

# Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities

2606 Brady Lake Road

Ravenna, Ohio 44266

**April 15, 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 5:04 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, excused, 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, J. Greenwood

Staff/Guests: Abra Schweikert, Cyndi Porter, various staff members from EPIC, various SSA staff from PCBDD

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

Adopted a motion to excuse absent Board Member Tom Grist.

Motion by M. Haska

Second by K. Butler

Motion carried by voice vote

Public Comment: none at this time

Michelle Dolensky introduced the April DSP of the Month, Katrina Smith, EPIC. This award was presented Posthumous. Angelia Werner read a tribute about the DSP. Michelle Maden, EPIC, thanked the Board for recognizing Katrina and appreciated what Katrina has brought to those she served as a DSP.

Superintendent, John Vennetti, presented to Cynthia Porter, Business Office Associate, retired with 44

½ years, a proclamation from Congressman David Joyce’s Office. On behalf of David Joyce and his local representative, they proudly commend Cyndi on the great accomplishment of her dedicated years to the Board of DD and wish her well on her retirement.

Adopted a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held via ‘Teams’ and in-person March 18, 2026.

Motion by B. Cameron

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote

Motioned to approve the agenda for April 15, 2026, Regular Meeting.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by W. Tarver

Motion carried by voice vote.

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

Motion by B. Cameron

Second by M. Haska

Motion carried by voice vote.

Board committee report: There were no committee meetings held.

Motion to approval Resolution 26-04-01 Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Temporary Appropriation Budget in the amount of thirty million, three hundred forty-four thousand and five dollars, \$30,344,005.00.

#### **RESOLUTION 26-04-01**

#### **REQUEST APPROVAL OF FISCAL YEAR 2027 TEPORARY APPROPRIATION BUDGET**

WHEREAS, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 5126.05(A)(5), the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities (herein after referred to as the Board) shall adopt a budget, authorize expenditures for the purposes specified in this chapter and do so in accordance with section 319.16 of the Revised Code; and

WHEREAS, in order to comply with these Ohio Revised Code Sections and the requirements of the Portage County Commissioners to establish a temporary appropriation budget for Portage County fiscal year 2027; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent and the Director of Business Management herein request that the Board

authorize the fiscal year 2027 temporary appropriation budget at an estimated amount as allowable by current revenue certifications, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board does hereby approve and authorize an appropriation for the Fiscal Year 2027 Temporary Appropriation Budget in the amount of thirty million, three hundred forty-four thousand, five dollars; \$30,344,005.00, with the individual fund amounts shown in the table below; and be it further

| Account Number | Description                   | Temporary Budget              |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Fund 1340      | DD Operating Fund             | \$30,341,955.00               |
| Fund 8104      | Gift/Donation Fund,,          | \$2,050.00                    |
|                | <b><i>TOTAL ALL FUNDS</i></b> | <b><i>\$30,344,005.00</i></b> |

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

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Ohio Revised Code sections 319.16 and 5126.0227, the Board hereby authorizes the Superintendent to instruct the Portage County Auditor to encumber funds and pay Board obligations in accordance with the Board's annual approved budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby gives the Superintendent the authority to modify appropriation line items within any of the fund accounts listed in the Table above during the 2027 fiscal year as revenues and needs change.

Submitted by: John Vennetti, Superintendent, 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

Tom Grist, excused  
Christina Krister, aye  
William Tarver, aye

Michelle Sahr, 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 **April 15,**

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 amend Policy 7.12 Property Inventory.

Motion by B. Cameron

Second by W. Tarver

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: 4/15/2026

**Board Report:**

**1. Provider Relations/Support:**

- a. DD Awareness Month 2026. Limitless Art Show, Art is installed and on display through most of April. There are 169 entries to the show and 126 of the pieces are for sale, ranging in price from \$3 to \$50. To locate where a person's art is on display go to: [Art Locations — The Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities](#) Art Sale 4/28 4:00pm-8:30pm at North Water Brewing, Hike Club 4/23. Events were well attended, Silent Disco had 42 participants, 122 folks came to the first movie night, estimated 150 in attendance at the first Talent Show and over 80 people at the Rally.
- b. Portage DD Informational Series: First training scheduled on 4/23 topics include ISP process, Nursing and communication, also offering Annual Provider Training and Quarterly Billing Training
- c. Discussing initiating a virtual suggestion box for providers to give shout outs or leave comments or questions
- d. Group met to discuss Growing Together Series. It is a program used in schools to educate students on persons with disabilities. Planning to approach three school districts to gauge interest in starting program in Fall of 2026
- e. DSP-U, we will be training students in FA/CPR. Currently auditing student records to make sure all items are completed
- f. Cardio Drumming held on 4/13, next session 5/11

**2. Advocacy:**

- a. Advocacy: No meeting in March. Next Meeting April 14<sup>th</sup>, location is now at the Portage DD Board Room due to change in library hours.
- b. Project STIR rescheduled to June

**3. Special Olympics:**

- a. Spring Sports: Athletics-20 Athletes (Regional Meet on 4/26 in Bedford), Bocce-12 Athletes (Regional Meet on 4/25 in Willoughby), Bowling -18 Athletes (Portage DD Invite 4/18 at Spins Bowls), Powerlifting – 3 Athletes (Regional Meet on 4/19 in Medina).
- b. Fundraiser: KOC Super Cash Bonanza raffle tickets, tickets are \$5 and we receive \$4 for each one we sell

**4. Community Employment:**

- a. 137 people employed in the community
- b. New PEC flyers ready to distribute to community partners
- c. Volunteer Fair April 9, Hiring Event April 30 and Transportation Fair May 7.

**5. Nursing:**

Batteries replaced in AEDs, good until 8/4/2028. New AEDs will need to be purchased prior to this date. The batteries for the current AEDs are no longer being produced.

Manager: George Gabriel

Department: Service & Support Administration

Date: 4/15/2026

**Board Report:**

- Individual meetings with SSA department staff have concluded. Thirty-five meetings have been held in total. Some similarities were noted in responses to strengths within the department and suggestions for improvements. Next step: summarize the discussions and follow up on suggestions for improvements.
- SSA managers and I are discussing ways to maximize the services in our department due to the increase in the requests and allocation of waivers as well as changes from DODD. We will be restructuring the staffing within the department to accommodate for changes. The restructuring should be completed by 5/1/26.
- 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. Thirty-two cases have been assigned to SSA's from 3/17 through 4/7/26.
- 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. One hundred fifty-three sites have been changed over to the new system thus far.
- 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 will be moving its' tech home to the Coble maintenance facility effective 7/1/26. A shout out to the maintenance department for how quickly they have made a portion of the facility ready for us. A shout out as well to Tara Beatty and Chrissy West for having this idea. Superintendent Vennetti has been very supportive. Tours will continue and this location is accessible to all to visit.
- Continue to provide Provider Support for Billing issues and training. This service has

proven to be invaluable for providers and the Board.

- Meetings continue 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 next step is follow up by JFS.
- The SSA department is fully staffed. Danny Campbell has been hired to replace Jim Bobek who is retiring effective 5/31/26. Danny Campbell is scheduled to start April 27, 2026. He comes to us from Mahoning County and has been an IA for the past few years.
- SSA staff continue to cover cases until Jamie Miller is ready to assume a full caseload. Jamie now has eight cases and will be given her next five cases soon. Thank you to all SSA staff for their help and patience.
- InterRai starts May 1, 2026. This is a new assessment to determine funding levels for individuals on waivers. Nicole Williams will be our InterRai assessor and will complete assess eight individuals to begin the pilot in our county. She will do an additional 196 assessments by the end of the year and additional assessments by the summer of 2027. Information is going out to families and Nicole is receiving her training on the assessment. More to come.
- Continuing to conduct meetings to discuss having maintenance goals moved to other team members as opposed to ongoing PT services for them.
- 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 rule, 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, preparation for the MSS changeover, ongoing discussions with Team members regarding Assessed needs vs. Wants, closer look at PA’s, individual living situations, and overtime requests, 2:1 staffing, increased communication, closer look at change notices.
- Reviewing Change notices for individuals not on waivers to determine assessed need.
- Superintendent Vennetti and I will continue to meet with Union members for the Labor Management Committee as needed.
- Scheduling training for department staff: OISP outcomes, technology, Employment, Docuware, Behavior Support, and more. Lunch and learns are scheduled through June regarding services being offered by other agencies.
- No appeals at this time.
- Participating in negotiations.
- Six staff in the SSA department participated in the AI training.
- Participate in the Portal meetings, DSP recognition meetings, informational series meetings.

Department: Superintendent

Date: 4/15/2026

**Board Report:**

1. Sustainability- The Superintendents, OACB, and Director Nash from DODD met on 4-2-26 to talk about sustainability. The Superintendents also met on 3-27-26 and 4-10-26.
2. Unit B Negotiations (SSA Department)- They will start in April. April 20, 22, 29, and May 7<sup>th</sup>.
3. Board Trainings- May- MUI Training at 4pm.
4. OACB updates. Adam Herman, CEO of OACB represented county boards during a steering committee meeting and a branding and communications work session with the Coalition to Protect Essential Public Services to prepare for the rollout of a statewide public awareness campaign on the role of property taxes in key areas of government and social services. The group reviewed branding, website plans, and messaging strategies to ensure coordinated, cross-sector representation of property tax-supported services, including people with developmental disabilities and their families. Information will be shared by mid-April, with all participating entities agreeing to hold internal messaging efforts until the statewide materials can be finalized and distributed.
5. Lisa Comes Service and Support Advisor OACB, and Whitney Langston Youth Support Advisor OACB, met with SETWorks to review progress on the Pilot AI Compliance Checker product being co-developed between the software provider and OACB. The project aims to support SSAs in improving the quality of Ohio ISPs through a HIPAA-compliant AI solution, with pilot participation from Cuyahoga, Lucas, Ashland, Stark, Mercer, and Highland counties.
6. Retirement- Congratulations to Cyndi Porter who retired. Her last official day was 3-31-26 and she was here at Portage DD for over 44 years!! Jim Bobek, SSA also has announced his retirement effective 5-31-26. Jim has been here for over 11 years. Congrats to both!!

**Actions for March 2026:**

As of February, there were 91 employees including five (5) intermittent positions and no vacancies

**Positions Added/Abolished:**

**Job Postings/Vacancies:**

Substitute Lifeguard (Happy Day Services)

Substitute Vehicle Operator (Transportation), November 18, 2025 until filled, Vacant

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

**Supplemental Positions:**

All Supplemental Positions

**New Hires:****Promotions/Transfers:****Reclassifications:****Additional Assignments:****Supplemental Agreements:****Separations:**

Tracy Smolic, Substitute RN, Happy Day Services

**Retirements:**

Cynthia Porter, Business Office Assistant, 260/261/262, 8 hours/day (Administration)

March 2026 Enrollment Report with beginning enrollment of 1,351 and an ending enrollment of 1364, an increase of 32 and minus 19.

The Vice-President announced the next regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, starting at 5:00 p.m. with a Board In-service at 4:00 p.m.

At 5:28 pm, the Board entered Executive Session in the Board Room.

Motion by K. Butler

Second by W. Tarver

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

( X ) Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment;

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 6:54 p.m.

Motion by K. Butler  
Second by C. Krister

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

Motion to return to open session 6:54 p.m.

Motion by B. Cameron  
Second by M. Haska  
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 6:55 pm.

Motion by M. Haska  
Second by C. Krister  
Motion carried by voice vote.

## INFORMATION

**L.E.A.P Self-Advocacy Group** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month 10:00am – 11:00am

Location: Happy Day Services Building, Beverly J. Puleo Board Room, 2500 Brady Lake Rd.  
Ravenna

### **Special Olympics**

May 29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> Special Olympics Ohio State Summer Games Location: Ohio State University

### **Bowling**

April 18<sup>th</sup> -- Portage DD Bowling Invitational --11:30am - 2:00pm Location: Spins Bowl Kent 2245 OH-59 Kent, OH 44240

### **Athletics (Track & Field)**

April 26<sup>th</sup> -- NE Regional Meet -- 9:30am - 4:00pm Location: Bedford High School - 481 Northfield Rd.  
Bedford, 44146

May 16<sup>th</sup> -- Tuscarawas Invitational -- 9:30am - 4:00pm Location: Strasburg Ron Hurst Stadium -- 140 4th St SE,  
Strasburg, OH 44680

**Bocce**

April 25<sup>th</sup> -- NE Regional Tournament --10:00am - 4:00pm Location: American Italian Club - 29717 Euclid Ave. Wickliffe, 44092

May 14<sup>th</sup> -- Tuscarawas Invitational — 5:30pm - 8:00pm Location: Tuscora Park — 161 Tuscora Ave NW, New Philadelphia, OH 44663

**Powerlifting**

April 19<sup>th</sup> -- NE Regional Meet -- 12:00pm- 5:00pm Location: Medina High School - 777 E Union St, Medina, OH, 44256

**Hike Club**

April 23<sup>rd</sup> 4:30pm - Morgan Park (.80 miles) Location: 8828 St. Rt. 44 Ravenna, 44266

May 7<sup>th</sup> 4:30pm — Berlin Lake Trail (2.5 miles) Location: 10228 U.S. 224 Deerfield, 44411

May 18<sup>th</sup> 4:30pm - Jessie Smith Wildlife Preserve Location: 100 Majors Lane Kent, 44240

**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](mailto:events@portagedd.org)

**Special Olympic Fundraiser**

**We are selling KOC Super Cash Bonanza raffle tickets. Each ticket is \$5. We get \$4 of every ticket sold! Drawing is May 23rd.**

**Contact Colleen Brown at [portagecountythunder@sooh.org](mailto:portagecountythunder@sooh.org) to purchase.**

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