

**Minutes**  
**Mental Health Partners**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Thursday, February 19, 2009**  
**7:00 P.M.**

The Mental Health Partners Board of Directors met on this date in the conference room at Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare (CVBH) in Morganton.

Members of the Board present included: Ray Von Beatty, Todd Carswell, Lori Faulkner, Danny Graves, Bruce Hawkins, Sr., Cynthia Houser, Ronald Kendrick, and Elizabeth Young. Excused and/or absent for other equivalent circumstances were Kitty Barnes, Joseph Beaman, Jr., John Dayberry, Dr. Anthony Frasca, and Michele Hamby. Mental Health Partners staff present included John Hardy, Lori Mathes, Melanie Britt, and Janice Cornett.

A quorum was present.

The meeting agenda was mailed to the media and Board members on February 13, 2009. There were no representatives of the media present.

#### **Handouts**

The following items were distributed prior to the opening of the meeting:

1. Point in Time Homeless Count
2. Average Value/Cost of a Mental Health Partners' Position
3. Financial Reports – July 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008 and July 1, 2008 – January 31, 2009
4. Revised Policy – *“Separation from Employment”*
5. North Carolina Council Update – January 31, 2009

#### **Overview of Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare**

Kelli Carson, Burke Center Manager, greeted Board members and gave a brief tour of the facility. She also presented an overview of the services provided at CVBH-Burke. There are about 1100 active consumers receiving services at this location, with another 2200 being served out of the Hickory location. CVBH-Burke has seen 264 new consumers in the last quarter, and predicts 1150 new consumers over this year.

The “no show” rate for appointments has dropped from 55 percent to 40 percent. About 1330 consumers maintained their doctor/PA appointments last quarter. A free on-site pharmacy service is available to consumers, and this has proved to be very helpful to consumers and staff. It is especially beneficial in the fast track of consumers discharged from hospitals as it enables them to receive sample medications during the transition to outpatient status, thus preventing a return to the hospital. The pharmacy staff member deals with most medication issues and this gives other staff more time to spend with consumers.

Upon completion of her presentation, Ms. Carson answered any additional questions from Board members.

## **Call to Order and Welcome of Guests**

In the absence of Board Chair Joseph Beaman, Jr., the meeting was called to order at 7:15 P.M. by Vice Chair Von Beatty. Acting Chair Beatty thanked Ms. Carson for the tour and refreshments provided to the Board. At this point, Ms. Carson excused herself from the room and the Board began its business for the night.

## **Invocation**

Elizabeth "Beth" Young led the invocation.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of the January 15, 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors were presented.

Todd Carswell made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 15, 2009 Board of Directors' meeting as presented. Danny Graves seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes as presented.

## **Citizen Comments**

There were no citizen comments.

## **Commissioner Comments**

Catawba County Commissioner Kitty Barnes was not present at the meeting.

Burke County Commissioner Bruce Hawkins, Sr. stated that in his three months as commissioner, there have been three regular meetings and numerous other meetings. The Burke Commissioners have been working on a lot of consent items and decisions. Some recent items considered by the commissioners are as follows:

- Incorporation of Lake James – A decision was deferred until the commissioners hear back from the legislative committee in Raleigh. A response from the committee may be received by Monday.
- Ordinance request from *Friends for Animals*- Adoption of the proposed ordinance was deferred. A committee was appointed to gather additional information and report back to the Board of Commissioners.
- Commissioners participated in a retreat at the end of January to plan for the year.
- A new location needs to be identified for the Board of Elections. Their current space has been deeded to the Historical Society and they need to vacate by the end of June. One possible new location might be space in the Allied Science Building.
- A funding request from Mental Health Partners was approved.
- A personnel freeze has been instigated.

## Director's Report

1. Mental Health Partners (MHP) continues to experience a flurry of activity with high consumer demand and administrative tasks. We are seeing new clients due to the job losses in the community. We have been working with Clay, Wilson, and Associates to explore the possibility of creating some type of "Job Link" to try to assist consumers in their search for employment.
2. Director Hardy referred to the handout of the "*Point in Time Homeless Count*". The handout is a revision of the one included in the Board packet. The information has been updated and now includes the count for Burke County. The count shows 320 respondents to the homeless count in Catawba County and 166 in Burke County. Director Hardy noted that in Catawba County, assistance for the survey was solicited from homeless individuals living in "tent cities". The count for Burke County is not complete as relating to some individuals in institutional settings, such as jail. It is not clear whether or not they would have a place to live if not in jail at the time of the survey. The HUD definition of homeless is stated at the bottom of the handout.
3. Discussions continue in the search for a new location for CVBH in Hickory. A deadline for CVBH to exit their current location is being negotiated with Catawba County. CVBH is exploring many options – build, rent, rent to own, etc. The current location is approximately 22,000 square feet. CVBH could possibly make do with a little less square footage, but not much less.
4. Director Hardy, two other Area Directors, and Yvonne Copeland from the Division recently met with Lanier Cansler, the new Secretary of Health and Human Services. The two major issues of the new Secretary are what is happening with state institutions and expanding community capacity. He plans to appoint an Assistant Secretary and a new Division Director. The focus for the Assistant Secretary will be developing community capacity.
5. A major issue for MHP is trying to convey to providers that the dollars in their contracts are all that is available to them this year. In past years, we have been able to pay for some services provided beyond contract limits, but with the current economic situation, that will not be possible this year. We started meeting with providers in December to try to clarify contract limits. One issue is that what is authorized and what is utilized are two different things. We now have a new software system in place that will deal with the actual utilization. We identified 11 providers that were in trouble with their contract dollars. The providers were required to submit a plan of correction to MHP by February 13. We are now in the process of reviewing these plans and will be making decisions as to how to best manage these providers for the rest of the year. While the economy is uncertain, there is no doubt that fewer dollars will be available to us next year. Our goal is to utilize all service dollars for this year.
6. The contracts between MHP, the Division, and the local hospitals for inpatient indigent care have been finalized. The contract with Frye is for \$675,000 and the one with Catawba Valley Medical Center is for \$1.7 million. The Frye contract was signed this week, but is not yet back from the Division. Frye will have five beds available for indigent care.
7. Some legislative language and provisions call for area programs to resume the processing of Medicaid utilization. MHP did not apply to assume this responsibility. For an area program to really be effective in this task, the catchment area needs to be 500,000 or more.

8. PBH (Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare), a LME serving five counties, began a Medicaid waiver several years ago that has proven to be very successful. There has been some discussion as to whether or not the State might want to explore a similar program in other areas. We will probably hear more about this in the future.
9. C.R. Turner, our lead technology developer, is retiring effective March 1. Stephanie Smith has been hired to fill C.R.'s position. Stephanie comes to us with many years of similar experience at Foothills Area Program.
10. The March Board meeting will be held at the Adult Life Program in Hickory.

### **Review of Institute of Government Board Training Module**

Board members reviewed the Institute of Government's Board Training Module, "*Working with Others*", prior to tonight's meeting. This was the first of five training modules. Von Beatty led a group discussion of the simple, but important concepts of "*Working with Others*".

The module discussed perception and the fact that people see things differently based on their own life experiences. The life experiences can actually form a person's position regardless of the real issue. Holding on to a position can affect work, relationships with others, and hinder progress. People need to remain open to other ideas and be willing to look at the "bigger" picture in order to define the best solution to an issue. When you cannot change a situation, you must change yourself.

### **SCFAC Update**

Board member Ron Kendrick gave an update on SCFAC (State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee). Ron is serving as Chair of SCFAC. Wilda Brown is Co-Chair. SCFAC is composed of 21 members who are either consumers of mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services or family members of consumers of these services. SCFAC members are appointed in a variety of ways - by the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the General Assembly, the Council of Community Programs, or the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

The role of SCFAC is to review plans and issues involving the delivery of mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services and then provide feedback to the Division and General Assembly. SCFAC will also make recommendations for ways to improve services and close service gaps. Some committee members recently met with the General Assembly to explain how SCFAC is structured and encourage the General Assembly to use SCFAC as a resource. It was also requested that SCFAC be allowed some time quarterly on the General Assembly's agenda.

### **Consideration Items**

#### **09-'10 Budget Considerations**

Director Hardy discussed potential budget impacts for FY 09/10 due to the anticipated major loss of both service dollars and administrative dollars. Since the final budget numbers are not yet known, MHP has developed several scenarios to manage the anticipated loss of dollars. Director Hardy referred to the spreadsheet included in the Board packet (9a2) and the email of January 29 from Leza Wainwright

(9a3). The email equates a major reduction in dollars – probably an 8 percent reduction to MHP. How do we deal with major dollar losses? He noted the handout distributed prior to the opening of the meeting which shows the average value of a position at MHP, the average hourly cost per position, the value of one day without pay, and the projected savings of a 2-5 percent pay reduction for employees. Director Hardy gave an overview of the handout and explained that these are just options for now. It is not known if the state will reduce its expectations due to the economic situation. If so, this could affect our decisions in how to manage the budget reductions. On the service side, universal principles are needed across the state.

MHP is planning to eliminate one position (office support at the Burke location) to assist with the budget for this current year. We hope to be able to finalize the '09-'10 budget at the April Board meeting, but no later than the May meeting.

## **Action Items**

### **February 2009 Budget Revision**

Lori Mathes, Finance Officer, presented a proposed revision to the FY 08/09 budget. The revision would increase the current budget of \$21,736,260 by \$2,740,000, bringing it to \$24,476,260. The three major changes are as follows:

1. \$140,000 - County share dollars from Burke County (\$110,000 to support infrastructure costs for Catawba Valley Behavioral Healthcare (CVBH – Burke) and \$30,000 to create a client emergency assistance fund)
2. \$2,375,000 – These are state funds to support the three-way contracts with Catawba Valley Medical Center and Frye Regional Medical Center for inpatient indigent psychiatric beds. Although the money does not actually come to us, it must be put into the budget. We will get the money as we earn it. All of the money probably will not be expended this year. The contract with Catawba began December 1, 2008. The contract with Frye will probably begin next week or the first of March.
3. \$225,000 – additional funds to support Medicaid contract services through June 30, 2009

Ron Kendrick made a motion to approve the proposed revision to the FY 08/09 budget as presented. Lori Faulkner seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to approve the revision as presented.

Lori then referred to the handouts of the financial reports as of December 31, 2008 and January 31, 2009. The reports include both the income statements and balance sheets. As of January 31, 2009, assets total \$3,383,983 and liabilities total \$1,982, for a net income of \$3,382,001.

The State fronted some dollars at the beginning of the fiscal year (1/12 to LMEs) to satisfy legislative requirements. These dollars actually should have gone into the IPRS system rather than to the LMEs. Mental Health Partners received \$876,516 and included the dollars in the Federal/State line item on the financial report. There is now a need to repay those dollars. This obligation will be satisfied in two payments – one on February 20 and one on March 20.

The \$636,888 from Catawba County for settlement from FY 07/08 has been received. Lori also noted that expenditures for the year are on target.

## **Request for Burke and Catawba Dollars for FY 2009-2010**

It is time to make the request to both Catawba and Burke Counties for local dollars. Since we know that the counties will struggle with reductions in their revenue next year, Mental Health Partners is requesting the same amount in local dollars for FY 2009-2010 as we received in FY 2008-2009. We may be given less. Director Hardy referred to the spreadsheets that were included in the Board packet. He noted that each county has some common areas for the use of local dollars – mental health/substance abuse services in the jails, support of overtime to law enforcement related to involuntary commitments, etc.

Ron Kendrick stated that he has talked to Burke County Manager Ron Lewis and Burke County Commissioner Ruth Ann Suttle about working to increase the dollar amount for Burke County's participation with Mental Health Partners. An increase would be based on the tax base per capita, the percentage of giving, and the percentage of giving per capita as compared to other counties in the state. Director Hardy suggested scheduling a meeting with Ron Lewis, Ruth Ann Suttle, Burke Commissioner and Board member Bruce Hawkins, Sr., Ron Kendrick and himself to discuss this matter. The group would work to find a reasonable dollar amount for Burke's share and then determine what services could be provided with those dollars.

The request to Catawba County was due on February 13 and was made based on this Board's approval. There is not yet a time frame set for the request to Burke County. Director Hardy suggested taking action on the request to Catawba County and tabling the request to Burke County until the Board can further explore the subject of county participation.

The Board agreed with the Director's suggestion. Ron Kendrick made a motion to approve the dollar request to Catawba County as presented and table the request to Burke County. Bruce Hawkins, Sr. seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to approve the dollar request to Catawba County as presented and table the request to Burke County.

## **Adoption of Policies**

Melanie Britt, Policy Analyst for Mental Health Partners, presented seven policies for approval. The policies are as follows:

1. **Separation From Employment** – On the advice of the agency's legal representative, this policy was revised after the Board packet was mailed. There were no content changes, only wording changes. The revised policy was distributed prior to the opening of tonight's meeting.
2. **Client Assistance Funds** – This policy was originally approved at the September 2008 Board meeting. At that time, there were no client assistance funds available for consumers in Burke County. However, Burke County recently allocated \$30,000 for an assistance fund for its citizens. Therefore, the policy has been revised to apply to both counties. The matrix for the federal poverty guidelines has also been removed, with the policy revised to reflect that eligibility will be determined by the guidelines of the current year.
3. **Technology Plan** – Software and hardware must be secure. This policy states that Mental Health Partners will maintain a technology plan which will be reviewed annually. This will be a "fluid" document with changes being made as they occur.

4. **Authorization for CTSP Funding for Room and Board** – Funds from the Comprehensive Treatment and Services Program (CTSP) may be used to pay room and board for a child in a residential setting under certain circumstances.
5. **Travel/Training Reimbursement Policy** – Clarifies the expenses that the agency will/will not reimburse
6. **Reports of Possible Illegal, Unethical, or Dishonest Activity Policy (Whistleblower)** – All staff members of Mental Health Partners have an obligation to maintain integrity. An employee who reports a suspicion or knowledge of an illegal, dishonest, or unethical action is protected from retaliation. This policy is a requirement for CARF accreditation and is required under federal guidelines since Mental Health Partners receives federal dollars.
7. **Electronic Communication Policy** – Staff members of Mental Health Partners have no expectations of privacy while using agency equipment. Employees are responsible to ensure that all communication on agency equipment assigned to them is legal, ethical, responsible and appropriate.

Ron Kendrick made a motion to approve the seven policies as presented. Todd Carswell seconded the motion.

There was no discussion, and it was unanimously voted to approve all seven policies as presented.

#### **Information Items**

Acting Chair Von Beatty reviewed the information items with the group. All Board members are invited to attend the retirement reception for C.R. Turner on February 24.

With no other business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice D. Cornett  
Administrative Assistant II/ Clerk to the Board