

Ottawa County Commissioners Special Public Hearing – Withdrawal from a Joint-County Community Mental Health Board

May 12, 2021

A virtual public hearing was held using the zoom platform with the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. The participant list included 45 individuals.

The Commissioners began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Douglas (DD) thanked all who were in attendance at today's public hearing and will call to order the public hearing this is specific to the withdrawal from the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Erie & Ottawa Counties (MHRBEO). I want to start with some comments. The Ottawa County Commissioners scheduled this public hearing today inviting public comment regarding a possible pathway that would ensure uninterrupted services to both current and future Ottawa County clients requiring mental health and recovery services. We want to make it clear that our goal and objective is to maneuver through this period of change with zero disruption to those currently receiving treatment and our hope would be that this new path leads to expanded programs and better recovery outcomes. Again, our goal is for current service provider contracts for the upcoming fiscal year, just keep in mind there is no intention those, would remain in force and we would hope there is no disruption there at all to the clients.

The public comment we are seeking today is forward thinking. The decision to dissolve this board has already been made by Erie County. They conducted two public hearings and passed a resolution to withdraw from the MHRBEO. That leaves us, Ottawa County, faced with the finding the best possible outcome for Ottawa County residents. We have sought out guidance from all County Prosecutors involved, Secretary of State, as well as the Director of the OhioMHAS. Their input has guided us and prepared us to date.

We have shared our intentions with all or most of you attending today and as an alternative to attending virtually today, we also invited written testimony or letters of support. To date we have received 16 responses and just from 30,000 feet to give you an idea and again those would be available to you as they are public record and if you would like to see those at some point you may request those. 13 of those coming in all indicated no objection basically full support of our support of our intentions. 3 shared their thoughts of support to a single county board approach and only 1 of the letters suggested we reject Erie County's request to dissolve the current Board.

Just a couple housekeeping comments before we get started – again we are using zoom and ask that to be called upon raise your hand using the zoom feature or put a comment in chat that you would like to make public comment this morning. In order to be respectful of everyone's time today we are ask that you try to limit your time to 10 or 15 minutes. Depending upon how long this goes on we may entertain a break at the 90-minute mark if we would get there and other than that we will open it up at this time for public comments.

So again, raise your hand and we have one already. Put a comment in the chat box if you would like to be called upon and we will start calling you off individually for your public comments.

Tom Clemons - board member - Thank you very much Commissioner Douglas, Commissioner Coppeler, and Commissioner Stahl appreciate this opportunity to address you with my concerns. As an Ottawa resident and also as a current member of the MHRBEO - I have spent about 36 years in the public supported mental health systems in Ohio as a therapist, program director and director of a 4-county mental health agency and also about 20-23 years of working for the Wood County Alcohol, Drug Addiction Mental health services board the last 7 years as their Executive Director. I served on many task forces state wide and regionally and also a number of statewide committees. I think I bring some experience to my comments today. My main concern is client care – care for families – care for successful workers working in local businesses. That is the main issue that I have today. My concern is the push to try to end this current joint board relationship within about a month and half and that could

mean termination of services or the interruption of services for a while and that is my biggest concern. Over my years I have seen that happen where the clients and family have no choice but to end an important therapeutic relationship or sometimes several therapeutic relationships because of a change of a contract that are going on. So administrative choices can have a devastating impact on people who are often fragile and who are dependent, even if they are stable, they are dependent upon an ongoing therapeutic relationship with a psychiatrist, nurse, case managers, therapists and sometimes several all combined as well as certain support groups and the humanity. So my concern, I understand this dissolution is going to be happening, seems like it is going to be happening - so I'm not going to talk about concerns with that whole process. I do want to mention first and foremost the concern of the families and clients, friends and co-workers. So given what I said, and by the way I have seen in these interruption of services increase suicidal behavior and also relapses in substance abuse. To rush this whole process while it may be a little bit of a headache administratively I think could be potentially very devastating for those people that we exist to serve. So that is my first and main point. The second thing is by trying to rush this decision to make it effective by July 1, there are a number of contracts then that need to be discussed and considered – the current MHRBEO is undergoing making allocation decisions for fiscal year, state fiscal year 2022, which begins on July 1. In order to do that the allocation decisions need to be made and are being made thoughtfully, carefully, professionally, but there then needs to be contracts that need to be written. Provider services need to have assurances that contracts are coming – if an agency such as the board is dissolved during this time period, or during this 1<sup>st</sup> year without a planned transition not only to providers but to the benefit of clients – I think this could result in a number of potential legal possibilities, liabilities – if you have a contract in place which is something the board needs to be doing to plan for this next coming year – fiscal year – the law currently states that you need to have 120 day notice to at least break the contracts and to me it will take time to do. Legally without incurring any liability to the board and potentially to other parties you will need the time to plan for this. I will say that should the Commissioners decide to enter into a merger with the MHRBSSW - I want to say that I know the Executive Director, Mircea Handru and I have nothing but extreme respect and confidence in his capabilities and his staff capabilities to do an excellent job, but even there he will need time to work things out and make the new contracts written for services in Ottawa County that will take some time, there also may need recruitment of agencies that are willing to provide the excellent services that I think the residents of Ottawa County really need – such as in-home 24-hour crisis intervention services. Right now, we do not have that as a possibility, also in-home evidence based extremely effective - especially cost effective services be provided in homes. To families with children and dysfunctional family therapy, dialectical behavior therapy and groups and also serving community treatment teams. These are effective programs that have shown to reduce hospitalization, reduce suicidal deaths, improve worker productivity, and improve getting jobs, paying jobs, and also saving costs in the short and long run. When I was in Wood County we were able to implement several of these programs and services. Reduced our psychiatric hospitalization we reduced our re-arrests and we reduced the use of emergency rooms 24/7 and sometimes represents a safety concern for those involved and bystanders, and other patients in the ERs. These things take time to do so my main urge here is to after continuity of care for clients and families to take the time needed to do the due diligence legally to make sure the new contracts are in place in a timely manner to allow for continuation of services and enhancement of services that would be cost effective. I think long run – while I have extreme confidence in Director Handru and his staff, I also wonder really long term – I believe it will probably be in the best interest of Ottawa County to consider to look into being a single county board. No offense to the MHRBSSW whatsoever, but becoming part of a 4-county board, there might be just 2 representatives on the board from Ottawa County voting members of that board and I think that the representation for the County would best be served perhaps by a 14 board maybe a little smaller – not smaller than 12 if that is permissible in the future to serve and be able to listen to directly all of the mental, substance abuse concerns for Ottawa County. I appreciate your time and your patience with me and thank you for your consideration.

DD - Tom thank you for your comments this morning. Your comments are duly noted. I think as you know we have a comprehensive plan that needs to be prepared and submitted to the state which I would hope addressed

the majority of those concerns and I have to believe that the guidance that we are looking for from the State Director would also be taking all of those things into consideration as well. Any other comments from other Board members here at this time .... No comments

DD - Thank you again Tom

DD - At this time I will call on Glenn Osowski – Glenn the floor is yours.

Glenn Osowski – board member. Thanks Rhonda and Commissioners – appreciate the time and opportunity to express my concerns and opinions regarding the split and as Tom said I think that is water under the bridge and what are we going to do at this point that best serves the Ottawa County residents. I am a resident of Ottawa County, I am former Marine Corp combat veteran, spent the last 16 years as a mental health professional with the Department of Veteran Affairs and I still provide mental health services to the Department of Veteran Affairs I have been a board member for 2 years and appointed by the State of Ohio and for the last year have been the finance chair for the MHRBEO. The first thing I would like to do and the Commissioners may be aware of this but I think it's important to understand the history of the MH Boards and why they were created and put into perspective of what is going on here. The reason the State of Ohio decided the MH boards were important is because the county governments that were in charge of the mental health funds at the time were not doing a very good job managing the mental health funds. I'll leave it at that. Plenty of research that you can find that for yourself. Some of the counties and financial issues that then created the mental health boards. The one thing I wanted to talk about briefly even though not directly related to this - is the obviously the legislation and the amendments about the representation of the boards and slimming them down. I think and I will also say for the record I am a registered Republican and I think that is important for everyone to know. I have never seen any place where a community is provided any sort of services that can be better by having less representation on these county boards. Most importantly limiting the people that have suffered mental health or are suffering with mental health illness and the family members that have gone through losses of loved ones to be eliminated from the process of this board and sitting on this board, I think it is a very big disservice and almost malfeasance in my opinion and not to have any mental health providers who become the experts on the board to provide guidance and assistance to the Executive Director and you may not even have mental health professionals on the board. Also as finance chair I wanted to talk briefly about the impact of the split between Erie & Ottawa Counties. I know the Commissioners are well aware, and it is important to realize the Erie County tax levy to our budget was \$2.3M; Ottawa County's budget contribution was basically \$2.068M. So that is a total of \$4.5M the remaining budget of our current \$10.5M is provided by the state, federal and local grants that the board receives. I find it interesting though in regards specifically to Ottawa County that those state, local and federal funds represented in 2018 about 31% of the budget, while Erie County provided 69%; 39% and 60% in 2019 of the same 2 numbers. I think it is really important then to look for an example of showing how Ottawa County has always gone above and beyond in providing Erie County finances for Ottawa County residents who did not use the services yet are doing a full share of getting our funds to provide those services. For instance if you look at Bayshore of their budget of \$985,000 - \$733,000 was provided by Erie County and \$252,000 by Ottawa County. Yet less than 15% of Ottawa County residents actually used those services. So Ottawa County funding paid for Erie County resident services. I think this is just one example and I can go through all of them and basically the same the biggest 3 – Firelands and Volunteers of America – shows the same misrepresentation of funds. As sure as the taxpayers are wanting to make sure our Ottawa County funds are getting a correct reimbursement back to the people of Ottawa County really need to look at that. That is one of the things Handru will have to look at and explain if you vote to go with that – how are we assured we will get the total share of our contribution to the Ottawa County residents. Which goes to my same point that I will echo that Mr. Thomas (Clemons) said that that in itself is the best example of why a single board in the long term is the best way to go and having the Ottawa County Board knowing what the Ottawa County needs are and what the residents are, providers are, and users are to be a custodian of our own funds. Couple of other comments I would like to make. Very interesting in this whole process that you reference the Erie County hearings and found it troubling, but understandable, that we only heard from a couple of providers

both of those that we heard from were absolutely for splitting up the Board, not surprisingly. The issue is the providers – they are caught in a rock and a hard spot – providers have not been able to place a true opinion throughout this because they are afraid they are going to cut off the hand that feeds them. This puts them in a politically precarious position. To say yes the Erie & Ottawa County boards have done us well – we have not complaints - it is important to note that in my 2 years and the Executive Director can probably talk about it longer we have not turned down one provider for funding, not one request for funding. We see what I will call falsehoods published or otherwise pushed around in public meetings. I find that decisions based on not factual information very problematic. I think the diligence and the mere importance of you 3 Commissioners to make sure that that bill is done so you understand the complete picture. The other thing financially of note is although the discrepancies of the population of Erie & Ottawa counties is different, again realize those levy dollars the difference is only \$200K so sometime did Ottawa County even get an equal representation of their funds in terms of the makeup of their population when the board was certainly much heavier supported or provided board chairs seats by Erie County. Again, that is the thing if the legislation by Swearingen and Gavarone gets approved how possibly are we going to be able to represent Ottawa County with 4-boards working together. Important thing to know is the administrative contracts that you Commissioners – that would be staff that would be internal accounting procedures that maybe people we have contracted for administrative support those contracts were all 50/50 so Ottawa County paid 50% of the employment costs of this board. 50% of any sort of contract that we may have used in terms of public relations, advertising for levies, all that stuff was done 50/50. I think it is important to realize the financial impact – I find it interesting too again focusing on the providers right – this all trickles down from a mental health provider – what comes from the top is what provides the services and how well those services are provided below. I think it's just rushing this – because here's the thing I don't understand – if something is brought to the public – and taken the time to really understand the facts and everything - why does it have to be rushed. Why can't we all do our diligence, why do amendments – which is not really in call here – by why is an amendment going to become a law on mental health when it doesn't go through a committee and have the proper process. If you are presenting something that is good and right it can go through the scrutiny of a political process that was set up to make those laws. That is not happening with these decisions and it will have a drastic effect on the most vulnerable people who do not have a voice in this and we are supposed to be representing and that is really important to remember. Maybe 2 other notes and I'll close. I joined this board because I thought it would be the most apolitical board one could possibly joint. How could there be disagreements in terms of providing services to those that need mental health services – why is there such a fight over mental health services? If I would have known when the State of Ohio asked me to serve on this board that I would be tied up in political consternation and political battles to do simply the right thing I find disturbing and quite frankly upsetting. The last thing I am going to say is this process that has happened started probably I don't know when, I don't know how long ago it was under consideration by Erie County but our Executive Director, Brenda Cronin, has been absolutely attacked unfairly by all sides – by the press, by the Erie County government officials – you know the great thing about this board is each board member votes on a decision – these are not Brenda Cronin decisions every funding decision everything we have voted on were board member votes. And when you review the board vote and look at the board minutes it is very clear to see the process out of this, but it an absolute shame and I cannot express myself any stronger that Brenda Cronin has been an advocate and most importantly you Commissioners you need to realize she was appointed to a joint board – a joint board which means she has to look out for the best scenario for both counties – not favoring one or not favoring the other but what is the best interest for everyone and Erie County has consistently felt that they were not getting what they wanted or what they needed from the Executive Director. She was actually being a steward – a proper steward to ensure Ottawa County and its residents were getting the services they deserve and needed and I think that it is just unbelievable that people have not looked at the facts and only looked at one-sided facts and we can go back to the nursing decision and I'm going to talk about that and then I'll close. The nursing decision in the county jails – approximately 9 months ago the Erie County Commissioners made a request of this board the MHRBEO to fund a jail nurse – the board including the Erie County board members voted unanimously to say no to that request based on a couple of things. Based on #1 it was out of our scope – if you understand the MHRBEO scope it was out of

scope and the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing is that nowhere in the state of Ohio does any MHRB fund a county position/employee. So that is the reality of it and it is also called mission... most importantly let's not forget that the MHRBEO under the Executive Director leadership is already funding \$400,000 services of mental health services to Erie & Ottawa County jails. And finally on that point – you know who provides those services to the Erie County and Ottawa County jails the mental health services – it's Firelands. You know what Firelands – when asked during committee hearings what their opinion was of this nurse they said it is not needed. It is not going to be helpful to provide mental health services to this jail. Here is what we do need – we may need 10 or 20 hours of a psychiatrist, or a psychiatric nurse practitioner to help with assessments and prescribing psychotropic medication. I was the first one to say I would support that but let's find that today. No one wanted to listen to that so you have to understand the frustration of that as a board member when I am sitting there and we are hearing the experts who are on the ground providing services say we don't need something. The Director, Brenda Cronin and Diane Taylor both recommend against doing this and this board somehow says no we are going to approve it. The Board knows more apparently there is some board members that know more about mental health services than the people providing them in the jail and our Executive Director and so they have to own those votes. And that's what I am talking about, those votes and those decisions are not Brenda Cronin's they are this board and so thank you for your time.

DD - Thank you Glenn for your time and your perspective on many issues – I'm going to make a few comments on clarification on a few things – one of the points you made was in reference to board size and I will say that as far as SSW goes – they are a 14 member board today and there is no intention of downsizing that board and again we have not seen the final legislation but it is our intention that whatever is going to come through will hopefully provide latitude for board size and won't be a mandate of any kind. For the discussion today – the intent with the board we are considering a merger with it would remain and we would have representation there and if anything that board would likely grow before it would decrease. Another comment I will make is you made comments about the funding balance between Erie & Ottawa and I will tell you and I think again in the materials that were shared one of the most attractive things about the potential merger and setup with SSW is the fact that your funds are your funds – the funds do not all come in and get mixed up and disbursed in anyway shape or form. Ottawa County's silo is our silo and those moneys are used in Ottawa County and that is the same for the other 3 counties and that is probably one of the most attractive things to this concept or merger with them. Again it makes sense. It makes sense because we know that today there is an imbalance there. That is all I wanted to comment on at this point. At a later point I will call on Mircea to explain some of those things in more detail too and I will do that at the end. At this point and time we have another person interested in providing comment today and that is Melanie White.

Glenn - Just before – I'm sorry Mr. Commissioner just make sure they mute me now so no one hears me huffing and puffing.

Melanie White – NAMI SSW – Thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. My name is Melanie White and Executive Director of NAMI SSW and I have had the privilege to work with not only work Mircea for many years but also with many of our partners and Ottawa County as well. If you are not familiar with who we are – NAMI affiliates are formed around MH boards so I would like to first of all point out that we already have strong partnership with all of our community agencies and partners and we work very closely with Firelands, MH board and we've worked with all the MH boards in all 6 county areas. We have been providing support services for our clients and for residents of Ottawa County for many years. If they call us we provide those services. In fact, with our CIT program if you are not familiar with the CIT program in 2018 Erie/Ottawa formally joined our partnership and now we are a 6-county program and serving over I think 60 agencies law enforcement agencies in a 6-county region. It is very successful program and we have a strong team that build with and grow that program – we have a retired chief who is growing that opportunity. What I would like to point out is we have been providing these services for the other counties at really because Mircea has been kind enough to allow us to expand our services to meet the needs of these agencies have asked for they come to us and ask for our help and Mircea has been very

supportive of us proving these services out of his budget. We have not billed other boards for these services since we have been providing them. So I just want to point out that it really is with a growth and change and increase in level of crisis calls we are receiving we would really continue to support and like working with our partners in Ottawa County along with Erie County and Huron as well. This partnership I think is going to be very positive for all of the community members in Ottawa County. NAMI Ohio and NAMI SSW would be prepared to incorporate NAMI – Ottawa County under us affiliate and would increase the level of services there that can be provided and let me give you an example of that. We have a new program called Crisis Navigation and that works individually one on one with families with individuals who are in crisis. Very successful program and I don't know and I can't speak for how that might expand but we are very good at what we do at NAMI providing education, advocacy, and support. We work hand-in-hand with Firelands, with hand-in-hand with really all the important community partners and I would like to encourage you to really be open to the value that can be added to Ottawa County by this merger and by really just embracing the opportunity for a strong organization like NAMI and like Mircea's board to be able to think and respond to what your needs are there. I think maybe I could say a lot more but I think I want you to be aware that we are ready – NAMI's ready and we support this and just know that we are already providing services through the kindness through MHRBSSW. Any questions for me?

DD – Thank you Melanie – thank you for your comments. Any questions for Melanie? Hearing none we are going to move on and will yield the floor to our next individual and that would be John Fletcher. John go ahead the floor is yours.

John Fletcher – board member. Thank you. I am a resident of Harris Township and a member of the MHRBEO and I was appointed by you Commissioners in 2017. Just before I start my prepared remarks I just wanted to go back to one thing that was just said about the taxes and so forth. That is the understanding that the split between the 2 counties the context is here we were funding a regional organization and we we're funding it based on the tax valuation of the total district. If it falls one way or the other across one side of the bridge or the other it is the total district that we are talking about here in terms of where the valuation comes from and where the tax levies come from. There is a disproportionate spin and that has nothing to do with the regional concept of the revenue side. You can make the comparison but the answer is the spend is for the total district it may fall differently on either side of the bridge. But the revenue comes from the total district. Just so we understand where the revenue is and where the expenses fall. With that I do want to mention that my remarks were submitted yesterday in accordance with the rules and I ask that the Commissioners please consider the most recent strategic plan passed by the board as a part of your consideration in terms of board outcomes expected for both counties.

I am providing testimony today to urge the Board of Commissioners to reject the Plan for Dissolution of the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Erie-Ottawa Counties (MHRBEO) as drafted by the Erie County Commissioners and to request a stay of the consideration of a resolution to join the Sandusky, Seneca, Wyandot Mental Health and Recovery Board (MHBSSW).

Let me start with the dissolution plan. The revised code requires the withdrawing county to submit a resolution requesting withdrawal together with a comprehensive plan in compliance with rules adopted by the director of mental health and that provide for the equitable adjustment and division of all services, assets, property, debts, and obligations, if any, of the joint-county district to the board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services, to the boards of county commissioners of each county in the district, and to the directors. The dissolution plan calls for Ottawa and Erie Counties to establish ADAMHS Boards (or join an existing board) and operate. There is no comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan would provide for pro forma financial statements demonstrating the sufficiency of funds to fully fund the contracts which have already been entered into for the next fiscal year. A comprehensive plan would provide for the engagement of an executive director with sufficient credentials to be approved lead a Board. A comprehensive plan would show the anticipated staffing needs and their roles. The proposed three-person oversight board is apparently charged with operating an effective Board and being a watch dog for the Commissioners of both counties. An impossible task given all the masters to please. Each and every

provider invoice has to be analyzed to determine the share belonging to each county. Very tedious work that must be subjected to periodic audits. As of today there has been no contact from the Erie County Commissioners or their staff to reach out to the MHB for records. In the plan there are no provisions for independent verification of the work. You Commissioners, in both counties are setting aside a vote of the people of the special tax district – 75% of those supporting the tax levy. Those taxpayers and voters must insist that the process be correct. They deserve more than a comment that the voters didn't know what they were voting for - they just went along as your colleagues the Erie County Commissioners testified, with examples – Mrs. Shenigo, and Mr. Shoffner's mother and sister. The voters deserve more credit for their diligence when voting for a tax levy. You have to get this right!

Further the ORC provides that No county participating in a joint-county service district may withdraw from the district without the consent of the director of mental health and addiction services nor earlier than one year after the submission of such resolution unless all of the participating counties agree to an earlier withdrawal – You Commissioners do not have to agree to the early withdrawal. There are no reasons set forth in the Erie County withdrawal resolution that warrant the immediate consideration by You Commissioners. Mr. Douglas was present at the two hearings. The testimony centered on meeting decorum, charges of dysfunction, communication issues, and a host of issues with past-project scopes and completion times. Not a single mention of an unfunded project was made. Each year the MHB reports the plan for the district as is required by the revised code to the State Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OHMAS). That plan is either approved or disapproved and that is how Eligibility for state and federal funding is determined. That plan has been approved every year and all state and federal funding has been available. Let me repeat that at no time has there ever been a disapproved plan. Something you commissioners in both counties should applaud not tear down. Further the Code provides that You Commissioners are not required to provide resources beyond the total amount set forth in a budget and statement of services to be provided by the MHB. So, if the plan is judged to be approved it is meeting the needs of the tax district. The reasons for the immediate withdrawal are weak, they were no better demonstrated than The Erie County Treasurer Elect Caleb Stidham testifying at both hearings how he was badly treated by some board members and then showed a time consuming, out of context, recording of a board discussion on a motion that was withdrawn. No wonder the hearing took so long. The State Director in her deliberations for consent should weigh the effectiveness of the MHB against the reasons for withdrawal. The writers of the statute certainly must have expected more significant issues than those cited by the Erie County Commissioners to cause this level of upset in the community my hope is the Director follows their lead.

In regards to the reasons for the split – the Erie County Commissioners have yet to respond to records request asking for the reasons for the withdrawal. They also not responded to written questions submitted to them at the public hearings. The process is moving too fast – it suggests that even the Erie County Commissioners do not have the necessary information at their disposal to make a credible response to questions that should have been answered before they acted. Do NOT validate their lack of preparedness by agreeing to a withdrawal without all of the information and data that you need. Again, you are considering collecting taxes for a purpose other than what the voters approved.

Do NOT be in a hurry, the board is functioning fine, services are being provided, all is well in both counties.

Let the Erie County Commissioners know that every dollar of cost related to the withdrawal must be paid for by Erie County – In the plan it states the oversight board will hire staff – what is the expected budget for the staff and what assurance do the citizens of Ottawa County have that no moneys from the transfer of balances is used to fund the oversight function. In that regard – Ottawa County must insist that either all of the members of that board be independent from the commissioners or that Ottawa County get the majority of the membership. Those members should also be compensated. There must be an agreed upon charter for the oversight committee. The duties in the Erie agreement are a great starting point but they are likely all in the favor of the writers. At no point can any of the financial information provided by the Erie County Commissioners be relied upon without verification. At the hearings Commissioner Douglas attended the only financial matters testified to by the

commissioners consisted of a clerk advising of correcting entries and alleging those entries would somehow tip off some auditor of an impropriety as if the present CFO who was an auditor would be so unwise; and criticism of running a campaign to pass the levy. Apparently, all the commissioners could have done it better, more effectively, and with a lower cost. That's it with respect to fiscal matters and transactions.

If the Erie County Board of commissioners is setting aside the sacred vote of the citizens in this county, you commissioners have the obligation to be certain that none of the costs – none of the costs be borne by the Ottawa co residents, especially those who are the consumers.

IN the plan of dissolution there should be hired by the Erie County Board of commissioners at their expense an attorney to review the transfer documents and procedures, an accounting firm to ascertain that all money, the value of properties, and any future benefit that may have been due Ottawa county is fully compensated. All of the detail of the transaction should be run past a newly established citizen advisory board here in Ottawa County BEFORE decisions are made. That keeps the process completely in Ottawa County's favor.

There should be a thorough review of all the debt guarantees or convents that may exist for the property to remove any and all obligations of Ottawa County

Your resolution does not provide for continuation if the OHMAS board rejects the withdrawal or delays the withdrawal that should be provided for. The reasons provided to the public at the hearing were weak at best and it would not be unreasonable for the board to reject.

As to the joining of the multi county MHBSSW. The model as presented to the commissioners at the special meeting was a wonderful overview. Perhaps these questions were asked. Is there an agreement in place to continue programs or services that may be at odds with other counties? What assurance beyond one year so do you have? For instance, best practices for county MHB is to stay out the business of funding corrections related personal. Case in point – the Erie and Ottawa co. jail nurse. Attempting to tie that funding to a person in other counties may not be practical and that board may not choose to fund in order to keep the peace in other counties. Not all of the county levies in the other counties could generate enough levy funds to provide if the commissioners are already fully funding all of the corrections needs. Another, could be the costs of recovery housing in Ottawa co vs the rest of the counties. There also may be policies on how much fund raising is expected from non-medical providers. Presently most of the programs are 100 % funded by levy dollars and a portion of the fund raising efforts are "paid back" to the board for use in other programs. The same issues with corrections may also be present in the funding of probate court wards. This is again a funding that may be unique to the present board that may cause an issue with other counties and the funding is stopped.

The million-dollar rebate while generous is mostly a result of covid, and the funding programs that were budgeted but not able to be completed. That excess is presently being spent down by opening spending opportunities to the community. Almost 1 million of applications have been received.

There is not a comprehensive funding plan for the Eire County New Board. As distasteful as it may seem there needs to be extra oversight to ensure that our funding is not commingled. The board of commissioners should consider someone from another county to head the oversight board. The complete appearance of independence is required in this business. Given the reputation of the Erie Commissioners and there inexperienced administrator.

I would urge the Commissioners to establish their own board and contract for administration. This keeps local control and continuation of the present services This is an alternative to the joining of the board that could be a better model for Ottawa County. Maybe the voters would prefer it to remain here. However you slice it you are taking away their vote. You do not need to be pressured into an agreement with another board because of the timeline with of the Erie County Commissioners over some spat where their desires were not met. For the

expected contribution to the new joint board you could get a lot of services. This alternative should be fully explored before you agree to a withdrawal. Insist on the time to explore all options before you jump.

Clearly, you have the option of keeping the same arrangement with Erie county as well but it should be changed. Maybe a model where local levies support local projects and the administrative costs can be shared.

Further, no involvement has been had with the CFO of the present board. How can you in good conscience bet on the come that it will work itself out. This is a 7 million budget presently that requires expertise and experience to navigate. The extent of the process in Erie County was to have a person testify that correcting entries were a bad idea. That was it.

Beware without raising taxes or cutting current services especially if they are intent on picking up additional correction, child services, and health department cost shifts there is not enough money. BEWARE. By them telling you are getting a \$million you may be cheated out of a few hundred thousand just to get it done. Don't trust them. Your taxpayers are watching and will demand a full and complete accounting with a full report when this is concluded. For put bill inspection and if necessary, law suits and challenges. There must be a contingency fund establish within the Erie county portion to provide for the cost out the and to further indemnify Ottawa county. All for this of this decoupling need to be borne by the Erie County board.

There are questions about how to split anticipated funding that may benefit Ottawa County.

I believe the Board needs a better understanding of how the state and federal funding works. Those are pass through dollars – some are paid out as received. Some are received and then paid out. Many of the programs are use it or lose it. How can you be assured that the MHBSSW will be thinking of paying to OC in the same proportion as it brings to the board?

The staff at the MHB presently are experienced the director and assistant director they know our county

You do a disservice to all stakeholders – voters, consumers, providers, the schools, the judges; if you choose to rush to a result instead of a solution. Be strong take you time get all of the pertinent facts. Be leaders not settlers.

You have options: You can continue the present arrangement, you can tell the Erie County Commissioners that change is needed – not because of the lame reasons they provide – you are above letting personality conflicts and strong willed board doing its job be the reason for a withdrawal.

Please examine closely the actual costs of having your own MHRB vs the contribution to a multi county Board

Don't use a ballpark number from an administrator with a vested interest. Spend the time and resources to come to a conclusion your voters can support next time not a forced solution by the Erie County Commissioners. You have to get this right. Thanks you for your time.

DD – Thank you John and points taken and will certainly be considered as we continue to move forward. I want to make one clarification on one of your comments when you talk about a comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan has been prepared and is what will be submitted to the state. It is being finalized as we speak, I want you to have some reassurance that we are not going into this blindly and there is an Administrative Code that has to be followed and again we have continued to work with the prosecutors and the state at many levels to make sure that we are going to get this right. But again, thank you for your points today and again you time. Thank you.

At this point I will yield the floor to Tracy Campbell.

Tracy Campbell – Firelands Counseling. Thank you for this opportunity to talk this morning. I wanted to clarify a couple of things. Firelands is not in a position to decide whether or not a board should stay joined or split or merge with another board, etc. that is not our role. Our role is, as everyone is aware, to bid on services every year

and the board chooses to fund those services or not and throughout the fiscal year we provide quarterly reports of data about our services to the community. Our goal is to continue to serve clients no matter the structure of the board. I also wanted to clarify that when we submit our bills to the board every client has a county of residence attached to that so it is very transparent the services being provided to Erie, Ottawa, Sandusky, Seneca, Wyandot, and Lorain Counties how the board chooses to pay us in terms of levy dollars and things like that is not to our knowledge. I just want to make it clear that we are transparently billing by county of residence and I want to make it clear we are not miss utilizing levy dollars in any way shape or form. We bill by county of residence and how we are paid is up to each board. Just to clarify the SSW board does provide production reports monthly that shows the exact amount of levy dollars for the county for which they are intended because they do have separate levies. They have transparent pots of money that they say these are the levy dollars used for residents for Sandusky County based on the amount of dollars available from the levy from Sandusky County. It is very transparent and separated. I also want to clarify and I do have Karen Russell present with me today. I know there was a lot of animosity over whether to fund the jail nurses and Karen participated in a finance committee meeting and I participated in a subsequent board meeting and Firelands was asked in the finance committee meeting what things they thought would be useful in the jails and if we could wave a wand and say what was useful and we said the services that Glenn mentioned but that did not mean that we were against the board funding of a jail nurse – that is really not our role to decide. The boards have full discretion of who and how they fund and if they need data to determine whether or not something should be funded that should come from whomever is requesting the funding. So I want to make it clear that we did not directly oppose that – we don't have that data to determine that and is something I personally said that a board meeting as well. I wanted the opportunity to clarify some things and thank you and best of luck as you make your decision going forward.

DD – Thank you for the clarification and appreciate it. At this time next up is Margaret Osborne.

Margaret Osborne – Ottawa FCFC. As Director of the Ottawa County FCFC I have had the opportunity to work closely with Director Cronin and Deputy Director Taylor with the efforts and initiatives that the council works towards. When Director Cronin came on board she had to sort out a mess from the previous leadership and for that I want to commend her. Ottawa FCFC is seeing an increase in referrals in wraparound program which serve youth and families with multi-system needs. I would like to support the Commissioners make the decision to form our own County board, however I want you to also to know I have also had a chance to speak to my FCFC counterparts in SSW counties and they have all relayed to me that the Director of the joint SSW board, Mircea, has been very supportive of the individual initiatives under the FCFC. In closure I would like to place my support behind the Commissioners position to either form our own board or to join the SSW board. Thank you for your time.

DD – Thank you Margaret - appreciate your time today.

Kristen Gerwin – Oak House. Good morning. I am the current Executive Director at the Oak House here in Port Clinton, Ottawa County. An Ottawa County resident, I started at the Oak House last July so I am fairly new to this agency and the MHRB as a whole. I did want to say that I am one of the providers that are funded through Ottawa County that Mr. Osowski referred to. We have been quiet on this really because we all have our opinions and thoughts but we don't want to bite the hand that feeds us. A lot of us do rely on the MHRB levy funds for most of our operating costs. I think mine is 94% of my budget or something. I wanted to say really I was hired by the Oak House to do a job and as Executive Director my concern is our members and it would be in whether Ottawa County does form its own board or does fall in with SSW just uninterrupted services for our members uninterrupted contracts and funding. That all really is very important that it stays in place and continues. Oak House has been a funded provider for MHRB's for 32 years – actually it was created as collaboration between Lending Hands before Giving Tree and MHRB's so we have been around for a long time as an organization. We have always been funded by the MHRB and we thank them for that. One of the few people probably that has worked with Mircea in the SSW board when I worked for GLCAP I did have the opportunity to meet with them and their office and we did some

programming with them through mobility management and with state funds. They are very organized and very efficient and very good at what they do and I am confident in that if we would decide go that route that Ottawa County would fit in well with them and I think that – look at that as an opportunity to grow that's what I'm looking at for our agency. We are one of the smaller ones and we have done a total shift in programming and are engaging a lot of new members right now so for us Oak House is looking at it as an opportunity to further partner and collaborate with the other funded partners and to keep services going for our members. I do have a concern this is in regards to we have a partnership that we work with the Sandusky Artisans out of Erie County and our peer supporters currently there are 43 people in Ottawa County that get peer support services provided through Sandusky Artisans there are peer supporters and they do some of our peer led meetings here at Oak House for our members here in Ottawa County residents and we do have a few Erie County residents come over fairly regularly. So that was a concern with talking with them if the board if it splits – I as director have no intention of not serving the Erie County people – we don't charge any fees for services provided by the Oak House and so all the current members even new members would still be welcomed. I am just trying to figure out how we can maintain those services as far as peer supporters and the things that we do get through artisans because they applied for the funding for those services they provide them to Ottawa County residents for free currently and it becomes another layer of allowed and unallowable expenses – that's just something else to consider. We are totally supported with whichever road you choose. I can answer any questions and thank you for your time.

DD – Kristen thank you for your comments this morning. We understand those concerns and we share those same concerns. Again, our goal in this transition is zero disruption for those that are being served. We will continue to do our best to keep that at the top of our list for everything that we do and we are hoping again for the same outcomes as you have indicated as well. At this point I will yield the floor now to Jim Sass.

Jim Sass – board member – Thank you and thank you for the opportunity to present to the honorable board. I want to compliment you on the hearing process that you are conducting compared to the sham that took place at Erie County. I was appointed as a board member by you folks over 2 years ago and I didn't anticipate coming to this situation as far as the board split. I have a history – I served Ottawa County as a Commissioner for 12 years and the board has always had somewhat I'll call a checkered past and I saw this as an opportunity that maybe I can give back and be positive for the board and the community and also the providers and the consumers and the taxpayers. So I didn't anticipate coming into this environment. The split is going to take place. Erie County has for whatever reason has already determined that is the route they want to go. I personally don't agree with that. But I see the board working and we are functioning we don't hear complaints from consumers, providers or taxpayers. But for whatever reason the politics sneak in every so often and over there quite a bit seems like and that is what is causing the split of this board. My request to you respectfully would be to use the ORC 340.01 and do not agree to the split that will give you one year to research the opportunities that you have in front of you. I don't know whether going with a 4-county board or going as a single county board - I don't know which one is the best one. I don't know how you Commissioners can make a decision to have a hearing on Wednesday and the resolution is already typed up for Thursday and how you can process the amount of information being presented today and to be able to make that decision and make that decision that is going to be right for the providers, consumers and taxpayers, I struggle with that. I would respectfully ask that you use that section of the law that you are allowed and not agree to the split – keep the board together for a year and at that point you have time to research what may be the best route to go. I am not sure what it is - single county board has advantages and I would assume the multi-county board has its advantages. My personal preference would be to keep the current board together as it is. But I think the handwriting is on the wall and that's probably not going to happen. I think if you take the time and process the information to make a decision that will be a benefit to all, it would be appropriate thing to do and I think it would be the right thing to do. I want to put a plug in for the Executive Director, the Assistant Director, and the CFO you won't find any 3 that will work any harder for the people they are representing and Commissioner Douglas you mentioned at the beginning that you contacted Prosecutors, State Directors but I guess to be very honest, I am a little disappointed that you didn't contact anyone on our local board, either board members, the CFO, the Executive Director, or the Assistant Director. So this is just an example where maybe there needs to be

more homework done and maybe step back and not get caught up in the lack of better word – fight of splitting the board up. It makes for good newspaper print but I think to do the right thing would be to step back and don't agree to the split and respectfully take the year and research this process and do what is best for all those concerned. Thank you very much for your time and I'll answer any questions.

DD – Thank you Jim – fair points and they are taken. The outreach that we are doing again is taking a path forward and you know to me – I will speak for myself – it did not make a lot of sense to go back and rehash whether there is going to be a separation or not. That decision was pretty much made for us. Again, we are doing our due diligence and are not taking this lightly. We are receiving as much input as we can possibly get from all levels to make sure that we are going to do this right and we are going to have to move forward to the best that we can. We are using 340.01 obviously and other guidelines that are there. We understand our options and again we have a big decision in front of us and do what is best for Ottawa County. Thank you Jim.

At this time I will yield the floor to Brenda Cronin.

Brenda Cronin – Executive Director MHRBEO. Thank you Commissioners for the opportunity to speak today. I know that you talked about moving forward and I definitely understand and I thought about this last night and thought what is it that I would want people to know or just remember in the middle of all of this – for lack of better word – something that feels like chaos and so I did write up something and some of it is maybe well that was yesterday and today we are looking at something differently but I do want to get it on the record. So I wanted to say this – when the board completed its strategic plan 4 years ago – the public's opinion of the board was not positive. As a matter of fact our stakeholders stated you guys are kind of in trouble. We said we want you to print what the public has said. We don't want you to minimize it tell us exactly the opinion of us. They gave many examples of the times that the Board let them down. Three years later, February of 2020, the community stakeholders were again polled in both counties– the comments was much more positive those polls were quite satisfied with the board's leadership presence and engagement in both Erie and Ottawa County. Some of the highlights for Ottawa County that I would like to mention again maybe because I need to hear it again or my staff needs to hear how hard we worked – we initiated a collaboration with the education services center and the schools in Ottawa County to provide funding for mental health and/or substance abuse services that had never been done before in Ottawa or Erie Counties. We structured our funding models to ensure recovery housing had their operational cost covered while focusing on the constituents in the community. Enhanced funding for those services for individuals that were indirectly affected by addiction, overdose and so forth, and one of those examples is the GRANDlove program. Working with grandparents and grandchildren. Identified and funded services to the Ottawa County jail for inmates with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders. In addition to that, because we kept hearing about the number of mentally ill individuals in the jail, the board orchestrated a community problem solving meeting, many meetings, to determine the needs of the jail inmates and identify obstacles and suggested solutions. This community needs meeting involved the jail, mental health, providers, the courts, probation and we currently fund the mental health crisis and intervention training that Melanie spoke of earlier. We arranged for a state expert in visit outpatient treatment to communicate the benefits of the AOT to Ottawa County stakeholders to motivate the implementation in the county. With partnership with Judge Giesler, the court staff and so forth, Ottawa County now has an AOT program and we also provided legal services. We sent our attorney for guardianship and for competency from Smith & Lehr we had them work with Ottawa County Probate Court to implement AOT and they created a number of legal documents that would be necessary to help this process move smoothly. We have had 5 individuals go through AOT and not one has been re-hospitalized and not one has been re-incarcerated. Kuddos to the Probate Court and the providers on the work they have done for the consumers in Ottawa County. We also applied for and was awarded approximately \$80,000 for Ottawa County Drug Court testing. That also means there was money in that grant to help pay for some of the jail services. I would ... public hearing the board is not done we in no way believe we have crossed the finish line. We do however know that we are better off today than we were 4 years ago. We will be even better 4 years from now if we are allowed to continue on the path we are on and I don't mean necessarily in... I've been Executive Director

for 4 years and I can assure you running a board whether for one board or a multi-county is complex and governed by strict regulations and during my tenure as Director, other than board members – no one has sat down with us to understand what the daily operations and the fiscal management entails. We have only seen a 3 page plan that was attached to the Erie County resolution and this is what I have to say to that – if the decision is made to split I fear that a 3 page plan being proposed will fall short of identifying what it really would take for this to go smoothly. I want to assure you that I and my staff are available to meet with you and provide any information and/or answer any questions regarding how we carry out our actions that result from the activity and decisions of the board. In closing, I would encourage the Ottawa County Commissioners to take the time to fully evaluate and determine the best plan for the consumers of Ottawa County. I am available to help in any way that I can in this endeavor.

DD – Thank you Brenda. I personally commend you and your staff and the board for the work they have done to date and it is unfortunate that it has come to this and I don't know what else I can say but again I appreciate the points you made and appreciate your time. At this point I think it's 10:25 a.m. I'm going to suggest we take a 10 minute break and reconvene at 10:35, so please bear with us and we will return shortly.

DD – Continuing on at 10:35 – thank you for your patience.

Connie Cornett – Family Advocacy Center (CASA) – I want to say thank you for allowing me the time to speak – I am a little bit passionate about this for a number of reasons so I think I have a unique perspective in that I was appointed to the MHRBEO a number of years ago by the Commissioners to serve and I did that up until we developed a program that needed funding and there became a conflict of interest and had to step down. I was part of the board when Dr. Halliday was released from service and I want to say that the progress that the board and the staff has made as far as that organization goes is commendable at minimum. It has gone from huge level of dysfunction to really a lot of organization and a really a lot of good work being done by the MHRBEO. I did attend the Erie County hearings on the split and I can speak to the Erie County Commissioners because I felt that it was really important that someone say – someone – anyone say that that is an awful lot of good stuff happening from the MHRBEO. I attend nearly all the meetings that I can and I will tell you that there is a lot of spirited discussion – and I personally don't look at that as dysfunction and I look at that as a good thing because there are a lot of passionate people representing their interest and making sure their voices are heard and quite candidly I prefer to attend the meeting where there is spirited discussion and not where there is a lot of yes – yes – yes and so I never really did agree with the dysfunction of the board because there was passionate views both ways. I am going to join with other members and say that I would hope that the Ottawa County Commissioners will slow this process down. One of the things that make me most proud of being an Ottawa County resident is that we really do a good job of making sure that we are taking care of the people that live here and the folks that can really could use assistance and I think that if nothing else comes from this potential Erie/Ottawa split is that the opportunity for dissent on a board like that is great and the feeling that Ottawa County was under represented on that board was always present. So now we are going from a 2 county board to a 4-5 ish potentially county board where again I'm not sure we can adequately represent the people of Ottawa County. I in addition to saying that I think the staff of the MHRBEO are outstanding I would really like to encourage our Commissioners to slow the process down and really think about whether or not it is an option for us to be here and take care of our own people and operate our own board. I think that best serves the taxpayers as well as the people who live here in Ottawa County. Thanks for your time.

DD – Thank you Connie. Appreciate your time today. We'll give Stephanie the floor.

Stephanie Kowal – Ottawa County JFS Director. Good morning. The comments that I want to make are not necessarily prepared comments but there things that I picked up on from folks that went earlier. I hope the Commissioners take into consideration is the planning process that is needed for continuity of services. I don't want to see service disruption. Getting contracts in place can take time to making sure the right contracts and right services in place can take some time. So making an effort to ensure that the folks are getting the services continue to receive the services they need and that the providers are able to do so. I believe also that – I think this

is the 1<sup>st</sup> individual that spoke talked about the need of quality and evidence based home based therapeutic services I think that is great – I think that is something we have tried to get off the ground and have had some false starts maybe or some starts and stops and getting that back into a place where that could be a service need that could greatly assist our families. I also think that we could see an increase in the amount of outreach to get folks connected to services. This is not necessarily a criticism of the current board. I also feel there is an opportunity for more of that and that is one of the things I noticed in the SSW board they have an outreach person and that is all they focus on. Having some kind of coordinated effort and message that goes across the county would be beneficial. From a standpoint of where you go from here – if we do move in the direction of a being part of a 4-county board I am interested in how local - county needs are communicated to that full board. I do agree would be very difficult to have our interest represented fairly if we only have 2 people on that board. So I don't know if any other counties in the existing structures if they have subcommittees that are county specific or how they access the needs and services are delivered as anticipated. That is all I have. Thank you so much.

DD – Thank you Stephanie. Appreciate your observations and your time with us today. Ok I think we are winding down here. I see Glenn you raised you hand – do you have another comment

Glenn – I want to mention one thing more before we wrap up or before we go to Mircea. I think it's important for the Commissioners to also recognize the current county's board's make-up. There are several Erie County board members that are not here due to work or things like that that are also not in support of this split. I just wanted that on the record that there are Erie County Board members currently that are not in favor of this. I just wanted to make sure you were aware of that. Thanks for the 2<sup>nd</sup> opportunity.

DD – You are welcome. Noted. Will turn the floor over to Mircea Handru – who is the Director and I will let him introduce himself.

Mircea Handru – Executive Director SSW. Good morning Commissioners. My name is Mircea Handru and I am with MHRBSSW thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. I made around 2 pages of notes – just getting everybody's questions to answer every question that was raised. There are 2 things I took out of the last 1 hour and 45 minutes. One – positive think, lucky for me nobody said anything negative about our organization so that important. I wasn't sure who would speak here today. The second thing is honestly major question that comes to my mind is there appears to be some differences and various opinions between Erie/Ottawa, and various community organizations or County Commissioners. Either way I want to make it clear that I am not here today or was never in a position and I will never be in a position to influence anybody to split the board. That is not my role – my role here is to offer an option to Ottawa County if they choose to consider it. I have a very good relationship with Brenda and we talk on the phone pretty often and I have all the respect for her and her staff. I just want to make that clear from the beginning. I am going to start now and go with some of my notes that I made. 1. It was mentioned about the legislative language introduced that decreases the number of board members and there was a concern. The concern was how can we go to a 4-county board and now we might have to reduce the number of board members. I am not sure how many of you guys are aware I actually received this fresh last night from Senator Reinke, the bill introduced in the senate committee –might be introduced today and I received one of the 1st copies, is that we will be able to jump to 18 board members. We are currently at 14 and we can jump to 18 and my plan is that all those 4 seats will be given to Ottawa County day one. So we have not been forced to reduce the number of board members and County Commissioners have the ability to increase the board members and the first day whatever that date is, Ottawa County can have those 4 seats. As we move in the future and some of my current 14 board members term out some of those seats could also be provided to Ottawa County. The second thing I would like to mention is that we are just structured different than the MHRBEO. I truly believe that my board members have the best interest of the entire district and also we don't mix funds – levy funds when it comes to services between the 3 counties that we currently have. Let me give you an example – there were a few years Wyandot County only had 1 representative. Well if my Seneca and Sandusky County board members wanted to be biased they just couldn't. It is safe to say those funds collected for Wyandot County had to be invested back

into Wyandot County. Actually I believe it made our board members actually more neutral and more fair because they are not influenced by anybody in their own community - vote for this agency or vote for that agency because my cousin works for this agency or my mother-in-law is friends with this agency. Actually I think it creates a more neutral process because our agencies do not crisscross funds. So end of day, Ottawa County can get ... or 4 board members and everything collected for Ottawa County is invested back into Ottawa County. I operate that I will be the one doing a lot of community meetings and with stakeholders and agencies to understand the needs of what is best for Ottawa County. But I also want to answer the question that yes we do have committees in each county and various county coalitions that we are part of and all of the feedback is brought back to our committees of the Board before a final decision is made. On another note I had, about the comment regarding as the board and should we pay for a county position should we pay for a city position, should we continue what the MHRBEO decided when it comes to jail nurse. I'll be honest I don't know the details and I don't need to know those details at this time. But I would respect that every county is different and we don't do things the same in each of our 3 counties. I want you guys to understand that. We don't do things the same in each of our all 3 counties. I think the first presentation I mentioned we fund in each of the 3 counties by each of their services are different, the plan is different the program is different so I won't come here and say so we fought for Ottawa County therefore we have to fund it with Seneca. No, that is just not how we operate and that is just not how that will happen. We look at each of those counties and I also want to mention that the reality is that yes we do fund county positions and city positions right now so that this is not a role for the board - well I think it is - actually it is a role of the board to support the community. So if that means we fund a City of Fremont for example .... position or a school position or a county jail then that is what we do. Unfortunately I disagree with that and I believe we must look at each county and their own needs. There was another comment mentioned about that the number of board members and representation that it should not be introduced through the budget but should be introduced through a bill - well I will tell you that us as boards in Ohio - we are introducing language in a budget that we are watching so we can't all play only one way we have to play both ways - so if people introduce language that we as boards don't like we say why is that in the budget but the language that we like and its introduced in the budget it's ok for us. We introduce language in our own budget that maybe people in Ohio don't like but we are pushing for it. They will ask why are we pushing for this for a single county bill and we say no we want it in the budget when other put people in the budget that we don't like. We are asking about a single bill. The reality is that every 2 years the state of Ohio they pass a biennial budget where a lot of legislation has changed. It's just the reality it's not a unique cause or that something is coming ... board. I just think this is reality and this is how the state of Ohio operates. I do want to talk a little bit about our organization and I have a lot of respect for Brenda and her staff I'm not here to make or change the decision to speak or not to speak but am here to give Ottawa County an option. I've been with the board for almost 10 years now - our assistant director has been around in the clinical role for over 25 years she was actually the site director of Firelands prior to joining the board and she is a very qualified person when it comes to mental health and addiction a great clinician a person we use very often to evaluate programs and services and we have a fiscal person who has 15 years of county fiscal work - joined our board when I became the Executive director. And lastly that I am very proud of is that she .... We develop our own culture when it comes to working hard and meeting community needs. We are, as I mentioned in the first meeting that we are ... certified board very proud of that and going on the 4<sup>th</sup> right now. Also very proud of 10 consecutive years of clean fiscal audits. Please go across the 50 boards in Ohio and see who has that. I don't want to compare us with others I'm just trying to give them an option. When it comes to the cost of the package that we are trying to provide to the Ottawa County Commissioners we have asked \$150,000 a year in administrative cost to do everything we do for the other 3 counties for Ottawa County as well if that is the direction you want to go. It's just impossible to run a single county board with that cost. You are probably look at least 3 times that money to run a single county board and start from scratch, hire your own staff, board members, do policies and procedures, your own fiscal practices and I think we have a proven record and know what you get with us. Client care costs, we already I believe in E/O the same thing that we have as a 3 county board that often times when we negotiate with agencies we negotiate as a 3-county package actually in Ottawa County would strengthen that we would be negotiating that as a 4-county package. We are in the middle of signing an agreement with Flower ProMedica

which is crisis inpatient services – I truly believe we will have a seat at the table because I am negotiating as a 3-county board and negotiating as a 3-county package and I think what that does it keeps the cost down and actually opens the door for all my 3-county residents to access that service. The first day this will happen, if it happens, Ottawa County residents will have the exact same access to the quality services you have as the 3-county already being served. I also mentioned this at the first meeting we are one of the only... my coordinator... have a 4-county active grant and all this grant as an example comes to Ottawa County agencies to be part of. Federal grants as a large district and larger area – more population have a better chance to compete with larger counties across Ohio and the nation. Multi-county projects – many to mention across the 3-counties already. GLCAP was mentioned, agency like .... – again this is an opportunity for Ottawa County to be part of this new multi-county project if they want day one if this was to happen. Many of them these we developed as multi-county because the single county boards couldn't fund it. They didn't have the volume and couldn't afford a full-time person and just didn't have enough time. Some of these multi-county projects are becoming very effective in our board district. I discussed about the levy and how it stays with the particular county obviously you all know by now that the proposed of moving forward - Ottawa County funds stay with Ottawa County. I do want to mention another thing and I know this was discussed with both the residents of Erie and Ottawa and truly supported the levy in last time around in 2019 and renewed levy at 75% that speaks highly that about people caring about mental health and addiction services in your local community. One thing I do have to say is in the last 4 years – we ran 3 new levy campaigns... I mean an additional tax – not a renewal – we were able to successfully pass all 3 levies. I actually believe the Sandusky County levy is passed in 2019 is probably the highest new levy of the mental health board to pass in Ohio. New levy an additional tax. If you want a little history – my Sandusky County Commissioners are on the line and Sandusky County going back to 2015 was the only county that failed a levy 10 consecutive times. So I believe that we turned around that county 180 degrees in a very short period of time and very proud of that. When we talk about levies and serve on Ohio boards on how to run or operate local levies and very proud of collecting those 3 levies, each single county levies. I just want to make sure that I don't forget some of the comments that were made. I see the possibility of the merger now I don't see the disruption of services I see completely the other way. I see that by not doing it prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> or not passing this resolution as soon as possible I see that could possibly hurt more services to the clients. The sooner the resolution – we as the board – I as the Director will give me the authority to quickly contact the providers and quickly work with them and have agreements in place by July 1. Have things in place that we agree and are supportive and no or any disruption of services. If any county already pulled out I'm just not sure how it would continue after July 1. I don't know – I just know that it's just bad what is happening right here in Ottawa County ... in Ohio if you just want to measure it. I don't know why anyone would want to continue in that environment for another year based on what you have on the table in front of you. I also want to make it very clear that I have no interest no vested financial interest nobody promised me anything – no one promised me a house on the Lake by doing this or anything like that. It is just that I see future opportunity a younger director when hired I was the youngest in Ohio hired at the age of 30 as an Executive Director in the history of Ohio – I see as an opportunity and challenge for me. I really don't have any gain or hidden agenda why I want this merger. I am just here to provide what we can offer as a board. It is obviously known that if Ottawa County does a single county or merges with us they would have to run a new levy in the near future and would not be able to continue tax it as currently collecting. It would be an additional tax for Ottawa County residents. Now an additional tax is the ballot language in reality one is dropping off and you add another but that will be a decision by the Ottawa County Commissioners that will be made at that time. We ask because today MRHBSSW are the ones putting the levies on the ballot from each county. Not the MHRB. We believe in local controls and believe those taxes must stay with each of those counties. I did mention in my first presentation a few weeks ago. The plan is not to discontinue any services and to make sure all providers are covered for one year and what happens after one year. We want to make sure we have one year to review contracts before making any recommendations. We really don't like to go with providers anything more than one year. We have never had a contract over 12 months. That is just standard and pretty sure that 99% of the contracts across the boards are for 1 year. I do want to thank everyone who came and appreciate your comments and I would love to meet with the board members of Erie & Ottawa counties in the near future if the merger is to happen I really value your feedback

and to build that trust in Ottawa County Commissioners wish to merge with us. I want and promise I will represent the best for Ottawa County clients and family members. If you want to call I would value your input. Thank you for Commissioners for allowing me to speak. If you have any questions or anything I missed I am willing to respond. I didn't want to go into all the details of all services – we can talk for a long time if I mentioned every service we can provide in the 3 counties that we currently serve. Thank you.

DD – Thank you Mircea we really appreciate you making yourself available this morning and taking time to sit through this with us and clarifying many of the items that were questioned today. So at this point in time I'm not seeing any other requests to speak. At this time I would yield the floor to our Board to consider closing public comment at this time. Again thank you to everyone who participated in this.

It was moved by Commissioner Coppeler and seconded by Commissioner Stahl that the Board of Ottawa County Commissioners close the hearing on the withdraw of the joint Mental Health & Recovery Board of Erie & Ottawa Counties after hearing no further comments. Vote on Motion: Donald A. Douglas, yes; Mark E. Coppeler, yes; Mark W. Stahl, yes.

#### RESOLUTION NO 21-24

#### RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF OTTAWA COUNTY, OHIO, FOR THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORIZING THE WITHDRAW FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY BOARD OF ERIE AND OTTAWA COUNTIES AND MERGING WITH THE MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES BOARD OF SENECA, SANDUSKY, AND WYANDOT COUNTIES

The Board of County Commissioners of the County of Ottawa, Ohio met in special session on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of May 2021, at the office of said Board of County Commissioners, located at the Ottawa County Courthouse, Port Clinton, Ohio, with the following members present:

Donald A. Douglas

Mark E. Coppeler

Mark W. Stahl

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2021 the Erie County Board of Commissioners adopted Resolution #21-99 to withdraw from the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Erie and Ottawa Counties, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code 340.01(B) , the Board of Ottawa County Commissioners must join another joint-county district due to the population size of Ottawa County being less than fifty thousand, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Ottawa County Commissioners held a public hearing on May 12, 2021 and announced to all relevant agencies and providers and to the general public within the proposed new board service district to be comprised of or to include the withdrawing county(ies), that such a public hearing has been conducted, and evidence of all written comments and other testimony received are attached hereto, now

THEREFORE, it is the intent of said Board, to join the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Seneca, Sandusky, and Wyandot Counties and to ensure the uninterrupted services to clients, now

THEREFORE, the Board of Ottawa County Commissioners have prepared a Comprehensive Written Plan that is in compliance with rules adopted by the Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services as required under section 5119.22 of the Ohio Revised Code, including the Ottawa County proposed division of assets with Erie County; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 340.01(B) and the Ohio Administrative Code Rule #5122:2-1-03 the Board of Ottawa County Commissioners agree to withdraw from the joint board as

requested by Erie County and hereby request the Director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to consent to the withdraw of the joint district effective June 30, 2021, and

FURTHER this Board hereby finds and determines that all formal actions relative to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board and of its committees, if any, which resulted in formal action were taken in meetings open to the public in full compliance with applicable legal requirements including Section 121.22 of the Revised Code.

Commissioner Coppeler moved and Commissioner Stahl seconded the resolution, and the roll being called on its adoption, the vote resulted as follows:

Vote on Motion: Donald A. Douglas, yes; Mark E. Coppeler, yes; Mark W. Stahl, yes.

DD – At this time we will step down and thank you again for attending.