

Levy Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Meeting time: 9:00am – 10:30am

Meeting location: Huron County DJFS, 185 Shady Lane Drive, Norwalk

Board Members Present:

X	Nora Knople		Ben Chaffee, Jr.-Excused
X	Sandy Hovest		

Board Staff Present:

X	Kristen Cardone, Executive Director	X	Ashley Morrow, Community Engagement and Resource Manager
	Cari Williamson, Office and Fiscal Manager - Excused		

Discussion Items:

- Levy Request (Motion)
 - Kristen reminded the members of the decision made last month to move forward with .5 mill replacement with .5 mill increase.
 - Kristen shared the numbers from Roland 9/18:
 - Cost per year for \$100,000 home: \$35
 - Total collection: \$1,377,774.00
 - Kristen shared that a motion will be added to the MHAS Board Meeting Agenda that states: To put on ballot a replacement of .5 mill with increase of .5mill and request that prosecutors’ office prepare necessary legislation for that.
- Timeline (Attachment I)
 - Kristen shared a brief outline of the timeline for levy activities, found in Attachment I.
- Levy Materials
 - Website
 - Kristen shared a preview of the Levy Website with the members, reviewing specifically the questions and answers section with the committee members to gain feedback.
 - Committee members suggested the following:
 - In the cost estimate section, add the annual cost to residents along with the monthly cost.
 - Add a \$300,000 option to the house cost list.
 - A preview of the Levy Website can be found at www.hcbmhas.org/levy.
 - Brochure (Attachment V)
 - Kristen shared an updated brochure design for committee members to review. Kristen shared that she did play with the colored blocks as requested at the last meeting, however, she chose to keep them because the color helped break up the brochure.
 - The committee members had several suggestions in changes/additions of wording and alignment of paragraphs in sections.
 - The updated brochure reflecting those changes can be found in the attachment.
 - Volunteer Fact Sheet (Attachment IV)
 - Kristen reviewed the volunteer fact sheet with committee members.

- Suggestions from committee members include:
 - Adding a \$300,000.00 home cost
 - Changing the word ‘flexible’ and further clarify what levy funds are used for and mention that the Board still ensures all spending is done in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code.
 - Add in the top paragraph that Board members are volunteers.
 - Possibly link people with the Huron County Data Dashboard and CIT Dashboard for additional data specific for Huron County.
 - Add a section to address what the impact will be on the community if the Board experiences further cuts from the state.
 - Change the word ‘encumbrances’ to ‘contractual obligations’ when discussing MHAS reserves and financials for the community to better understand. If the subject is brought up, it is important for residents to understand that while grants are received in one lump sum, contractual obligations are paid out in monthly increments. Committee members discussed the important of communicating that while there is money in the MHAS account to satisfy the contractual obligations, there is little disposable cash use to for unanticipated needs.
 - Add the word ‘Minimum’ required reserve balance.
 - Add a section to address what the impact is if the levy does not pass.
 - The requested changes above are highlighted in yellow and reflected in the updated attachment.
 - Kristen appreciated the feedback and said that the volunteer fact sheet will not cover all questions however for any questions that are unable to be answered, community members can always contact the Board Office.
- Budget
 - Kristen reviewed an estimated budget for the Levy. Kristen shared that the levy budget outline was created based on feedback from what other Boards are doing and what is known to work for levy outreach campaigns. The following avenues will be pursued to promote the levy:
 - Billboards
 - Brochures
 - Radio
 - Norwalk Ohio News
 - Norwalk Reflector
 - Willard Times Junction
 - Levy Signs
 - Levy Social Media
 - Levy Mailers/Postcards
 - Levy Door Hangers
 - Snacks/Drinks for Levy Townhalls
 - Estimated \$18,000.00 for the campaign. Kristen will recommend earmarking no more than \$20,000.00.
 - A motion will be on the MHAS Board agenda.
- Postcards (Attachment II)
 - Kristen shared that the goal is to purchase postcards and have agencies and Board members hand write messages on them to send out. The purpose is to put a personal touch on this outreach. The outreach will be targeted towards residents who voted during the last levy.
 - Postcards will be distributed in November 2024 and requested back by end of March 2025.

- Amount of postcards to be distributed:
 - 200 Board members
 - 100 Agencies/Volunteers
 - 5 per day MHAS Staff
 - Approximately 5,000 total
 - Suggestions for the postcard included adding a QR code that leads to the Levy Website if possible. Update has been made and be seen in the attachment.
- Language (Attachment III)
 - Committee members reviewed the postcard and template statements to be utilized in writing the messages. Some suggestions were:
 - Change ‘invest in mental health’ and use similar wording in brochure such as ‘invest in stronger families, healthier youth, safer communities’ etc.
 - Adding a personal touch, adding something personal if the individual wants to try to connect with the receiver.
 - Adding data on how many lives have been affected, creating reasons to vote.
- Levy Supporter Spreadsheet
 - Kristen reviewed the Levy spreadsheet with committee members. Board members and agencies will be asked to identify a certain number of people to add to the list to reach out to and ask personally to be a supporter of the MAHS Levy.
- Finalize questions for website/brochure.
 - Kristen asked committee members to review all questions on the website and brochure and to choose their top 5 for each. Kristen will send these out and request the rest of the committees to respond with their top picks.
 - Website:
 - What kind of services does the Board currently fund?
 - How much does the levy cost?
 - What services are a top priority for the board at this moment?
 - How many individuals are receiving assistance through the board?
 - How does levy funding benefit Huron county residents?
 - If the MHAS Board is a county agency, why is levy funding needed?
 - What is the economic impact of mental illness and substance use treatment?
 - Is there a report showing how board funds are currently being spent?
 - What other funding does the board receive and use for services?
 - Why is additional funding needed?
 - What if someone has more questions or would like to help with the levy?
 - Brochure:
 - What are the terms for the levy?
 - How much of the board’s budget is made up of levy funding?
 - Why is the funding needed?
 - Where do levy funds go?
 - How does this help me?

Attachment I

Levy Timeline/Process

Step One: The Taxing Authority must pass a resolution (Resolution #1-Resolution of Necessity to Levy a Tax in Excess of the Ten-Mill Limitation), by vote of two-thirds of all members, that declares it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation and that requests the County Auditor to certify to the taxing authority the total current tax valuation of the Board's service district and the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by the specified number of mills. Specific information is required to be included in this resolution. The resolution must be certified to the County Auditor. For renewal and replacement levies, the resolution and the ballot language must use the same purpose language and authorizing statute as the original levy.

- October 2024 call Randy and say need resolution of necessity for levy.

Step Two: The County Auditor must issue the requested certification to the Taxing Authority within 10 days of receiving the resolution requesting it. For a multi-county subdivision, the County Auditor must obtain the current tax valuation for the other counties from the respective County Auditors.

- 10 days after resolution is received by Auditor.

Step Three: If AFTER receiving the certification from the County Auditor, the Taxing Authority decides to submit the question of the tax to the voters, the Taxing Authority must pass a resolution stating its intention to proceed (Resolution #2-Resolution to Proceed) by vote of two-thirds of all members. The Resolution to Proceed must include the rate of the tax levy, expressed in mills for each one dollar in tax valuation, as estimated by the County Auditor. The Resolution to Proceed must be dated after the Auditor's Certification.

- January 2025

Step Four: The taxing authority must certify its resolution to proceed to the board of elections and the County Auditor at least 90 days prior to the election. A copy of the County Auditor's certification and the Resolution of Necessity (Resolution #1) must accompany the certified Resolution to Proceed (Resolution #2).

Taxing Authority = County Commissioners

Attachment II

Invest in Huron County Mental Health

HURON COUNTY



BOARD OF MENTAL
HEALTH & ADDICTION
SERVICES

***Together We Make
a Difference.***

Learn more at:
www.hcbmhas.org/levy



Attachment III

- Mental Health matters, so does your vote!
- Vote yes to help support and sustain behavioral health services.
- Mental health is as important as physical health.
- Mental health is an investment in yourself.
- Mental health is not a luxury, it is a necessity.
- Behavioral health is a community effort.
- We all have mental health, lets take care of it.
- Let's work towards a community where behavioral health is a top priority.
- Vote yes for you, your loved ones, your neighbors, and your community.

Draft templates:

Invest in Huron County mental health by voting YES for the Mental Health and Addiction Services Levy. Huron County needs these services now more than ever. Vote yes for you, your loved ones, your neighbors, and your community.

Mental health matters and so does your vote! Invest in the mental health of yourself, your loved ones, your neighbors and your community by voting YES for the Mental Health and Addiction Services levy.

Mental health services are needed now, more than ever. Invest in the mental health of yourself, your loved ones, your neighbors and your community by voting YES for the Mental Health and Addiction Services levy.

Attachment IV

Huron County Levy VOLUNTEER FACT SHEET

The Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) is a public body made up of 14 volunteer Board members including clients, family members, and other community leaders representing Huron County. The Mental Health & Addiction Services Board is responsible, by law, for ensuring the availability of high-quality prevention, treatment, and recovery support services to residents of Huron County. One way the Board meets this mandate is to generate local public support through tax levies. All public funds flow through the Board, which is held accountable for the appropriate and responsible use of these dollars. Although not a direct service provider, the Board contracts for needed services with local providers.

Levy Facts:

- ◆ The Board is seeking a replacement of the .05 (5/10) mill levy and an increase of .05 mills. The levy will run for 10 years.
- ◆ The County Auditor has estimated the millage will bring in \$1,377,774.00 each year for 10 years.
- ◆ Approximate cost to property owner, based on current property calculations:
 - \$70,000 home: \$24.50/year; \$2.04/month; \$0.067/day
 - \$100,000 home: \$35.00/year; \$2.92/month; \$0.095/day.
 - \$200,000 home: \$70/year; \$5.83/month; \$0.19/day
 - \$300,000 home: \$105.00/year; \$8.75/month; \$0.287/day
- ◆ Only Huron County residents are served by Huron County levy revenue. The Board is able to utilize levy dollars to fund services not eligible for state or federal funds due to restrictions placed on these funds. Levy funds are always allocated and utilized in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code.
- ◆ Local funds are used to capture state and federal dollars for Huron County residents, bringing state and federal taxes back to this community. Local dollars are often needed when applying for grants.
- ◆ While HCMHAS is an organization that serves Huron County, we are not funded by the Huron County Commissioners. The majority of the Board's funding comes from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Board also holds, and frequently applies for, grants to expand funding.
- ◆ Allocated funding from state has not increased in many years, requiring the Board to obtain additional funding from other sources to meet the needs of the community. With the lack of increased funding and increased cost of living, the Board has in essence experienced a loss in funding over the years. If there is a continued decrease in funding from the state, the result will be decreased services and supports available for Huron County residents in need.
- ◆ Focus on the costs of untreated mental health and substance use issues. Without adequate community treatment, individuals with mental illness and substance use often end up costing greater amounts of public dollars by needing treatment in other systems such as jails, juvenile facilities, emergency rooms, homeless shelters and foster care. Substance use treatment costs approximately \$20,000 less than incarceration per person per year for a drug related crime.
 - For every \$1 spent on mental health treatment, there is an economic return of approximately \$5;
 - for every \$1 spent on substance abuse treatment, there is an economic return of approximately \$4 to \$7.
- ◆ In State Fiscal Year 2023, the Board's levy made up only 18% of the Board's budget, with 40% coming from state funds, 41% from federal funds, and 1% from other.
- ◆ In addition to levy funding, the Board also utilizes state, federal and grant funding for services and supports in Huron County.

- ◆ Those who are able to pay for services do so according to their financial ability. No one is turned away because of inability to pay.

Why is additional funding needed?

- ◆ Annually, the Board completes a community needs assessment during which we gather feedback from Huron County residents to determine what the primary mental health and substance use needs are in the community. Mental health services, mental health peer support, crisis services, and supportive services such as housing and transportation were identified as the primary needs. In order to meet these needs, additional funding is needed.
- ◆ Additionally, the state recently raised the Medicaid reimbursement rate for services, which is the rate used by the Board when funding services through contracted treatment providers. Because of this increase, additional funds are needed to support mental health and substance use treatment services.
- ◆ If the levy does not pass, critical services and supports that are currently available will either decrease in their ability to serve the community or cease to exist.
 - Services we will no longer be able to fund:
 - Miriam House
 - Age Exchange
 - DARE
 - Huron County Family and Children First Council
 - Reach Our Youth
 - After Prom funding
 - Critical Incident Stress Management debriefing services
 - Crisis Intervention Trainings for law enforcement
 - Recovery housing
 - Trainings and outreach initiatives
 - Annual Recovery Walk
 - Annual Mental Health Awareness event and walk
 - Behavioral Health Appreciation Dinner
 - Reduction in certain services at Family Life Counseling, Firelands Counseling, and Oriana House

Who will benefit from this levy?

- ◆ Funding is not only for individuals with a mental health or substance use diagnosis; funding is also used for wellness support services, prevention, critical incident stress management and debriefings, family support and education, support groups, community trainings and outreach. These services work to improve the overall wellbeing of Huron County residents.
- ◆ One in four Americans (26%) over the age of 18 suffer from a mental disorder in any given year. When these individuals go without treatment, very rarely are they able to achieve school success, secure employment, maintain housing and ultimately live a quality life. One in six Americans report **battling** a substance use problem in the past year.
- ◆ In the 2022 – 2023 school year, 12.5% of Huron County youth reported they have seriously considered attempting suicide during the past year. The Board funds multiple services to treat mental health challenges in youth and to help prevent youth suicide. Many of these services involve family services and supports.
- ◆ People with chronic mental illness (such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorders), who struggle to maintain their freedom from life in a more costly institution – with the help of case managers, educational and social groups, and medication.
- ◆ Men, women and adolescents whose lives are off course due to misuse of alcohol or other drugs.

- ◆ For additional data related to the number of residents being served through current programs, treatment services, and emergency interventions, visit <https://www.huroncohealth.com/dashboard>.

Levy Reserves information (if anyone asks)

- ◆ Per the Board's policy, we are required to maintain specific reserves and cash flow to assure continuation of its programs and services. The reserves would be critical if the Board experiences further funding cuts from the state and/or federal government, allowing services to continue while Board staff seek out funding from grants and other sources.
- ◆ The Board's policy states that we are required to maintain a minimum of 3 months of average monthly expenditures and maximum of 9 months of average monthly expenditures.
 - Average monthly expenditures are calculated taking into consideration the last three calendar years.
- ◆ The reserve amounts are set annually in the January Board meeting. For 2024, the minimum required reserve fund balance of \$883,416.00 and a maximum required reserve fund balance \$2,650,248.00 was set.
- ◆ While funding is often received or accessible in lump sums for the Board to utilize, contractual obligations are paid out in monthly increments. The Board's balance at any given point in time may reflect sufficient funds to satisfy the contractual obligations for the fiscal year, however, due to the schedule of payments for these contracts, there is little disposable cash use for unanticipated needs.

General information:

- ◆ The Board's current priorities include mental health services for children and families, mental health peer support, crisis services.
- ◆ Number of individuals receiving assistance through MHAS Board:
 - In Fiscal Year 2024, we averaged 1,558 clients served per month.
 - Our system received 1,774 calls for assistance for mental health or addiction services through the local HOPE Line.
 - Through our system, 610 crisis assessments were completed in Fiscal Year 2024 and 259 individuals were hospitalized.



How the levy will make a difference

Stronger Families & Healthier Youth by funding programs that give our younger generations the best possible start in life, with suicide and substance use prevention programs, treatment for youth mental health and substance use challenges including school based counseling services, and programs offering support and education for caregivers.

Safer Communities by funding programs aimed at treating drug and alcohol issues, reducing recidivism, preventing suicide, and providing specialized training for law enforcement on how to work with people in crisis.

Supports People in Crisis by funding the Huron County Hope Line, mobile crisis response team services, behavioral health crisis screens, inpatient crisis services, and transportation to detox and treatment.

Services to Help Workers & Businesses by funding the Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative, providing trainings to local businesses and staff, and increasing access to services funded by the Board so employees can remain on the job.

Local funding helping local people... Your family, your friends, your neighbors.

Based on a \$100,000 home, this levy costs \$0.095 a day; \$2.92 a month; \$35 a year

For more information:

Call: 419-681-6268

Email: huroncountymhas@gmail.com

Visit: www.hcbmhas.org/levy



*Invest in Huron County
Mental Health.
Together We Make A Difference.*

2025 Levy
Facts & Information

May, X, 2025
LEVY ELECTION DATE

VOTE
 Yes
 No

How MHAS Makes a Difference

Prevention

- Youth Mentoring Programs*
- DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)
- Huron County Prevention Coalition*
- School Prevention Programs

Recovery, Support & Education

- Men's and Women's Recovery Housing*
- Peer Recovery Support Services*
- Support Groups*
- Mental Health & Wellness Support Services*
- Women's Transitional Housing
- Transportation*
- Family Dependency Treatment Court
- Guardianship Services*
- Family Support and Education*
- Critical Incident Stress Management & Debriefing Services*

- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Trainings for law enforcement*
- Trainings: Mental Health First Aid, Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR), Wellness & Resiliency, and Mental Health and Substance Use 101*

Treatment

- Mental Health Counseling & Treatment*
- Substance Use Counseling & Treatment*
- School-Based Mental Health Services*
- Crisis Services including hospital screening & referral, inpatient treatment
- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)*
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)*
- Jail Based Mental Health and Substance Use Services*
- Early Childhood Mental Health Services
- Mobile Crisis Response Team*
- Crisis Hope Line
- Detox Services

*Added and/or expanded within past 6 years

Learn more about the Board's funding and how we make a difference by reviewing our SFY 2023 Annual Report.



Levy Facts

What are the terms for the levy?
10 Year Replacement with increase

How much of the Board's budget is made up of Levy funding?

In State Fiscal Year 2023, Levy funding made up only 18% of the Board's budget.

Why is the funding needed?

Levies provide critical funding that increases access to treatment services beyond limited state and federal funding. With levy funds, we are able to implement important services not funded by the state and federal government, such as mobile crisis, prevention, trainings, etc.

Where do Levy funds go?

Only Huron County residents are served by Huron County levy revenue. In Fiscal Year 2024, we averaged 1,558 Huron County residents served per month.

How does this help me?

Funding is used not only for individuals with a mental health or substance use disorder, but also for wellness support services, prevention services, family support and education, and community trainings and outreach. These services work to improve the overall wellbeing of Huron County residents. Without adequate community treatment, individuals with mental illness and/or substance use often end up costing greater amounts of public dollars by needing treatment in other systems such as jails, emergency rooms, foster care, etc.

Learn more at www.hcbmhas.org/levy