

Minutes
Mental Health Partners
Board of Directors
Thursday, July 24, 2008
7:00 P.M.

The Mental Health Partners Board of Directors met on this date in the first floor conference room at First Plaza.

Members of the Board present included: Joseph Beaman, Jr., Ray Von Beatty, John Dayberry, Lori Faulkner, Dr. Anthony Frasca, Michele Hamby, Cynthia Houser, Ronald Kendrick, Suzanne Smith, and Maynard Taylor. Excused and/or absent for other equivalent circumstances were Kitty Barnes, Todd Carswell, and Danny Graves. Mental Health staff present included John Hardy, Lesa Silver, and Janice Cornett.

A quorum was present.

The meeting agenda was mailed to the media on July 11, 2008. The agenda and board packet were mailed to Board members on July 18, 2008.

An orientation for new Board members was held at 5:45 P.M. on this date in conference room A on the fifth floor of First Plaza. Members attending the orientation with Director John Hardy and interim Board Chair Joseph Beaman, Jr. included Suzanne Smith, Cynthia Houser, Dr. Anthony Frasca, and Michele Hamby. New member Todd Carswell was unable to attend the orientation and will be scheduled for orientation at a later date.

Chair Joe Beaman called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance. He noted that this was a historical moment as tonight's meeting was the first for the Mental Health Partners Board. The Board then took a few moments to go around the table with introductions so Board members could become acquainted.

Invocation

Lori Faulkner led the invocation.

Minutes

The minutes of the June 19, 2008 meeting of the Mental Health Services of Catawba County Board of Directors were presented. Joe Beaman, Jr. noted a word omission on page 3 under "Consideration Items". The minutes read as, "There were consideration items." This should actually read as, "There were **no** consideration items." This correction was noted and will be made in the minutes.

John Dayberry made a motion that the minutes of the June 19, 2008 Board of Directors meeting be accepted as revised. Lori Faulkner seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the June 19, 2008 Board of Directors meeting as revised.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Commissioner Comments

Catawba County Commissioner Kitty Barnes was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Chair Beaman referred the group to the copies of the *Commissioners' Synopsis* included in the Board packets for an update on the issues in Catawba County.

Burke County Commissioner Maynard Taylor stated that the commissioners only met once during the month of July and it was a lengthy meeting with three public hearings. There were many appointments to various Boards, including the Mental Health Partners Board. The commissioners handled tax releases, approved policies, and accepted EMS Collection Reports for May and June 2008. A voting delegate was also appointed to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) annual conference in August.

Director's Report

1. The dominant issue since the last Board meeting has been getting Mental Health Partners (MHP) up and operational by July 1st. The agency is handling all its business functions electronically – ACH transfers with vendors, etc. New signage is up at both locations and the new logo is in use. The website has been assessable for a couple of weeks and we are still in the process of updating information. The website is designed to be responsive to the public, potential consumers, and providers.
2. Renovations are being finalized on the fifth floor and MHP will soon occupy the entire floor. The first phase of the renovations is complete and we are now ready to begin the second phase. We expect everything to be completed by mid-August. We still have four IT staff located at our old location (now CVBH) and these employees will be moving to First Plaza once the renovations are completed.
3. MHP is in discussion with management at the Burke location for some additional conference room space.
4. MHP is striving to take advantage of available technology. We are engaged with Biz Tech to develop four to five major forms for use by our providers. These forms will be accessed through the website and will be completed on the website. However, providers will not be able to transmit the forms until they are complete, thus reducing errors due to incomplete submissions. Permission was given to a couple of providers this week to begin testing the forms. Family N.E.T. plans to convert to electronic medical records in early August, and we are in the process of looking at the details of that change.
5. The LME is still working to provide training for providers, but this is a lengthy task due to the varied needs and constant changes.
6. A discussion was held with Art Robarge, interim director at Broughton Hospital, regarding the use of available inpatient beds at the local hospitals. Broughton is doing business with Grace Hospital, Catawba Valley Medical Center, and Frye Regional Hospital. Each of the hospitals was approached by Broughton for overflow contracts for beds. The State is committed to reducing the operable beds in its hospitals, and community hospitals have reduced their beds due to psychiatric beds not being very lucrative business. Yet, the demand for inpatient psychiatric beds is very high across the state. The LMEs are charged with helping to contribute to lesser use of state hospital beds, but find themselves now competing with the state hospitals for local beds. The discussion was held to try to prevent some of the competition and get all parties in agreement as to how to handle specific issues. There needs to be criteria on who belongs where and for what reasons.

7. Director Hardy referred to the Division's Implementation Update #46 regarding Community Support Services. Technical amendments have been attached to some of the budget items passed by the General Assembly. One of these amendments puts additional restraints on Community Support Services.
8. Super Saturday was sponsored by our Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) right after the June Board meeting. The attendees spent their time discussing concerns and receiving information on medical issues and mental illnesses. The event was funded by a major drug company. There was a presenter from Asheville and one from Hickory. Overall, this event was well attended and provided a lot of valuable information.
9. We would like to consider a Board retreat where staff could present our strategic plan for the major five to six goals of MHP for the next year. These would be the goals we would primarily spend our energies on. The retreat would be held in September or October - possibly a Friday evening with dinner and then looking at some of the issues, with a return on Saturday morning to finish the strategic steps and hold the regular Board meeting. Information would be sent to the Board members prior to the retreat so they could prepare for the meeting. A tentative date of October 24-25 is suggested. John asked Board members to please check their schedules and we will discuss the retreat again at the August meeting.

At this point, Ron Kendrick asked for a summary of the settlement with Foothills and Maynard Taylor gave a brief synopsis. Mr. Kendrick stated that he believed ALL monies and settlement from Foothills should go directly to Mental Health Partners, not a large portion to Burke County as happened. This is also true for the settlement with Catawba County.

Director Hardy noted that this is not the first environment in which this has occurred when LMEs have merged. It is possible that state auditors may eventually get involved and make a decision on this issue sometime in the future. In the meantime, it is important that we move forward with our responsibilities to our consumers. Eight percent of operational funds must be held in reserve. County share from both Catawba and Burke has been moved to MHP. Fund balance from Catawba has also been moved to MHP, but fund balance from Burke has not yet been received. Director Hardy is in the process of drafting agreements with both counties on fund balance.

Consideration Items

There were no consideration items.

Action Items

Personnel Policies – Salary Plan, MOU with OSP, and Employee Development/Education Assistance

Lesa Silver, Human Resources Director for MHP, explained that as a new unit of Local Government, MHP must establish its own relationship with the Office of State Personnel (OSP). Social Services, Public Health, and Mental Health are all subject to the Personnel Act. While Mental Health was a department of Catawba County, this process was handled by the county, which has been granted "substantial equivalency" by the OSP.

One requirement of the OSP is the annual submission of a salary reporting package which includes the adopted salary plan of MHP. We are also requesting that the OSP grant MHP the authority to determine if

final applicants meet the requirements of vacant positions rather than this determination having to be done through the OSP.

Salary Plan

The salary plan is not new, but was pulled from the Catawba County umbrella and is now specific to MHP. The county conducts a one-third classification study annually to ensure that its pay plan is equivalent to what other governmental agencies and the private sector are paying for similar positions across the state. Mental Health Partners will do its own studies in the future. The OSP requires adoption of the salary plan by the Board of Directors. The plan will then be sent to the OSP for approval.

Ronald Kendrick made a motion to approve the 2008-2009 salary plan as presented. Ray Von Beatty seconded the motion.

Maynard Taylor asked where most of the employees of MHP range on the salary plan. Lesa Silver replied that most are in the middle range of their grade. With no other discussion, it was voted to approve the 2008-2009 salary plan as presented.

Memorandum of Understanding Between MHP and the Office of State Personnel

The next personnel policy presented was a memorandum of understanding between MHP and the Office of State Personnel (OSP). The memorandum describes the relationship of MHP with the OSP and serves as a formal request for delegation of authority so MHP can review applications, degrees, and licensures to determine appropriate candidates for vacant positions. In return for being granted the delegation, MHP commits to the administration of human resources programs in compliance with State Personnel Commission rules, OSP policies, and Federal Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration as described in the Code of Federal Regulation.

Ray Von Beatty made a motion to approve the MOU being sent to the Office of State Personnel as presented. John Dayberry seconded the motion.

John Hardy noted that Catawba County Personnel is also being paid to handle qualifying for MHP before they route applications to the agency. Therefore, it is not just our staff looking at the applications. With no other discussion, it was unanimously voted to approve the MOU with the Office of State Personnel as presented.

Employee Development/Education Assistance Program

The next action item was a policy for employee development/education assistance. Lesa explained that MHP wants to encourage continuing education and provide administrative support for that continuing education. She then gave an overview of the proposed policy, noting that the course of study must be applicable to the employee's current job or help prepare the employee for a job with a higher level of responsibility within the agency. There are minimum grade requirements and penalties if the employee is not employed with MHP for a minimum of two years upon completion of the course.

Lori Faulkner stated that it would be important to ensure that employees participating in this education assistance plan are fully aware of all the restrictions up front. Lesa answered that employees would be required to complete an application and that application would fully address all the requirements.

Ronald Kendrick made a motion to approve the Employee Development/Education Assistance Program as presented. John Dayberry seconded the motion.

With no further discussion, it was unanimously voted to approve the Employee Development/Education Assistance Program as presented.

Committee Appointments

We need to appoint our committee members for FY 2008-2009. Two members (one from Burke and one from Catawba) are needed to serve on the Client Rights Committee. We also need to appoint members to serve on the Budget/Finance Committee. A sign up sheet will be passed around the table to allow Board members to sign up for the invocation on a month of their choice for the upcoming year.

Ronald Kendrick from Burke County volunteered to serve on the Budget/Finance Committee and John Dayberry from Catawba County agreed to stay on the committee another year if needed.

Cynthia Houser will serve as the Catawba County representative on the Client Rights Committee, and Suzanne Smith agreed to be the Burke County representative on the committee.

We will finalize these appointments at the August meeting.

MHP Board Calendar for 2008-2009

The Board meeting schedule for 2008-2009 was presented. The schedule remains consistent with Board meetings being held on the third Thursday of each month unless otherwise noted.

John Dayberry made a motion to approve the Board meeting schedule for 2008-2009 as presented. Cynthia Houser seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was voted to approve the Board meeting schedule for 2008-2009 as presented.

Information Items

Chair Beaman reviewed the information items with the group. He noted that the next meeting of the MHP Board will be on August 21, 2008.

With no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice D. Cornett
Administrative Assistant II
Clerk to the Board