

**Minutes  
Mental Health Partners  
Board of Directors  
Thursday, September 18, 2008  
7:00 P.M.**

The Mental Health Partners Board of Directors met on this date in Conference Room 4 of the Morganton City Offices.

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

A quorum was present.

The meeting agenda was mailed to the media and Board members on September 11, 2008. There were no representatives of the media.

#### **Handouts**

The following handouts were distributed prior to the opening of the meeting: (1) Burke County Board of Commissioners Meeting Summary for September 16, 2008; (2) Customer Services Overview; (3) Client Rights Committee 2008 Annual Report; (4) Mental Health Partners Consumer Manual; (5) Mental Health Partners 2007-2008 Annual Report; (6) Financial Report July 1, 2008-August 31, 2008; (7) North Carolina Council 2008 Legislative Survey.

#### **Call to Order**

The Board met in the Morganton office of Mental Health Partners for a quick tour of that space before walking next door to the Morganton City Offices for the Board meeting. Chair Joe Beaman, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. and welcomed all in attendance.

#### **Invocation**

Danny Graves led the invocation.

#### **Overview of Location Selection**

Director John Hardy then explained the logic for the selection of the location for the Mental Health Partners office in Morganton. The office is in close proximity to many of the providers in Burke County, as well as the Morganton City Offices, Burke County Offices, Burke County Courthouse, etc. Most of these locations are actually within walking distance of the Mental Health Partners office. He also gave a brief history of the building which houses the Mental Health Partners office. The building was once Premiere Textile Mill, then remained vacant for a period of years before being purchased and renovated into the current Morganton Trading Company.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of the August 21, 2008 meeting of the Mental Health Partners Board of Directors were presented.

Ron Kendrick made a motion that the minutes of the August 21, 2008 meeting of the Mental Health Partners Board of Directors be accepted as presented. Ray Von Beatty seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the August 21, 2008 meeting of the Board of Directors as presented.

## **Citizen Comments**

There were no citizen comments.

## **Commissioner Comments**

Catawba County Commissioner Kitty Barnes referred to the copies of the *Commissioners' Synopsis* included in the Board packets for a summary of the issues in Catawba County. She specifically referred to the highlighted section of the September 2<sup>nd</sup> synopsis. This section details the Commissioners' appropriation of ABC funds to Mental Health Partners and the modification of the lease agreement between Catawba County and Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare (CVBH). The modification was based on research of existing office/institutional lease rates across the county. Based on information from that research, the existing lease agreement with CVBH was modified to \$7.25 per square foot, an average of \$7.50 per square foot for the current fiscal year and \$9.00 per square foot for the overall lease period.

There has been one Commissioners' meeting since the last synopsis. The Board conducted a public hearing on a rezoning request and heard a presentation from Emergency Services for the purchase of an ambulance for neonatal transport. The Board also awarded the Catawba County Spirit Award to Cass Ballenger for his leadership and public service to the county.

Burke County Commissioner Maynard Taylor was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to another mandatory meeting, but sent a summary of the Commissioners' meeting of September 16, 2008. The summary was distributed prior to the opening of the meeting and indicated routine business for the Commissioners' meeting. Director Hardy noted that Commissioner Taylor would be the keynote speaker for the upcoming Family Day being held from 4-7 P.M. on Monday, September 22 at Catawba Meadows Park in Morganton.

## **Director's Report**

1. We have settled into our new space on the fifth floor at First Plaza, and staff that were located in the CVBH building have been relocated to First Plaza. Our last vacancy has been filled and that person will be starting next month.
2. CVBH and Clay, Wilson and Associates are working to provide quicker access to services for consumers. Mental Health Partners (MHP) staff met with both providers to get new ideas as it is important to get consumers into services quickly in all disability areas and especially in the arena

of substance abuse. Our timeliness for urgent and emergent appointments is good, but routine appointments are scheduled too far out due to capacity issues. Unfortunately, this results in an increase in the “no show” rate. In an attempt to remedy the situation, both these providers have moved to a variation of a clinical setting. Consumers show up every day and there is no need for an appointment. CVBH will be beginning this new clinical operation on September 30. Clay, Wilson and Associates implemented the change about 2 weeks ago and it seems to be working well. More consumers are coming in for services and the “no show” rate has decreased. Along this same avenue of getting consumers into services more quickly, the General Assembly is providing baseline support for Mobile Crisis. They are allocating \$155,600 for existing teams (which we already have). We will also receive another team consisting of a psychiatrist, LCSW and half time nurse. The purpose of this team will be to provide follow up appointments for consumers discharged from hospitals and follow up on crisis situations that occurred the night before. Tentatively, plans are for the psychiatrist to work from a Burke County location two days a week and from a Catawba County location three days a week. The psychiatrist would be available via telemedicine on alternate days.

3. The Housing Specialist is on staff and we are moving forward to develop plans to meet the housing needs of consumers in both counties.
4. We have requested that the State reallocate funds based on utilization last year. A Budget/Finance and Executive Committees meeting is scheduled for October 8<sup>th</sup> and we will look at the funding situation in great detail at that meeting.
5. We continue to explore the issue of provider capacity in both counties. There is a great deficit in providers for children’s services. Burke County Schools were able to obtain a Kate B. Reynolds Grant last year to assist with children’s services in the schools. That grant has been renewed this year. Family N.E.T. continues to struggle in Catawba County to provide services for children. We are in discussion with some over providers, Barium Springs for one.
6. Plans are being made for two retreats. A senior staff planning retreat is scheduled for October 1 at the Catholic Conference Center. We are having a preliminary meeting tomorrow for staff input. We will focus on internal issues and wider community needs. The Board retreat is scheduled for October 24-25 at the Community House in Morganton. We will have dinner and work on issues Friday evening, then return on Saturday morning to conclude our work and have the regular monthly Board meeting. A packet of information will be sent to Board members prior to the retreat.

## **Action Items**

### **Customer Services and Client Assistance Policy**

Vanessa Anderson referred to the customer service overview that was distributed prior to the opening of the meeting. She noted that the handout provides background information on the organization and mission of the Customer Services Unit. Customer service training was provided for all employees of Mental Health Partners this past year and will be continued with new employees. The customer service overview also gives a summary of complaints data for 2007-2008, as well as Customer Service accomplishments during the past year. There were 79 complaints received during the past year,

primarily handled by Vanessa. She noted that 58% of the complaints came from Catawba County and 41% came from Burke County. The other 1% came from other counties and were referred to the appropriate LME for their catchment area. The majority of complaints involved access to residential services.

Vanessa then asked the Board members to look at the Consumer Manual that was distributed prior to the opening of the meeting. Mental Health Partners prepared the manual to assist in getting information out to the community. The manual describes the role of the LME and its staff, as well as the type services available. It provides contact numbers to access services, information about the Consumer and Family Advisory Committee and the Consumer Rights Committee, and information on the complaint procedure. The Consumer Manual will be distributed through the provider network, and we will try to track on how they are distributed and when the providers need more copies.

The **Client Assistance Policy** was the next item for Board review. Periodically, consumers have a need for services or equipment that are not financially covered by any other funding source. Within the budget there is \$51,500 identified from Catawba County funds for client assistance services. These funds would be utilized for situations that are valid and require immediate attention, but are not covered by standard payment sources. Examples would be emergency housing, special transportation assistance, handicap equipment repair, support of short term services until regular resources are established, etc. The proposed policy sets guidelines for the administration of these dollars. It sets eligibility guidelines based on the federal poverty level and a process to determine appropriateness of the request. The approval of requests for funds would be based on the household's income, appropriate need, and availability of funds.

The current funds of \$51,500 are available for consumers in Catawba County only. The budgeted amount was determined based on expenditures from two "pots" of money from Catawba County last year: (1) individual requests totaling about \$15,000 last year and (2) people in "between" situations with emergency/extreme circumstances (such as special transportation assistance) totaling about \$30,000 last year. There are currently no funds available from Burke County to assist consumers in that county with these type needs.

Ron Kendrick made a motion to approve the Client Assistance Policy as presented, with a notation that efforts would be made to work with Burke County to establish a similar fund for consumers in that county. Michele Hamby seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion, and it was unanimously voted to approve the Client Assistance Policy.

### **Client Rights Committee 2008 Annual Report**

The Client Rights Committee 2008 Annual Report was distributed prior to the opening of the meeting. This was an addition to the *Action Items* listed on the agenda. It is a State requirement that the Annual Report of the Client Rights Committee be accepted by the Board of Directors. Vanessa Anderson gave an overview of the functions of the Client Rights Committee and summarized the activities of the committee during the past year. She noted that the committee rights committee met four times during 2007-2008.

Kitty Barnes made a motion to accept the Client Rights Committee 2008 Annual Report as presented. Todd Carswell seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion, and it was unanimously voted to accept the Client Rights Committee 2008 Annual Report.

### **LME Annual Report 2007-2008**

The LME's Annual Report for 2007-2008 was presented to the Board for acceptance. The report notes the transition from Mental Health Services of Catawba County to Mental Health Partners. It provides a general overview of what occurred last year relating to the transition, utilization of funding, and consumers served. The purpose is to provide information as to who we are and what we have worked to achieve during the past year. Once accepted by the Board, the Annual Report will be distributed to provider partners, State officials, and County officials.

Todd Carswell made a motion to accept the 2007-2008 Annual Report of Mental Health Partners as presented. Kitty Barnes seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to accept the 2007-2008 Annual Report as presented.

### **Office of State Personnel Pay Plan Reporting (Revision)**

Lesa Silver, Mental Health Partners Human Resources Director, noted that her role is to act as the liaison with the Office of State Personnel. North Carolina General Statutes established a uniform system of standard and fair personnel practices, especially in the areas of recruitment and selection. Social Services, Public Health, and Mental Health, although not State entities, fall under the State Personnel Act because they receive federal dollars that help support their services. A small number of entities that are similarly aligned with the Office of State Personnel have applied for and been granted "substantial equivalency". Catawba County has the substantial equivalent designation, but since Mental Health Partners is now a separate entity, we must establish our own with the Office of State Personnel.

At the July Board meeting, the pay plan and position report for MHP was presented for approval. However, when finalizing the report before sending to the State, it became apparent that a lot of our positions did not align on the State scale although they were acceptable while under Catawba County as the county had authority for some variances with substantial equivalency. Therefore, Lesa has revised the pay plan and position report so that position titles and grades align with the State.

There was some discussion regarding grade changes for some positions, and Lesa explained that although the grade may change, there would be no salary changes as those employees' current salaries are still within the range of the State's salary grade.

Ronald Kendrick made a motion to approve the revised MHP Title and Grade Scale. Ray Von Beatty seconded the motion.

With no further discussion, it was unanimously voted to approve the revised MHP Title and Grade Scale as presented.

Lesa also noted that the annual performance evaluation for Director Hardy had been mailed to Board members, and she would be available to answer any questions they may have regarding the evaluation form. Since there are so many new Board members who are not familiar with the director's

performance during the past year, the Board requested that Lesa also send the evaluation form to Board members who rotated off the Board on July 1.

## **Information Items**

### **Quarterly Update on Community Needs Assessment**

Director John Hardy gave an overview of the Community Needs Assessment. The update summarizes the activities that have been accomplished toward the goals designed to better meet the needs of the community. The goals include (1) increasing public awareness of service availability, service types, and access to services; (2) focus on crisis service; and (3) the development of a more integrated service delivery model.

### **Financial Report as of July 1, 2008 – August 31, 2008**

Director Hardy referred to the financial report distributed prior to the opening of the meeting. The report shows revenue and expenditures for the month of August, year to date, and how we currently stand with the annual budget for each line item. Page two of the report is the balance sheet as of August 31, 2008. The Board can expect to see this report routinely.

### **2008 Legislative Survey**

Board members were asked to locate the 2008 Legislative Survey that was included in the packet of handouts. Director Hardy asked that the Board members to please complete the survey at the end of the meeting and return it to Janice Cornett before leaving.

Chair Joe Beaman, Jr. reviewed the remainder of the information items with the group.

With no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice D. Cornett  
Administrative Assistant II  
Clerk to the Board