

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD  
JANUARY 11, 2023  
SHARWELL BUILDING**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

A meeting of the Human Services Advisory Board was Called to Order at 5:03 p.m. by Pete Smeltz, Chairman.

**Members:** Pete Smeltz; Michele Hazel; Virginia Council; Carla Mitcheltree; Commissioner Snyder; and Tara Ulrich.

**Staff:** Keith Wagner – Executive Director/MH-ID Administrator; Matt Salvatori - CYS Administrator; Kathy Hepler-AE Quality Manager and Aundrea Trautner- Administrative Assistant.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Due to a lack of attendees, there were not enough participants to meet the quorum requirements. No motion was held to approve the meeting minutes from 11/09/22. The minutes will need to be reviewed and approved at the next meeting to be held on April 12, 2023.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The election of officers has been postponed and will be decided at the next meeting to be held on April 12, 2023. Keith Wagner will send out a poll to ascertain any interest in the officer positions. Pete Smeltz noted that he would be willing to remain as Chairman.

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY STATEMENTS**

Keith Wagner noted that confidentiality policy statements must be signed yearly by board members. Those in attendance signed the form, and the rest will be sent out to the remaining board members prior to the next meeting.

**OVERVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY REPORT AND IM4Q UPDATES:**

Kathy Hepler, the Joinder's Administrative Quality Manager, provided the HSAB with a required update of Administrative Entity Quality Management Plan Objectives and IM4Q reporting information. She noted there were four ongoing objective areas addressed in the review period of 10/01/2022 to 12/31/2022: Individual to Individual Abuse; Employment; Restraints; and IM4Q. She provided a brief review of each objective which is summarized on the handout she distributed to the Board. She noted there were a total of 9 incidents of one-on-one abuse reported for this quarter. Agencies continue to support housemates and teach individuals non-violent coping skills. She noted that there were zero restraints used during this quarter. Regarding employment, there were no losses of jobs during this quarter, and one person was able to gain employment at a local restaurant. On the focus of IM4Q, the goal was to complete 100% of the considerations filed monthly. Only one consideration was filed during this time and was completed within 30 days, meeting that 100% goal. The summary documents distributed by Ms. Hepler are an attachment to these minutes (**Attachment A**).

## **Discussion:**

Carla Mitcheltree asked if these were the same employers from the past. Kathy Hepler responded that these were new employers, and the number of businesses willing to hire individuals is rising due to increased community involvement.

## **CYS LICENSURE**

Mr. Salvatori noted that once per year, the Children and Youth Agency is required to renew their license from the previous year. We have had good licensure reviews in the past, and the agency did well with the current one. The agency continues to meet the requirements and in the time frames needed. The Day Treatment Program is also required to renew its license once per year in October, which was also successful. Mr. Salvatori noted that there have been many new staff hires and was pleased with their performance and the overall outcome.

## **AUTISM WORKGROUP:**

Mr. Salvatori noted the recent startup of an Autism Workgroup in Lycoming County. He provided the OCYF background that inspired the idea. The workgroup, spearheaded by Judge Ryan Tira, looks to recognize those with ASD and evaluates our dependency system on how we can support children with autism and their families. Areas of note include the support and representation these families are provided when in court and the ease of entering and navigating the courthouse building and the hearing process. Many representatives from Lycoming County attended an Autism Summit in Lewisburg on December 8, 2022. It was decided that Lycoming County needed to develop a training plan that focused on educating members of the sheriff's department, JPO, EI, and other courthouse staff. The goal is to offer continued training and education to ensure a good system is in place that recognizes the needs of individuals with ASD. The group plans to meet each month going forward.

Keith Wagner noted that there was a great deal of passion surrounding this project. The courthouse can be an intimidating place for those diagnosed with ASD. The security process can be stressful, with noises from walkie-talkies and other distracting concerns. iPads are not allowed in the courthouse, and they are often a tool used by people with ASD to communicate and self-soothe. The focus of this group is to develop protocols that make navigating the court process easier for those with ASD.

## **CYS FAMILY CENTER:**

Mr. Salvatori provided a brief history of the Shelter building located at 192 Beach Road, Montoursville, PA. After the closure of Shelter services in 2015, many programs have investigated the building and its possible uses. A recent decision was made to move the visitation program from the Sharwell to the Shelter building. This move has many benefits, including the new addition of a playground, and the existing gymnasium and large kitchen facility. Large grounds for picnics are also available, and this new space will open greater opportunities to make visits more family-friendly. Mr. Salvatori also noted the prospect of opening the building to be used by groups and members of the local community.

Keith Wagner noted that moving the visitation staff to the Shelter building would open office space at the Sharwell that could have potential uses for other units. He mentioned that the current building lease expires in 2024, and the landlord must be notified of our renewal by June 2023.

**Discussion:**

Pete Smeltz inquired if there was a bus route that could take clients back and forth from town. Mr. Salvatori responded that while there is a bus route, it does not run frequently. The visitation staff have been looking into transportation options that would ensure client convenience.

Michele Hazel asked if there are any considerations for programs to offer activities to children at the new building so that foster parents could have time away. In addition, Carla Mitcheltree noted that at the previous meeting, there were concerns from foster parents who felt left behind and requested additional supports and resources. In past meetings, there was a discussion about partnering with local college students to help local foster families.

Mr. Salvatori stated that would not be an option at this time. He also noted that foster parents have opportunities to take breaks and request respites. Foster families also have the option to make other childcare arrangements. He agreed that it was a wonderful idea. Still, there are a lot of variables at play surrounding the court system and who is allowed to maintain even temporary custody and contact with children while in care. Mr. Salvatori also noted that fewer children are in care than there was 20 years ago, and roughly 45% of those children are fostered with family and through formal kinship.

**OTHER BUSINESS:****MH Funding**

Pete Smeltz noted issues surrounding the availability of funding for mental health services at the state level. Keith Wagner agreed that mental health has been woefully underfunded for close to 20 years. He mentioned the state working towards developing commissions to oversee the disbursement of new funding. Mr. Wagner also noted that there has been discussion about assembling a group of people to meet with legislative parties to express the need for increased allocations of funds.

**NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT:**

It was noted that the next quarterly meeting of the Human Services Advisory Board is scheduled for Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at the Sharwell Building. With no further business before the HSAB, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith A. Wagner  
MH/ID Administrator

Matthew Salvatori  
CYS Administrator