

# **Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities**

## **August 22, 2023, Board Meeting**

### **Minutes**

#### **Call to Order:**

A meeting of the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities was held on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, at 2950 Whipple Avenue NW, Canton, Ohio. The meeting was called to order by President Sutter at 6:03 P.M.

#### **Roll Call:**

Board Members:

#### **Present:**

President Dan Sutter  
Vice President Carmelita Smith  
Recording Secretary Dr. Jessica Falvo Lang  
James Anderson  
Maria Heege  
Jennifer Moff  
Cindi Sutter

Also Attending:

Bill Green, Superintendent  
Brandon Haney, Information Technology Manager  
Leigh Donatella, CFO/Business Manager  
Lisa Parramore, Communications Manager  
Connie Poulton, Director of Human Resources

#### **In Memoriam:**

A moment of silence was observed for the following: Dawnell D. Poulos, age 65, passed away on Friday, May 12, 2023. She received services from our SSA Department; David C. Sams, age 72, passed away on Thursday, June 15, 2023. David worked in the Stark DD workshops and received services from our SSA Department; Thomas E. Breno, age 49, passed away on Saturday, June 24, 2023. He received services from our SSA Department; Brian Patrick, age 57, passed away on Friday, July 28, 2023. He received services from our SSA Department. Thomas J. Vaughn, the Board's Manager of MUI and Investigative Services, passed away peacefully on Monday, July 17, 2023, after battling stage 4 cancer for two years. Despite his illness, Tom continued to serve in his role until the end. Tom was a cherished member of the Board's Management Team and the Agency, dedicating nearly 27 years of service to the organization.

#### **Minutes of the Previous Board Meeting:**

President Dan Sutter requested a motion to approve the minutes from the Board Meeting held on June 27, 2023.

James Anderson moved for approval. Dr. Falvo Lang seconded.

The Board duly adopted.

#### **Public Speaks:**

None.

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**President's Report:**

President Sutter welcomed everyone to the meeting. Well, it has been a great summer with the approval of Governor DeWine's Biennial Budget, which significantly increased state funding to providers and direct support professionals. The budget coalition stayed united, and with the county board system, additional financial assistance resulted in a 38% increase for direct support professionals and providers, which equates to \$18 average per hour in January 2024, and \$19 average per hour beginning on July 1, 2024. This is exciting and represents an influx of money into our system that is unprecedented at an amount of just over a billion dollars. We hope this assists our provider community in addressing the workforce crisis. I attended the County Board association sponsored budget forum, which was a nice recap of the accomplishments of the association's lobbying efforts. We now will have the opportunity to have hybrid meetings, which was extended to us. All county boards will be able to use credit cards, and each board with the following vacancy will have to have a person served appointed to the Board. All and all, the ball has been moved forward for people with disabilities and their families. I know it is the beginning of the new school year, and I am excited to hear from our principals about what this year will bring.

Before I close, our September board meeting will be an abbreviated and our last board training of the year.

This concluded the President's Report.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Green welcomed everyone to the meeting. He started his report by sharing that today was the first day of our accreditation survey. He shared a PowerPoint presentation, and noted that we kicked off accreditation by welcoming 17 of our community partners to Whipple-Dale. The partners were introduced to the review team, and left to discuss their relationships and collaboration with Stark DD. President Sutter met with the Regional Accreditation Reviewer to have a discussion about the Agency's direction, culture, and how things have evolved. Bill shared that there are a total of 50 people in our sample, and at the end of day one, the plans had generated over 60 questions, reflecting that the reviewers are really diving in deep to ensure quality plans for the people we serve. They will also meet with the people we serve, and providers tomorrow. The reviewers are also taking a deep dive into submissions from our HR Department, Early Intervention Department, and MUI department. The exit conference is scheduled for Thursday around 3 p.m.

As a part of the entrance for the reviewers, Bill shared an overview of the changes that have been made in the SSA department. He shared that in the last year and a half, we have hired 40 SSAs. We have also reduced caseloads from an average of 1:35 down to 1:26. Restrictive measures caseloads have been reduced from 1:20 down to 1:16. We launched a mentoring program, where new SSAs are assigned a mentor, which provides the new SSA with someone they can ask questions to and seek guidance from. The department implemented a new 12-month intensive training program, inclusive of a 5-month training period in the beginning prior to receiving their caseload, which is reduced in the beginning to allow new SSAs to get their footing. We have also converted 1,575 ISPs over to the new OISP, which is the most in the state.

Our All Employee In-Service is scheduled for Friday, September 8. Attendees will be at tables of 10 this year, with a seating chart based on alphabetical order. We will have some icebreakers for people to get to know each other. Connie will present on Employee Recognition, highlighting employees who have reached service milestones. Each department will then share a success story. Mike Gallina will give a presentation on team building. Zion Clark will be our keynote speaker, who is most closely tied to Massillon, but actually attended Eastgate Preschool. Zion was born without legs, and will share his successes and how he overcame adversity. We will conclude the morning with a buffet-style lunch.

Superintendent Green shared that we will also be bringing back Social Nights, which will occur quarterly throughout the year. We will be piloting an electronic Board Packet in October, which will save us paper, and

will be similar to the paper forms, but will be accessible with the swipe of a finger. We will also hold the Great Pumpkin Race on October 28. Beginning in October and running through December, we will begin work on our Strategic Plan, during that timeframe, we will be also hopefully updating our website if the resolution later this evening is approved.

We will let you know Thursday afternoon what the outcome of Accreditation is. Our people have worked very hard throughout the year, and we are feeling cautiously optimistic.

This concluded the Superintendent's Report.

**Committee/Department/Other Reports:**

- A. Finance Committee – Minutes in Board packet  
Next Meeting: September 18, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.
- B. Personnel Committee – Minutes in Board packet  
Next Meeting: September 21, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.
- C. Ethics Council – No meetings in June or July  
Next Meeting: September 26, 2023, at 5:45 p.m., if needed

**Old and New Business:**

None.

**Presentation – Preschool and School-Age Programs**

Tammy Maney, our Early Childhood Director, shared a PowerPoint presentation. This year, the preschool has 80 students. We held 71 open houses over about two and a half days, where parents had about 45 minutes to acclimate to the classroom and meet the teachers and nurse. We have 24 with multiple disabilities, 23 students with autism, and 33 typically developing peers. We have eight Early Childhood Intervention Specialists, one BCaBA, 10 Intervention Specialist Assistants, 10 follow-alongs, 1.4 FTE Speech Language Pathologists, 2 FTE Occupational Therapists, 1 FTE Physical Therapist, and a 0.6 FTE Physical Therapist Assistant. We're brainstorming and planning on how we will meet the needs of our students.

When Leigh Donatella, CFO/Business Manager, called the preschool to let us know that we had money left to spend, we got to work. We spent \$4,000 on new switches, which help our students with visual impairments. A lot of our interactive toys were outdated, so we were able to replace the older ones. We purchased new computers for the classrooms. Each classroom has two teacher/staff computers, which the students are able to use these also. We purchased two new iPads for the classrooms also. We want to ensure that our students are ready for kindergarten at their public schools, so we felt it was important to update our technology.

We purchased new mats for our indoor gym space and Early Intervention Gross Motor room. The previous mats were mismatched and uneven, but we have updated the mats and painted the room as well, as well as added a climbing mountain. These can be used for indoor recess as well. Tim Beard, our Manager of Maintenance, also had a Mason who came in over the summer and made some repairs to our physical building as well. The building looks great!

Goals for this year include re-establishing a parent group, hiring a full-time speech pathologist, writing and implementing PBIS lesson plans, updating the Emergency Operations Plans, and of course, having a safe and healthy school year!

Next, Ginna St. Clair, our School Age Principal, shared slides about Southgate. Southgate started their school year with 82 students who are currently enrolled, with a few openings at certain grade levels. Three students

from last year have been transitioned to their home district or to an ESC classroom; two students were at Avondale previously, and one at Southgate, which is an exciting, big win, for us. Two students who had been placed on home instruction due to medical concerns have been able to return to school, which is always great news. Last year we did have ten students graduate also.

All teachers from last year returned for this school year, and all but one assistant returned, which is great for a positive start to the school year, and helps maintain the consistency that our students and families need. We hired three new assistants and promoted one follow-along to an assistant as well. We hired four new follow-alongs, and are fully staffed except for one follow-along opening.

This year, we are implementing a new data-taking system, Brolly, which will help us to improve the accuracy and consistency of student data, versus paper forms which are more likely to be lost/etc. We are working to develop graduation plans for all students beginning in grade 8 and track each student's path to graduation. Students need to demonstrate completion of course requirements, competencies, and readiness, like all students in Ohio, in order to earn a High School Diploma. In Ohio, they need to earn two seals. Our students are able to be excused from certain seals, which we don't know if it will remain in place, but based on the guidance right now, we are working to gain those needed seals for students to get their Diplomas. The requirements are written into their IEPs to help them reach the objectives. Some students will work towards work-readiness, and we will use a matrix that we developed to see if and how they can reach those goals. It is important to us, the districts, and students and their families, to have the opportunity to earn their diplomas, as the State of Ohio no longer offers completion certificates.

With our newer staff, we wanted to place some additional mentoring in place, so they have the support of their fellow coworkers. Some of the best advice and guidance we get is from our fellow teachers. We added this to make sure that our staff have peers they can approach for help.

Our goals for the school year include improving the quality, consistency, and accuracy of student data, monitoring student progress to measure their growth, and documenting their services. We also seek to improve the quality of instruction, as well as maintain staff morale, by providing consistent opportunities for co-teaching, peer mentoring and coaching, and peer observation for all teachers and assistants. Our final goal is to provide a pathway for all Southgate students to earn their high school diploma. We are looking forward to a great school year, and everyone is excited. We are so pleased to be fully staffed, which allows us to focus on instruction and improvement.

This concluded the presentation.

### **First Reading of Board Policies**

Connie Poulton, Director of Human Resources, gave the first readings on the following policies. These policies will be presented during the August Board meeting for second reading and Board approval.

*Policy 1.04 Appearance and Presentation before the Board - Reviewed*

*Policy 2.04 Approval of Manuals, Handbooks, and Resource Directories - Reviewed*

*Policy 2.27 Managing Cost-Effective Residential Support Services - Reviewed*

### **Financials and Board Resolutions:**

08-25-23: Operating Fund #071

<b>A. Two Payrolls for June</b>	<b>\$1,316,711.50</b>
<b>B. Bills for Payment in June</b>	<b><u>\$1,161,421.10</u></b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b><u>\$2,478,132.60</u></b>

08-26-23: Operating Fund #071

<b>A. Two Payrolls for July</b>	<b>\$1,257,193.77</b>
<b>B. Bills for Payment in July</b>	<b><u>\$7,671,272.71</u></b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b><u>\$8,928,466.48</u></b>

Dr. Falvo Lang moved for approval of Resolution 08-25-23 and 08-26-23. James Anderson seconded.

Discussion:

Leigh Donatella, CFO/Business Manager, reported that for the month of June, total local revenues received were \$130,277, total state revenues of \$228,124, and total federal of \$19,921, giving us total revenue for the month of June of \$378,323. We had two payrolls during the month at \$1.3 million; total benefits paid of \$713,072; and total other expenses of \$448,348, giving us total expenses of \$2.5 million. Our expenditures did exceed our revenue by \$2.1 million during the month of June.

Total local revenue for the month of July was \$133,870, total state revenue was \$256,086, and total federal revenue was \$587,933. There were two payrolls during the month of July, totaling \$1.25 million, total benefits paid of \$229,430, and total other expenses came in at \$7.4 million. Leigh noted that the Board did pay a waiver match and administrative fee payment in the month of July. Expenses did exceed our revenues by \$7.9 million for the month of July. Our carry-over cash balance at the beginning of the year was \$61.2 million. We have current-year open purchase orders of \$9.8 million, and have a -\$5.6 million in our year-to-date position, which gives us unencumbered cash of \$35.8 million at the end of July.

Looking at the budget versus the actual statement for June, our year-to-date revenue is \$28.6 million, which is 57.44% of what we expect to receive. Expenses totaled \$26.2 million, which is 43.71% of what we expect to spend, and with being about halfway through the year, the benchmark is about 50%. Our available budget at the end of June is \$26.5 million, mostly made up of personnel expenses and unencumbered waiver match. Total revenue for July was \$29.5 million, which is 59.47% of what we expect to receive. Total expenditures year to date were \$35.1 million, which is 58.6% of what we expect to spend, with a target of around 58%; therefore, we are running right around our targets. The available budget at the end of July is \$14.97 million, now mostly made of personnel expenses and waiver match.

For Resolution 08-25-23, there were two payrolls in June totaling \$1.3 million, and other June non-payroll expenses of \$1.16 million. For Resolution 08-26-23, there were two payrolls in July, totaling \$1.25 million, and other July non-payroll expenses of \$7.7 million. The last week is where we paid Waiver Match.

The Board duly adopted.

**08-27-23 Resolution to Approve an Agreement to Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Stark County Probate Court to provide funding for guardians of Last resort**

Maria Heege moved for approval. Carmelita Smith seconded.

Discussion:

Superintendent Green explained that the Board has been providing \$22,500 to fund guardians of last resort for people determined eligible for County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services. Given the increase in people needing professional guardians, the existing Memorandum of Understanding requires revision to ensure that it addresses the need as it relates to people with complex needs. When the Probate Court orders a Guardian of Last Resort, the Guardianship Agency identified will complete an Application for Approval of Guardianship Fees, and file it in the corresponding case file with the Probate Court. The Probate Court and the Guardian Oversight Council for Guardianship Services review the Application to ensure that guardian fees and charges are reasonable and appropriate. Upon approval of the Application, the Probate Court directs Stark Management Services, the fiscal agent located at 330 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW, Canton, Ohio 44702, to prepare an invoice for the Board with the Guardianship of Last Resort Services that are needed. The Probate Court ensures that any professional guardian assigned receives training on supporting people with intellectual disabilities and the developmental disabilities service delivery system.

The Board duly adopted.

**Resolution 08-28-23 approves an agreement to redesign and update the Board's public website**

Maria Heege moved for approval of the resolution. Dr. Falvo Lang seconded.

Discussion:

Lisa Parramore, Communications Manager, shared with the Board that the Agency's website has remained largely unchanged since its inception in 2013, and recent assessments have underscored the pressing need for a website upgrade. While it was an adequate platform then, technological advancements and changing user behaviors have outpaced its capabilities. In today's fast-paced digital landscape, the website's design, limited accessibility features, and outdated user interface hinder the ability to engage with stakeholders effectively, share critical information, and represent the agency in the best light. The lack of accessibility features and user-friendly design has created barriers for people with disabilities and those seeking information quickly and efficiently. As a result, the website is not serving stakeholders, including the public, government partners, and other key constituents.

Triad was chosen as the web developer and design partner due to their proficiency and proven track record of delivering user-friendly, accessible websites. Upgrading the Board's website demonstrates the agency's commitment to accessible resources, improving stakeholder satisfaction, and bolstering the agency's reputation in the digital realm.

The Board duly adopted.

**Second Reading of Board Policies:**

Connie Poulton, Director of Human Resources, gave a summary of the policies presented for second reading:

*Policy 1.02 Powers, Responsibilities, and Prohibitions of Board Members – Reviewed*

*Policy 4.19 Use of Social Media – Reviewed*

*Policy 4.24 Delays, Early Dismissals, and Closing Announcements – Reviewed*

*Policy 4.35 Jury Duty, Court Appearance, Subpoenas, Search Warrants, Investigations, and Other Legal Actions – Reviewed*

08-29-23: Resolution to approve the Board policies presented for second reading.

James Anderson moved for approval of Resolution 08-29-23. Carmelita Smith seconded.

The Board duly adopted.

**Adjournment:**

President Sutter requested a motion to adjourn. James Anderson moved for approval. Maria Heege seconded. The Board adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

**Note:** The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Ernest Cohen Room at Whipple-Dale Centre.