

MENTAL HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES (MHRS) BOARD
Serving Coshocton, Guernsey, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble & Perry Counties
 1500 Coal Run Road – Zanesville, OH, 43701

GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS – REGULAR BOARD MEETING
(March 12, 2026)

ANNUAL BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

Prior to regular board meeting, MHRS Board Attorney Benjamin Humphrey presented the organization’s Annual Board Member Training – **1) AI Use in Behavioral Health; and 2) Executive Sessions @ Board Meetings.** ♦ He noted AI is reshaping behavioral health in some positive ways; but stressed that using AI for addressing behavioral health issues raises important ethical questions around privacy, bias, and safety. ♦ The Executive Session portion of the training pointed out that confidential sessions are sometimes needed, and the proper method for entering such sessions is necessary for maintaining trust, legality, and professionalism. *(Attorney Humphrey’s detailed PowerPoint document will be e-mailed to board members with the meeting minutes.)*

Dr. Dan Scheerer also shared a copy of a JAMA Article on Artificial Intelligence that portrayed AI mental health chatbots as a rapidly growing, accessible support tool — but one that comes with significant safety, privacy, and ethical questions. The article called for clearer guidelines and more research as millions of people turn to AI for help.

I. BOARD NOTIFICATION & COMPLIANCE WITH SUNSHINE LAW:

On March 2, 2026, board members, contract organization directors, service area news media, county boards of commissioners, and state legislators were notified that the Governing Board of Directors would meet on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at the MHRS Board Office — with the schedule of activities to include: 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., Annual Board Member Training; and 6:00 p.m., Regular Board Meeting.

II. CALL TO ORDER: Due to the inability of current officers to preside at the meeting, Sue Hoover called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS RATIFY THE APPOINTMENT OF SUE HOOVER AS PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE FOR THE MARCH 12, 2026, MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY REID CARPENTER. THERE WERE NO OBJECTIONS TO THE MOTION.

III. ROLL CALL:

Board Members Present:

- ***Sue Hoover, President Pro Tempore (Muskingum County)***
- ***Leondra Davis, Board President (Coshocton County) – Virtual***
- ***Reid Carpenter (Noble County)***
- ***Abby Corder (Muskingum County) - Virtual***
- ***Randi Earnest (Guernsey County)***
- ***William Johnson (Coshocton County)***
- ***Dr. Dan Scheerer (Muskingum County)***
- ***Tony Mayle, Jr. (Morgan County)***
- ***Wendy Starlin (Perry County)***
- ***Bonnie Taylor (Muskingum County)***

Board Members Excused:

- ***Sean Brady (Muskingum County)***
- ***Dennis Hitchcock (Muskingum County)***

- *Ben Taylor, Vice -President (Perry County)*
- *Cambridge Police Chief Dave Peoples (Guernsey County)*

There being ten board members present, a quorum was constituted for conducting official business.

Staff Members Present:

- *Misty Cromwell, Executive Director*
- *Sarah Reed, Director of Compliance & Quality Improvement*
- *Rhonda Hanes, Associate Director / Director of Finance*
- *Jamie McGrew, Director of Community Outreach & Programming*
- *Cassie Springer, Director of Community Engagement and Crisis Services*
- *Roger Birch, Director of Youth & Family Services*
- *Linda Hand, Administrative Coordinator*

IV. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

- *Theresa Kane, CEO, Behavioral Health Choices (present for FY 2027 RFA review).*
- *James McDonald, CEO, Allwell Behavioral Health & several other senior leadership staff members were present (in person and virtually) for the FY 2027 RFA review.*
- *Corrine Neptune and Madison Hartman, Student Observers*

V. **AGENDA:** Sue Hoover noted there were no changes to the pre-mailed agenda. RANDI EARNEST MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR THE MARCH 12, 2026, BOARD MEETING AS MAILED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY WENDY STARLIN AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

VI. **MEETING MINUTES:** WILLIAM JOHNSON MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 12, 2026, BOARD MEETING AS SUBMITTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY RANDI EARNEST AND A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDRADA DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA.

VII. **REVIEW HEARINGS – FY 2027 SERVICE PROVIDER REQUESTS FOR FUNDING:** MHRS Board staff and board members reviewed FY 2027 funding applications from 1) Behavioral Health Choices (that includes four BHC's from Guernsey, Morgan, Muskingum and Perry Counties) and 2) Allwell Behavioral Health Services. Action on RFA's will be made once all hearings have been conducted. Note: Concerns are growing about possible funding cuts in state and federal funding for behavioral health services, along with ongoing discussions about the possibility of eliminating property taxes. The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) is working on revenue sustainment advocacy talking points.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- ▶ Director Misty Cromwell's March Board Report listed various activities, as staff members worked toward meeting the MHRS Board's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- ▶ Misty introduced new employee, Cassie Springer, who will provide leadership in community engagement and monitoring the system's crisis services continuum.
- ▶ *(Some other activity summaries are included in the Board Meeting Highlights attached to the minutes.)*

IX. FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT: *(Dr. Dan Scheerer, Chair)*

1. ***Second Hearing – Resolution of Support for a Mortgage Transfer Requested by Allwell Behavioral Health:***

Following receipt of additional information related to updated financials and the organization's facility maintenance process, DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE BOARD OF

GOVERNORS APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, Allwell Behavioral Health owns property at 121 N. 18th Street in the city of Cambridge and County of Guernsey (“Property”) that is no longer needed for the operation of business, and as it would be in the best interest of the corporation to sell this property;

AND WHEREAS, the property is entailed under capital assistance mortgages numbered MH-849 (with a remaining balance of \$49,370.63); and MH-849A (with a remaining balance of \$14,291.67) – for a total remaining balance of \$63,662.30 as of February 2026;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Governors for the Muskingum Area Mental Health & Recovery Services Board supports the transfer of the balances of existing capital assistance mortgages to contract number MH-423, a capital assistance mortgage for the property at 3405 Dillon Acres Drive in the city of Zanesville, and County of Muskingum.

THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY WILLIAM JOHNSON AND A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDR A DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RECEIVING NINE POSITIVE VOTES.

2. **Financial Reports:**

Board members reviewed the following February 2026 financial reports: 1) Balance Sheet as of February 28, 2026; 2) Dashboard Report; 3) Report of Network Funding Reserves; 4) Year-to-Date Status Report for the MHRs Board’s Operating Budget; 5) Individual Counties’ FY 2026 Levy Fund Accounts; and 6) Reconciliation Report.

► **February 2026 Reconciliation Report:**

DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2026 RECONCILIATION REPORT AS SUBMITTED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY WILLIAM JOHNSON. Following review, A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDR A DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RECEIVING NINE POSITIVE VOTES.

3. **MHRs Board Calendar Year 2027 Operations Budget:**

DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE THE MHRs BOARD’S CALENDAR YEAR 2027 OPERATION BUDGET TOTALING \$1,399,410.88, THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY REID CARPENTER.

Fiscal Director Rhonda Hanes called board members’ attention to the Line Item Expense Narrative that was attached to the budget. Noted the CY 2027 budget represents a 14% increase over the CY 2026 budget.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS THEN TAKEN ON THE ABOVE MOTION AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA.

(According to state regulations, Virtual attendees Leondra Davis and Abby Corder were not able to vote on this issue, as it pertained to an amount above \$100,000.)

4. **‘Then and Now’ Certificate:**

DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVE A ‘THEN AND NOW’ CERTIFICATE FOR COLUMBUS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH LLC, P.O. #26-120628 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,800.00. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY RANDI EARNEST AND A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDR A DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA;

AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RECEIVING NINE POSITIVE VOTES.

5. *Special Allocation Request – Coshocton Behavioral Health Choices:*

DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD APPROVE A SPECIAL ALLOCATION TO COSHOCTON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CHOICES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,698.24 FOR UPGRADES TO THEIR PHONE, EMAIL, AND CYBERSECURITY SYSTEMS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY RANDI EARNEST.

It was noted that CBHC had outlined a comprehensive strategy for transitioning to Microsoft Outlook for email management, implementing Huntress for advanced security, and upgrading the organization's phone system. CBHC noted that these changes are vital steps toward building a robust infrastructure that supports a commitment to excellence and ensures the continuity of the organization's services.

A ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE ABOVE MOTION WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDRA DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RECEIVING NINE POSITIVE VOTES.

X. RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

WILLIAM JOHNSON MOVED THAT THE BOARD RECESS TO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO FURTHER ADDRESS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CY 2027 SALARY. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY WENDY STARLIN AND A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDRA DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RECEIVING NINE POSITIVE VOTES.

The Board of Governors recessed to Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. and returned to open session at 7:15 p.m.

Based upon an updated figure of Director Cromwell's FY 2026 salary, DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESCIND THE MOTION ADOPTED AT THE FEBRUARY 12, 2026, MEETING REGARDING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S SALARY FOR FY 2027. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY REID CARPENTER, AND A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; ABBY CORDER, YEA; LEONDRA DAVIS, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR, YEA. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RECEIVING NINE POSITIVE VOTES.

DAN SCHEERER MOVED THAT THE GOVERNING BOARD SET THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FY 2027 SALARY (EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026) AT \$123,600, REPRESENTING A 3% INCREASE. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY WILLIAM JOHNSON AND A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS: REID CARPENTER, YEA; RANDI EARNEST, YEA; WILLIAM JOHNSON, YEA; TONY MAYLE, YEA; DAN SCHEERER, YEA; WENDY STARLIN, YEA; AND BONNIE TAYLOR YEA. *(According to state regulations, virtual attendees Leondra Davis and Abby Corder were not able to vote on this issue, as it pertained to an amount above \$100,000.)*

XI. COMMENTS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:

► Director Cromwell noted that she would be contacting applicable board members whose terms

on the Board of Governors will expire at June 30, 2026, to determine if they are willing to serve another 4-year term (if that is permissible).

▶ Jamie McGrew noted she would share with board members information about an upcoming training sponsored by the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation — *“Exploring the Intersection of AI and Suicide Prevention.”*

XII. NEXT MEETING: The Board of Governors will next meet at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2026, at the MHRS Board Office. Committees will meet from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

SIGNATURES

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Linda Hand, Administrative Coordinator

Misty Cromwell, Executive Director

Sue Hoover, President Pro Tempore