Cameron, aye
Christina Krister, aye
William Tarver, aye

Maureen Haska, aye

CERTIFICATION

I, Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, for the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities, do hereby certify that the aforesaid motion was duly adopted at a regular meeting held on **January 21, 2026** and an accurate copy of said resolution may be located in the official minutes of the Board.



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Motion to approval Resolution 25-12-02 for acceptance of gifts, memorials, grants and donations for the Month of November in the amount of \$2,029.33 from the Aurora One Fund, second payment

RESOLUTION 26-01-02

REQUEST TO MODIFY THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 APPROPRIATION BUDGET AS APPROVED BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PER RESOLUTION 25-04-01.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code (hereinafter ORC) §5126.05(A)(5), the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities hereinafter Board) shall adopt a budget, authorize expenditures for the purposes specified in chapter 5126, and do so in accordance with §319.16 of the ORC; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent and the Director of Business Management herein request that the Board authorize the modification of the fiscal year 2026 appropriation budget due to revised expenditure projections; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board does hereby approve and authorize a modification to the Fiscal Year 2026

Appropriation Budget by an increase in the amount three million, six hundred seven thousand, three hundred ninety-eight dollars; \$3,607,398.00, with the modified amounts shown in the table below for a total Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriation Budget amount of twenty-eight million, three hundred twenty-two thousand, three hundred twenty dollars; \$28,322,320.00; and be it further

Account Number	Description	Budget	Modification	Budget Amount
Fund 1340	<i>DD Operating Fund</i>	\$24,704,922.00	\$3,599,898.00	\$28,304,820.00
Fund 8104	<i>Gift/Donation Fund</i>	\$10,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$17,500.00
	TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$24,714,922.00	\$3,607,398.00	\$28,322,320.00

RESOLVED, that the Board herein requests that the Portage County Budget Commission so modify the county funds as detailed in this table; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in accordance with ORC § 319.16 and 5126.0220, the Board hereby authorizes the Superintendent to direct the Portage County Auditor to encumber funds and pay Board obligations in accordance with the Board’s approved Appropriation Budget as detailed in this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby gives the Superintendent the authority to modify appropriation line items within any of the modified fund accounts listed in the Table above during fiscal year 2025 as revenues and needs change.

Submitted by: John Vennetti, Superintendent, & Tara Beatty, Director of Business Management

The resolution was moved by **William Tarver** and seconded by **Kelly Butler**

It is found and determined that all formal actions of the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities concerning and relative to the adoption of this resolution were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The aforesaid resolution having been put to a roll call vote, the result of which is as follows:

Kelly Butler, aye
 Maureen Haska, aye
 Babette Cameron, aye

Michelle Sahr, aye
 Christina Krister, aye
 William Tarver, aye

Tom Grist, aye

CERTIFICATION

I, Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, for the Portage county Board of Developmental Disabilities, do hereby certify that the aforesaid motion was duly adopted at a regular meeting held on **January 21, 2026**, and an accurate copy of said resolution may be located in the official minutes of the Board.



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

The following Management Reports were sent via e-mail to Board; no verbal reports were given at meeting. The reports are included herein:

Community and Provider Relations: Michelle Dolensky, Director

Board Report:
Manager: Michelle R. Dolensky
Department: CPR
Date: 1/21/2026

Board Report:

1. Provider Relations/Support:

- a. DD Awareness Month 2026. Art Nights 2/3 5pm at Jakes in Mantua, 2/10 5pm at Happy Day Services Building, 2/16 5pm & 7pm at Kent Free Library, 2/23 at 6pm Reed Memorial Library, 3/2 at 4pm Pierce Streetsboro Library. Art on display the month of April. Art show 4/28 4:30pm-8pm. Transition Fair 3/7, Dance/Silent Disco 3/10, Hike Club 3/12 & 3/23, Movie Nights at Ravenna 7 on 3/12 & 4/6.
- b. Cardio Drumming held on 12/15. In 2026, scheduled for the 2nd Monday of each month at 5:30pm
- c. 48th Annual Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest held on 1/10/26 at EPIC. Had great participant and spectator attendance.
- d. Advocacy: December meeting had 19 participants. January's meeting topic: The Oasis Moment: Starting the Year with a Calm Mind
- e. DSP-U: 48 students are on track to graduate this spring. Currently there are 16 students employed in the community who are DSP-U grads.
- f. Accessibility Workgroup: recommended accessible art tools and an adjustable table for Art Nights which have been purchased.
- g. Met with the District Outreach Representative for David Joyce. We discussed Portage DD services and toured the Happy Day Services Building.
- h. Nursing video series, editing video into a series of 1-2 minute segments to be shared on social media and in nursing classes. One segment posted to Facebook and people responded to discuss home health nursing opportunities for persons served by Portage DD.
- i. Working on Nursing collaboration this spring with KSU to present on home health nursing and developing a shadowing program for students.
- j. Therapeutic Foster Care Project with JFS. Two providers have received training and are moving forward in the process.

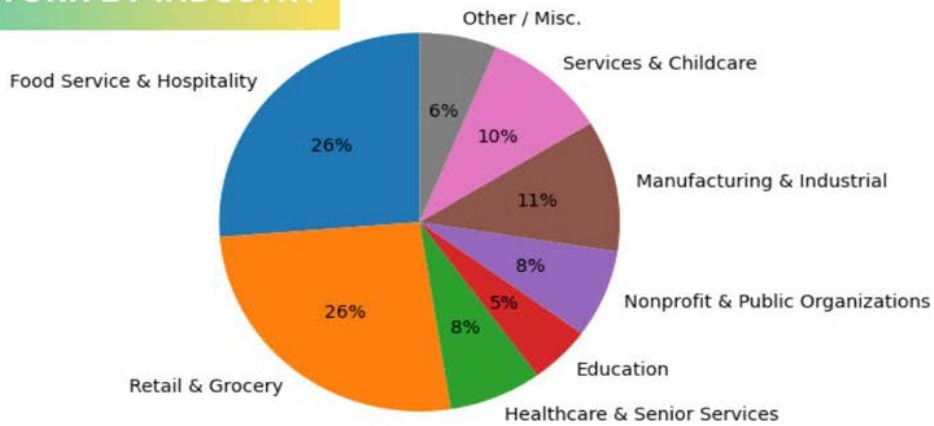
2. Special Olympics:

- a. Winter Sports: **Swim**-9 Athletes; Cheer, two Squads-**Club**– 15 Athletes, **Competitive**-12 Athletes; **Basketball** – two teams, **Unified** – 4 Athletes and 6 Unified partners and **Blue Team** – 9 Athletes (1 injury), **Skills** – 13 Athletes
- b. Fundraisers: ACME Community Cash Back collecting receipts now through February 15, 2026 and Cleveland Polar Plunge – will be participating in Cleveland on February 28th. To donate: <http://support.soo.org/goto/portagethunderchill>

3. Community Employment:

- a. 138 people employed in the community
- b. Employment First Business Engagement Advisory Group met and they are working on expanding the employment collaborative model across the state.
- c. Individuals supported by Portage DD have an average tenure at their job of 4.9 years which is one year longer than the national average of 3.9 years. 27 new jobs started in 2025.

WHERE PEOPLE WORK BY INDUSTRY



4. Nursing:

- a. New training for nurses (Independent Providers)
- b. Taking appointments for folks to receive formal wear for Night to Shine
- c. Jennifer Dippel becoming re-certified as an Investigative Agent to assist the IA department

Manager: George Gabriel
 Department: Service & Support Administration
 Date: 1/14/2026

Board Report:

-Buckeye Residential Facility Respite Program will continue for this year. Contract has been agreed to and signed.
 -The SSA Non-Waiver Service and Response caseload continues to be going very well, the caseload continues to grow to approximately 260 cases and our SSA is managing the contact requests very well. We have moved cases back and forth with our SSA only staff. Hopefully

this will allow us to serve more people in the Non- Waiver area that only need minimal contacts. This may be an option for us to continue to maximize our services in the SSA Department.

- SSA Intake continues to be very busy with referrals for services. This includes Redeterminations and County Transfers and Re-Opens. Several cases have been closed however due to lack of follow through from the families.
- Our department is preparing for the change over from the legacy MSS system to the new system. Gary Smith and Rachel France are a vital part of this conversion.
- The Youth Respite Facility program continues to do well and is a successful program. Many children are attending now and having wonderful experiences in the facility-based program. We currently have 57 children that are enrolled and receive services.
- PCBDD continues to be a leader in the State for Remote Support and Assistive technology. Our SSAs, Envisage and our own Tech Department have done an amazing job with our Tech Home. We continue to get many tours and interest in Technology from our tours. A Tech Ambassador will be visiting our County next month to do a presentation for our SSA's and to tour our Tech Home.
- Continue to provide Provider Support for Billing issues and training. This service has proven to be invaluable for providers and the Board.
- Continue to schedule meetings with Portage County JFS and MHRB leadership to improve joint services we provide to Individuals and families.
- We continue to discuss with JFS a program to assist them with developing potential Therapeutic Foster Homes for children utilizing some of our DODD certified providers. We currently have some participants receiving training.
- I have assumed the SSA Director duties as of 1/5/26. All PCBDD staff and management have been extremely helpful, patient, and supportive with my transition and I am very grateful to them. Desiree Natase started her new position as SSA supervisor effective 1/1/26. Her training has started as she is doing extremely well.
- Ashley Carocci started her position as a SSA effective 1/5/26. She replaced Desiree Natase's spot. Ashley is doing a great job and has hit the ground running.
- Shane Kuberry, SSA, resigned effective 1/1/26. Interviews were held on 1/6 and 1/8/26. Jamie Miller accepted our offer and is projected to start as our new SSA effective 2/2/26. Jamie comes to us with several years of experience.
- SSA supervisors and I continue to meet regularly to discuss the temporary need to adjust caseloads until our SSA staff is back to its' capacity and trained.
- SSA supervisors and I have been meeting regularly to "keep up with" the ongoing and frequent changes from DODD. Some include: switchover to the new MSS system, assistive tech/remote support tech rule, InterRai, Overtime requests, and more. SSA supervisors and Medicaid managers have been terrific.
- Developing department goals for 2026 to include: preparation for InterRai, preparation for 2027 Accreditation, need for leases to be included with the OISP, ongoing discussions with Team members regarding Assessed needs vs. Wants, closer look at PA's, individual living situations, and overtime requests, and increased communication.
- Providing trainings to department staff: On Seen, Tableau, OISP,s, difficult conversations,

ODDP, technology, Employment, Docuware, and more.

-Preparing for the first appeal on 1/26/26 involving a reduction of staffing being challenged.

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Department: Superintendent

Date: 1/21/2026

Board Report:

1. Annual Board Trainings- We will again need to do 4 Board trainings. We have the 5-year projection in May and AI in September. We still need to decide on the topics for April and June.
2. Sustainability- OACB and the Superintendents are working on funding the future sustainability model for County Boards. The plan is to have a comprehensive plan within the next 6 months. We met on Friday December 12th, we met regionally (Northeast Ohio Region) on 1-16-26, and will meet again on 1-23-26 (all the Superintendents) to request some significant changes to the system.
3. Executive session- We will have an executive session in February to discuss negotiations.
4. Unit B Negotiations (SSA Department)- They will probably start in April.
5. Appeals hearing Jan 26th- This is with the Bureau of State Hearings.
6. People for Portage DD (Levy Committee)- Met with them on 1-15-26 and discussed our current increase in enrollment and waivers over the last three years and the possibility of a new levy in the future.

Actions for December 2025:

As of December , there were 91 employees including six (6) intermittent positions and no vacancies

Positions Added/Abolished:

Job Postings/Vacancies:

Substitute Lifeguard (Happy Day Services)

Substitute Vehicle Operator (Transportation), November 18, 2020 until filled, Vacant

Speech-Language Pathologist (Part-time_ 240 days, 21 hrs/week (Happy Day Services)

SSA Supervisor, 260 days, 40 hrs/week (Service & Support Administration)

Service & Support Administrator, 240 days, 7.5 hours/day (Service & Support Administration)

Supplemental Positions:

All Supplemental Positions

New Hires:

Promotions/Transfers:

Reclassifications:

Additional Assignments:

Supplemental Agreements:

Separations:

Geneva Eldrige, Intern (Administration)

Tracy Moore, Senior Investigative Agent, 262 Days, 8 hours/day (Administration)

Susan Orr, Substitute LPN (Community & Provider Relations)

Retirements:

December 2025 Enrollment Report with beginning enrollment of 1,400 in and an ending enrollment of 1387, an increase of 25 and minus 38.

The President announced the next regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 starting at 5:00 p.m.

The President asked if any other business needed to come before the Board. There being none, she called for a motion for adjournment at 5:34 pm.

Motion by B. Cameron

Second by T. Grist

Motion carried by voice vote.

I N F O R M A T I O N

L.E.A.P Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Tuesday of the Month 10:00am – 11:00am

Location: Reed Memorial Library (Jenkins Room) – 167 East Main Street Ravenna, 44266

Special Olympics

Basketball

November 13th 6:00pm Thunder Blue @ Medina Location: 4691 Windfall Rd. Medina, 44256

November 20th vs. Murray Ridge Raiders Thunder Blue 6:00pm / Thunder Unified 7:15pm

Location: 575 E. Lake St. Ravenna, 44266

December 2nd 6:00pm Thunder Blue @ Lake DD Location: 8090 Broadmoor Rd. Mentor, 44060

December 3rd 6:00pm Thunder Unified @ Mahoning DD Location: 4801 Woodridge Dr. Youngstown, 44515

December 11th vs. Stark DD

Thunder Blue 6:00pm / Thunder Unified 7:15pm Location: 575 E. Lake St. Ravenna, 44266

December 17th 6:00 Thunder Blue @ Geauga DD Location: 8200 Cedar Rd. Chesterland, 44026

December 20th 12:00pm - Thunder Unified @ Tuscarawas Invite Basketball Tournament
Location: 140 N. Bodmer Ave. Strasburg, 44680

Save the Date

January 10, 2026 11:30am - 1:30pm Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest
Location: 575 E. Lake St. Ravenna, 44266

Fundraisers

Acme Community Cash Back — Collecting Receipts now – February 15, 2026 (receipts can be from any Acme store)

Cleveland Polar Plunge - February 28, 2026

Visit <http://support.soo.org/goto/portagethunderchill> to join our plunge team and/or donate.
Event Location: Edgewater Beach House -7600 Cleveland Memorial Shoreway Cleveland, 44102
Schedule of Events:
12:15 PM - Opening Ceremonies; fundraising awards and costume contest ~12:45 PM - Plunging Begins

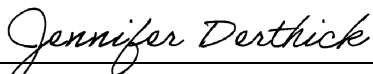
Cardio Drumming

3rd Monday of the month - 5:30pm Happy Day Services, 2500 Brady Lake Rd. Ravenna, 44266
Please rsvp by emailing events@portagedd.org

Check out the Portage DD Facebook page access for above events and for updates and other events!

<https://www.facebook.com/PortageSpecialOlympics>

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent



Michelle Sahr, President



Maureen Haska, Secretary