Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board

MINUTES

Thursday, October 28, 2021
5:30 p.m.

The **combined work session and regular monthly meeting** of the Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board was held on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at the at the Summit DD administrative offices located at 89 East Howe Road, Tallmadge, Ohio 44278. The **work session** convened at 5:36 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
Tami Gaugler, Board Vice President
Jason Dodson, Board Secretary
Meghan Wilkinson
Allyson V. James
Dave Dohnal
Denise Ricks

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED
Tom Quade, Board President

ALSO PRESENT
John J. Trunk, Superintendent
Lisa Kamlowsky, Assistant Superintendent
Russ DuPlain, Director of IT & Facilities
Joe Eck, Director of Labor Relations & Risk Management
Holly Brugh, Director of SSA & EI
Danyelle Conner, Director of HR
Billie Jo David, Dir. of Communications & Quality
Mira Pozna, Director of Fiscal
Drew Williams, Director of Community Supports & Development
Maggi Albright, Recording Secretary

I. MERAKEY CONTRACT

Summit DD currently serves almost 1,400 individuals who have at least one mental health diagnosis in addition to their diagnosis of a developmental and intellectual disability (IID). These individuals often present with complex emotional, behavioral, physical, and social issues which create challenges for their families, providers, and community supports. In addition, most providers in Summit County and across the State of Ohio do not offer clinical or mental health services. This can result in the DSP staff working with these individuals not having the resources and experience required to assist the individuals, especially in times of crisis. As a result, provider staff and families often resort to calling 911 to assist, leading to transportation via ambulance to the local emergency room with admission into either the psychiatric ward or a behavioral treatment facility. From there, Summit DD usually has no other option except to place individuals into a developmental center or residential treatment facility. Last year Summit DD spent over $650,000 in both local and waiver funding on five (5) individuals who fit this profile.

WORK SESSION *(continued)*

I. MERAKEY CONTRACT ***(continued)***

Due to the lack of comprehensive treatment options, including real-time support for individuals with co-occurring mental health diagnosis and developmental and intellectual disability, staff have done a tremendous amount of research for alternatives. Members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), along with representatives from Children's Services Board, the ADM Board and the Autism Society of Greater Akron met with the Merakey team and feel this organization offers comprehensive support to wrap around individuals with complex needs. Superintendent Trunk introduced two representatives from Merakey; Heather Harbert, Senior Executive Director of Behavioral Health and Anthony Destafano, Regional Director of Behavioral Health. Merakey was started in 1969 in Pennsylvania and the name is Greek for *putting your heart and soul into what you do*. Merakey has 10,000 employees, serves about 50,000 individuals and currently has programs in twelve states. Merakey is a leading developmental behavioral health and education non-profit provider with over 50 years of experience offering a holistic approach and breadth of integrated services across the country. Merakey offers a Dual Diagnosis Treatment Team (DDTT) designed to provide comprehensive support to individuals with dual diagnosis. Each DDTT consists of a program director, behavioral specialist,, recovery coordinator, registered nurse, treating psychiatrist, pharmacist, medical doctor, and administrative assistant who would all be included on a referred individual's team. Services are person-centered, strengths-based, and recovery-oriented and include:

- An initial assessment,
- Functional Behavioral Analysis
- Medication monitoring/management
- Safety/crisis plan development
- Treatment/recovery planning, including discharge/transition planning beginning with the initial treatment plan
- Coordination with physical health
- Trauma care and planning

Individualized treatment plans would be developed based on each person's diagnosis, behavioral patterns, and other identified unique needs. DDTT services are provided to an individual on average for 12-18 months in order to create an urgency to stabilize. The DDTT is also there to provide comprehensive training and support to the individual's family and provider team and will provide crisis management twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week.
Expected outcomes include:

- A reduction in the number of emergency room presentations and inpatient admissions
- An increase in the number of individuals who can maintain, or obtain and maintain safe, affordable housing in their community

WORK SESSION *(continued)*

I. MERAKEY CONTRACT *(continued)*

- An increase in the length of time an individual maintains their housing in the community
- A reduction in the number of crisis services
- Transfer of life/coping skills to natural/paid supports
- Satisfaction with program delivery as evidenced through results of consumer satisfaction surveys
- For individuals who are also involved in the criminal justice system, additional outcomes include: A reduction in the number of re-arrests & reduction in the number of individuals who have new arrests/incarcerations

The request is to enter into a one-year contract with Merakey to provide dual diagnosis treatment for up to twenty (20) eligible individuals for the period December 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022 in an amount not to exceed $1,000,000. Costs are billed at $1,225 per week, per person served by the DDTT. Mr. Dohnal asked if staff Merakey hire for Summit County would live near Summit County and also asked what happens when the police are called in various situations. Mr. Destefano replied that everyone Merakey hires for the Summit County team will live near Summit County and will be full time staff in an on-call rotation, so they are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. All calls are answered or returned within 15 minutes. Merakey builds relationships with local law enforcement so that the DDTT can be alerted if police are called. Ms. Harbert noted that Summit County is unique relative to collaborations with so many other agencies including law enforcement so the DDTT would support and enhance those relationships. Ms. James noted the current staffing challenges and asked if the Summit County team is already built. Mr. Destafano responded that building a team usually takes between 60-180 days and the Summit County team would be custom built. Merakey employs a full-time recruiter for Ohio and has a robust recruitment strategy. Superintendent Trunk thanked Ms. Harbert and Mr. Destafano for attending the meeting tonight and providing more information about Merakey and the unique services and supports it offers. He commented that the investment in this contract is to achieve better outcomes for individuals. Mr. Trunk informed the Board that staff have had discussion with local providers about working with Merakey and how this contract would support and enhance services the providers are delivering. He stated there is a need for an organization with these specialized services in our community. Funds are in the 2021 and 2022 budgets and the Merakey contract has been recommended for approval by the October Services & Supports and Finance & Facilities Committees.

WORK SESSION *(continued)*

II. SUMMIT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES CONTRACT

Summit DD receives assistance from a dedicated Department of Job & Family Services (JFS) caseworker whose sole responsibility is to assist Summit DD staff and eligible individuals with Medicaid enrollment, Medicaid waivers, food assistance programs, and access to various other JFS programs. Individuals and families have a direct connection with the JFS worker and do not have to go through the Akron office for support. In addition, the SSA Department also has direct access to this worker. The advantage of this arrangement allows for one caseworker to address special issues and barriers that delay Medicaid enrollment. This collaborative contract has been in effect since 2013 and the dedicated JFS worker provides support to over 300 individuals and SSAs each month. Reimbursement would be made to JFS on a monthly basis in an amount not to exceed $87,000 annually, which represents a $3,000 increase over the 2021 contract to support a salary increase for the JFS worker. Funds are available in the budget and the JFS contract has been recommended for approval by the October Services & Supports and Finance & Facilities Committees.

III. BRITTCO SOFTWARE CONTRACT

Summit DD currently utilizes the Gatekeeper system provided by Primary Solutions as its main application for supporting individuals served and managing related billing activities. Brittco is a competing solution that was developed several years ago and offers a modern, cloud-based approach that will better fit the needs of a mobile workforce. During 2021 staff from multiple departments at Summit DD have worked together to test Brittco software and it is recommended to transition to this platform. While the transition will be complicated and take some time to execute, it will provide an improved application. Additionally, being cloud-based software hosted by the vendor will reduce the amount of support needed from Summit DD IT staff to keep the server and end-user devices up to date. The monthly cost for Brittco is $5,850, which is a fixed price that will not increase. The annual cost in 2022 would not exceed $70,200 and includes all training and support. Funds are available in the budget and the Brittco Software contract has been recommended for approval by the October Finance & Facilities Committee.

IV. REVISED POLICY 2015 – SMOKE AND TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACE

Summit DD currently provides designated outdoor smoking areas for employees. The recommendation moving forward is to a provide smoke-free workplace for the benefit of employees, persons served and members of the public. Summit DD offers smoking cessation programs and education at no cost to employees who want to access these resources. Mr. Dohnal asked if staff incentives to quit smoking are being offered. Ms. Conner replied that smoking cessation is offered at no charge to staff through the Agency's wellness program.

WORK SESSION *(continued)*

IV. REVISED POLICY 2015 – SMOKE AND TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACE ***(continued)***

This Policy would become effective upon occupancy of the newly renovated Barberton and Cuyahoga Falls facilities. Revised Policy 2015 – Smoke and Tobacco-Free Workplace has been recommended for approval by the October HR/LR Committee.

V. SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Revenue for September included second half tax and Homestead and Rollback settlements of $26,352,000, annual settlement from Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) of $27,000, quarterly Medicaid Administrative Claims reimbursement of $503,300, and incremental reimbursement of expenses associated with the strong Families Safe Communities Grant of $113,300. Expenditures for the month were $100,000 incremental funding for the Family Engagement Program (FEP), $16,500 for provider grants awarded for the DSP appreciation program, and $29,200 payment to Intellinetics for digitizing records. September ended in a positive position of $20,161,531 and a fund balance of $77,927,120. The September financial statements have been recommended for approval by the October Finance & Facilities Committee.

The work session adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

BOARD MEETING

The **regular monthly meeting** of the Summit County Developmental Disabilities Board convened at 6:29 p.m.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Gaugler read comments submitted by Leslie Frank, a parent and former Summit DD staff: *The proposed collaboration between Summit DD and Merakey sounds like an awesome partnership and one which should benefit many individuals. There are so many people who have mental health issues, and they sometimes fall through the cracks. Sounds like this would have been helpful with our youngest daughter back in the day. Regarding the JFS contract for the on-site caseworker, this service was very helpful to my family and it was so nice not to have to wait in line or on hold and get immediate answers to questions. I also applaud the Board's decision about the smoke-free workplace policy! Congratulations to Lisa Kamlowsky on her promotion to Superintendent; I know Lisa will pick up where John leaves off and continue to lead Summit DD well for many years. Lastly, thank you to the Board for being such a great group of people!*

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 (combined work session and regular meeting)

RESOLUTION
No. 21-10-01

Ms. Wilkinson moved that the Board approve the minutes of the September 23, 2021 combined work session and regular meeting. The motion, seconded by Mrs. Ricks, was unanimously approved.

III. BOARD ACTION ITEMS

A. REVISED POLICY 2015 – SMOKE AND TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

RESOLUTION
No. 21-10-02

Mr. Dodson moved that the Board approve revisions to Policy 2015 – Smoke and Tobacco-Free Workplace. The motion, seconded by Ms. Wilkinson, was unanimously approved.

BOARD MEETING *(continued)*

III. BOARD ACTION ITEMS ***(continued)***

B. SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

RESOLUTION
No. 21-10-03

Ms. James moved that the Board approve the September Financial Statements. The motion, seconded by Mr. Dodson, was unanimously approved.

IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Trunk noted there has been a slow down in the number of people testing positive for Covid-19 with 14 positive tests in October, all mild cases. Summit DD continues to provide PPE and rapid test kits to providers and staff as needed. The Health Department is sponsoring another vaccination drive through on November 15th. Summit DD is providing another round of financial support to providers. So far Summit DD has paid out approximately $300,000 to over 60 local providers, supporting more than 1,700 DSPs with incentives for longevity, taking on extra shifts, etc.

Staff are in the process of finalizing the Agency's 2022-2024 Long Range Plan (LRP) which will include areas of focus such as supporting children and adults with complex needs, the DSP workforce crisis and innovative services. A draft of the LRP will be presented to the Board next month.

Superintendent Trunk thanked Lisa Kamlowsky and Mira Pozna for assisting with Summit DD's 2022 budget presentation to County Council on October 25th. Ms. Kamlowsky co-presented and fielded a few questions around Medicaid match. Also highlighted was the Covid-19 impact on providers and discussion around Merakey's contract, training and support.

There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony at the Russ Pry Barberton Center on November 10th at 10:00 to celebrate the completion of this newly renovated building.

The OACB Annual Convention will be held December 1-3 at the Hilton Easton in Columbus. Some virtual sessions will also be offered. This is a good opportunity to obtain required in-service training credits. Superintendent Trunk mentioned that Board Members interested in attending should contact Maggi Albright.

The 2022 Board Meeting schedule is being developed and meetings will continue to be held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30, with the exception of November and December when meetings will be the third Thursday due to holidays.

BOARD MEETING *(continued)*

V. VICE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Mrs. Gaguler noted that for Halloween about 60% of children will either be superheroes or princesses. Many families and individuals feel that their SSA is their superhero for all the support and assistance provided. Mrs. Gaugler thanked Summit DD SSAs for all the wonderful work they do to and encouraged all to keep up the good work.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

RESOLUTION
No. 21-10-04

Mr. Dodson moved that the Board enter into Executive Session in compliance with Sunshine Laws, Ohio Revised Code 121.22, Section G, Subsection (1) to consider the employment of public employees. Upon reconvening, the Board may or may not conduct additional business. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dohnal.

Roll call: James-yes, Gaugler-yes, Dohnal-yes, Ricks-yes, Wilkinson-yes and Dodson-yes.

The regular session of the Board Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

The Board entered Executive Session at 6:45 p.m.

The Board Meeting reconvened at 6:55 p.m.

VII. ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

A. EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – HOLLY BRUGH

RESOLUTION
No. 21-10-05

Mrs. Ricks moved that the Board approve a contract of employment with Holly Brugh, Director of SSA & Children's Services, for the term January 2, 2022 through January 3, 2024. The motion, seconded by Ms. James, was unanimously approved.

BOARD MEETING *(continued)*

VII. ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS *(continued)*

B. EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT – RUSS DUPLAIN

RESOLUTION
No. 21-10-06

Mr. Dodson moved that the Board approve a contract of employment with Russ DuPlain, Director of IT & Facilities, for the term January 2, 2022 through January 3, 2024. The motion, seconded by Ms. Wilkinson, was unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the Board Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Jason Dodson, Secretary