

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

February 18, 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 5:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the 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, L. Leslie, G. Slapnicker, G. Gabriel, Vince Valerio, M. Dolensky via teams, Juanita Greenward

Staff/Guests: Jamie Miller, Desiree Nastase, Tim Torch

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

Public Comment: none at this time

Katrina Kahout introduced the February DSP of the Month, Jessica Slusher from Hiram Farm and Community Living. Darren Helk, Director, accepted upon her behalf.

Geroge Gabriel introduced Ashley Carocci, SSA, Jamie Miller, SSA, Desiree Nastase, SSA Supervisor. Desiree and Jamie then told about themselves to the Board.

Adopted a motion to approve the minutes from the Organization Meeting held via 'Teams' and in-person January 21, 2026

Motion by K. Butler

Second by T. Grist

Motion carried by voice vote.

Adopted a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held via 'Teams' and in-person

January 21, 2026.

Motion by M. Haska

Second by T. Grist

Motion carried by voice vote

Motioned to approve the agenda for February 18, 2026, Regular Meeting.

Motion by B. Cameron

Second by T. Grist

Motion carried by voice vote.

Motion for the Ratification of the January 2026 Invoice Payments and Financial Reports as authorized by the Superintendent.

Motion by T. Grist

Second by W. Tarver

Motion carried by voice vote.

Board committee report: No Committee Meetings Held.

Motion to approval Resolution 26-02-01 for request to modify the Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriation Budget as approved by the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities per Resolution 26-01-02.

RESOLUTION 26-02-01

REQUEST TO MODIFY THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 APPROPRIATION BUDGET AS APPROVED BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PER RESOLUTION 26-01-02.

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 decrease in the amount fifteen hundred, \$1,500.00 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 thousand, eight hundred twenty dollars; \$28,320,820.00; and be it further

Account Number	Description	Budget	Modification	Budget Amount
Fund 1340	<i>DD Operating Fund</i>	\$28,304,820.00	\$0.00	\$28,304,820.00
Fund 8104	<i>Gift/Donation Fund</i>	\$17,500.00	(\$1,500.00)	\$16,000.00
	TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$28,322,320.00	(\$1,500.00)	\$28,320,820.00

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 2026 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 **Maureen Haska**

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

Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Motion to approval Resolution 26-02-02 for approval to enter into a contract with the Akron Area YMCA/Rotary Camp, 501(c)3 Not for Profit Corporation, 4460 Rex Lake Dr., Akron, OH 44319 for the operation of a summer recreation camp at Happy Day Services Building for the period of June 1, 2026 through July 31, 2026 in an amount not to exceed one hundred forty-one thousand, one hundred twenty dollars \$141,120.00.

RESOLUTION 26-02-02

APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE AKRON AREA YMCA/ROTARY CAMP, 501(C) NOT FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION, 4460 REX LAKE DRIVE, AKRON, OH 44319 FOR THE OPERATION OF A SUMMER RECREATION CAMP AT HAPPY DAY SERVICES BUILDING FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 1, 2026 THROUGH JULY 31, 2026 IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED ONE HUNDRED FORTY-ONE THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED TWENTY DOLLARS; \$141,120.00.

WHEREAS, the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities (hereinafter Board) is desirous of providing the opportunity for a summer recreation day camp for children eligible for Board services at Happy Day Services Building; and

WHEREAS, monies have been budgeted in Fund 1340 of the 2026 Appropriations Budget for the provision of the 2026 Summer Recreation Day Camp Program; and

WHEREAS, the Akron Area YMCA/Rotary Camp, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, 4460 Rex Lake Drive, Akron, OH 44319 (hereinafter Provider), has operated a very successful day camp program for the Board since 2010, and is desirous of again entering into an agreement with the Board for the operation of a summer recreation program at Happy Day Services Building; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby approves and authorizes the Superintendent to enter into a contract with the Provider for the operation of a summer recreation camp at Happy Day Services Building for the period of June 1, 2026 through July 31, 2026 serving up to forty-eight (48) Board-eligible children per week at four hundred twenty dollars; \$420.00 per week in an amount not to exceed one hundred forty-one thousand, one hundred twenty dollars, \$141,120.00; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Superintendent or his/her designee is hereby authorized to take any and all actions to carry out this resolution.

Submitted by: John Vennetti, Superintendent; Vincent Valerio, Director of Education and Child

Development; and 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

Thomas 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 **February 18, 2026** and an accurate copy of said resolution may be located in the official minutes of the Board.

Jennifer Derthick

Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Proclamation to the Knights of Columbus Bowling Invitational to recognize thirty-five (35) years of sponsoring the Annual Bowling Invitational April 18, 2026 at Spins Bowl, Kent Ohio.

Motion by M. Haska
Second by T. Grist
Motion carried by voice vote.

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:

Manager: Michelle R. Dolensky
Department: CPR
Date: 2/18/2026

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 in the month of April. Art show 4/28 4:30pm-8pm. Bowling at Spins Bowl on 3/1, Statehouse Watch Party 3/4, Transition Fair 3/7, Dance/Silent Disco 3/10, Hike Club 3/23, 4/2 & 4/23, Movie Nights at Ravenna 7 on 3/12 & 4/6, Rally 3/27.
- b. Cardio Drumming held on 2/9.
- c. Advocacy: January meeting had 22 participants. February's meeting topic: DD Awareness Month activities.
- d. 47th Annual Knights of Columbus Free Throw Contest held on 1/10/26 at EPIC with 41 participants.
- e. Nursing staff needs: social media campaign currently underway to recruit. Working to create a video to be shown to independent provider nurses at their QARN reviews.
- f. DSP-U: students are currently interning with us for events, URR, Special Olympics, Hattie's, Kent Schools, Ravenna Schools, Leeda, Buckeye, Stow schools, and others. 4000+ unpaid direct service hours per year from DSPU students to people served in Portage. 48 students on track to graduate the program this spring. Currently there are about 16 students gainfully employed in the community who are DSP-U grads. Video on the program featuring Portage students made by Lighthouse Cove (OADSP) [Here is the video on our DSPU program from Lighthouse Cove.](#)
- g. Treatment Foster Care Project: 2 foster parents who are both independent providers for us have completed the training and are in the process of becoming approved to be treatment foster care providers locally. DCY, JFS, and DODD confirmed they can hold both certifications. This appears to be the first time this has happened in the state to their knowledge.
- h. Accessibility Workgroup: Accessible art equipment in place for upcoming art nights. Adjustable table, accessible art tools. Working with Brianna/OOD and Annie/Portage County Library on designing and installing communication boards at all the PCDL locations. They also are getting ready to introduce their sensory kits that will be available to borrow from all locations, also working with Brianna and the [DODD communication boards online](#) to get laminated boards in the pool, multipurpose room, entry, and life skills rooms at HDS. Also providing one for movie nights.
- i. Portage DD Informational Series: Will be offering 4 3-hour sessions over 2026 on two modules. Module 1: ISP/Effective Communication/Nursing and module 2 (Behavior Support/Empathy Based Care/Trauma Informed Care/MUI Q & A). Will count toward yearly provider annual training requirements.

2. Special Olympics:

- a. Winter Sports: Swim-9 Athletes; NE Regional meet scheduled for 1/25 cancelled due to weather. **Competitive Cheer**-10 Athletes competed at Rocket Cheer Invite on 2/1; Basketball – two teams, **Unified** – 4 Athletes and 3 Unified partners and **Blue Team** – 9 Athletes (1 injury), **Skills** – 13 Athletes competed at NE Regional Basketball Tournament on 2/7 & 2/8.
- b. Indoor State Winter Games 2/20 & 2/21 at OSU. Athletes competing: Competitive Cheer-10, Basketball Skills – 2 and Swim – 4, delegation total=23
- c. Fundraisers: ACME Community Cash Back collecting receipts dated 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. First Portage Employment Collaborative (PEC) held, working on new pamphlets
- c. Continuing to distinguish Inclusion decals to businesses
- d. OOD – watching closely for possible shutdown due to budget
- e. Employment First Business Engagement Advisory group met. Working on expanding the employment collaborative model across the state. Meeting again in March under new leadership. Kelly Shruck replacing Keith Banner (retired).
- f. Volunteer Fair April 9, Hiring Event April 30 and Transportation Fair May 7.

4. Nursing:

- a. Night to Shine over 15 ladies and 3 gentlemen have received formal wear to date
- b. New Independent Provider Nursing Visit Note ready to start soon.
- c. Jen Dippel completed DODD IA Training and is start to train internally with the two Investigative Agents.
- d.

Manager: George Gabriel

Department: Service & Support Administration

Date: 2/18/2026

Board Report:

- I have set up individual meetings with SSA department staff through March in an effort to determine their opinions on the positives within the department and ideas for improvement. Thirty-five meetings have been scheduled.
- SSA managers are discussing ways to maximize the services in our department due to the increase in the requests and allocation of waivers. We may need to do some restructuring but there is nothing definite at this time.
- SSA Intake continues to be very busy with referrals for services. This includes Redeterminations, County Transfers and Re-Opens. Several cases have been closed due to lack of follow-through from the families.
- Our department continues to prepare 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. Additional assistance will be provided from another department.
- 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.
- 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 two providers who are certified to provide services as a foster care provider and DODD provider.
- The SSA department is now fully staffed. Desiree Natase is the new SSA supervisor. We have two new SSA's: Ashley Carocci and Jamie Miller. The SSA's will both be assigned to work as behavior support SSA's and are in the training process.
- SSA staff are currently covering cases until Jamie Miller is ready to assume a caseload. Thank you to all SSA staff for their help and patience.
- InterRai is coming. This is a new assessment to determine funding levels for individuals on waivers. We have a SSA assigned to receive training in April and potentially do the pilot in May on assessing 12 individuals in our county. More to come.
- We Rock the Spectrum program will continue this year providing one event per month. PCBDD will assist in providing information to the community regarding the events.
- 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, Overtime requests, 2:1 staffing, 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, 2:1 staffing, and increased communication.
- Blue Envelope program – if pulled over, provides information to law enforcement on an individual with a disability that is in that is in the car. Envelopes are available in Melissa Trautman's office and she is tracking who is taking an envelope and who it is for.
- Superintendent Vennetti and I continue to meet with Union members for the Labor Management Committee. Next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2026.
- Scheduling training for department staff: On Seen, Tableau, OISP outcomes, difficult conversations, ODDP, technology, Employment, Docuware, Behavior Support, and more.
- Addressing appeals dealing with either a suggested reduction in services or FSSP denials.

Department: Superintendent

Date: 2/18/2026

Board Report:

1. 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 will meet on Friday February 13th. We now have 10 items we are considering. They combined numerous items and that is why it is now at 10. We started at 64 and then moved to 16 and then back up to 24. Now with combining the 24 items we are down at 10. 6 of the 10 are moving forward and 4 still are possibilities.
2. Unit B Negotiations (SSA Department)- They will probably start in April. Still waiting to hear from Unit B about possible negotiation dates.
3. Appeals hearing- 2 appeals on FSSP and our tech grant. I have sent information to all board members regarding the appeals.
4. AI Training- We have our 1st AI training on February 18th.
5. Board Trainings- all 4 board trainings are set. April- 5-year projection, May MUI, June Community Employment, and Sept AI.
6. New Board attorney at the Prosecutor's office- Senior Assistant Prosecutor James Armstong will now be the person we speak to instead of Chris Meduri. Chris will be supervising Attorney Armstong.
7. Summer Camp- We met with Akron Rotary on February 11th. We are set for year 16 to begin June 8th.

Actions for January 2026:

As of January, 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:

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

Promotions/Transfers:

George Gabriel, SSA Supervisor to Director of Service & Support Administration, 260 days, 8 hours

Desiree Nastas, SSA to SSA Supervisor, 260 days, 8 hrs/day (Service & Support Administration)

Reclassifications:

Vincent Valerio, Director of Education & Child Development L1 to L2 (Happy Day Services)

Additional Assignments:

Supplemental Agreements:

Separations:

Shane Kubery, Service & Support Administrator, 240 days, 7.5 hrs/day (Service & Support Administration)

Retirements:

George Winsen, Director of Service & Support Administration, 260 days/ 8 hrs/day (Service & Support Administration)

January 2026 Enrollment Report with beginning enrollment of 1,387 and an ending enrollment of 1372, an increase of 18 and minus 33.

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

At 5:29 pm, the Board entered Executive Session in the Board Room.

Motion by B. Tarver
Second by K. Butler

For the following identified reason: per ORC 121.22 (G)(1) and (G)(4)

- (x) To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual;
indicate reason: employment of public employee
- () To consider the purchase of public property or the sale of property at competitive bidding, if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest;
- () Conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or intimate court action;.
- (X) Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment;
- () Matters required to be kept confidential by federal law or rules or state statutes.
- () Details relative to the security arrangements and emergency response protocols for a public body or a public office, if disclosure of the matters discussed could reasonably be expected to jeopardize the security of the public boy of public office.

The aforesaid motion having been put to a roll call vote, the results of which were as follows:

NOT VOTING	PRESENT		BOARD MEMBERS
	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	
()	(x)	()	KELLY BUTLER
()	(x)	()	BABETTE CAMERON
()	(X)	()	THOMAS GRIST
()	(x)	()	MAUREEN HASKA
()	(x)	()	CHRISTINA KRISTER
()	(x)	()	MICHELLE SAHR
()	(x)	()	WILLIAM TARVER

Motion to adjourn executive session at 7:01 p.m.

Motion by B. Cameron
 Second by K. Butler

Motion carried by roll call vote as follows: Kelly Butler, aye, Maureen Haska, aye, Tom Grist, aye, B. Cameron, aye, C. Krister, aye, Michelle Sahr, aye, William Tarver, aye.

Motion to return to open session 7:02 p.m.

Motion by M. Haska
 Second by K. Butler
 Motion carried.

The President asked if any other business needed to come before the Board. There being none, she called for a motion for adjournment at 7:03 pm.

Motion by C. Krister
 Second by W. Tarver
 Motion carried by voice vote.

INFORMATION

Advocacy

L.E.A.P. Meeting 2nd Tuesday of the Month 10:00am – 11:00am

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

Special Olympics

Basketball & Cheer

Swim

February 20th - 22nd - 2025 Special Olympics Ohio Indoor Winter Games

Location: Ohio State University

Save the Date!

April 18, 2026 11:30 - 2:00pm Bowling Invitational Location: Spins Bowl Kent - 2245 OH-59, Kent, 44240

Fundraisers

Cleveland Polar Plunge - February 28, 2026

Visit <http://support.soooh.org/goto/portagethunderhill> 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

2026 schedule 2nd 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

Jennifer Derthick, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Michelle Sahr

Michelle Sahr, President

Maureen Haska

Maureen Haska, Secretary