



## MEETING MINUTES

### MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

Thursday, April 13, 2017 7:00 PM

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, room 2402

Members Present: S. Johnson, K. Ruetzel, R. Feiler, M. Pierce, J. Sales, J. Taylor

Members Absent: L. Murphy, C. Fleming, I. Ziaya

Staff: E. Thomas-Smith, S. Flax, J. Wingader

Presiding Member: S. Johnson, Board Chair

Also Present: Ald. Revelle

---

#### Call to Order / Declaration of Quorum

Chair Johnson declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

#### Approval of the March 9, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Pierce moved approval of the March 9, 2017 meeting minutes, Ms. Feiler noted corrections. The minutes as amended were unanimously approved.

#### Health & Human Services Department Update

Health and Human Services Director, Evonda Thomas-Smith discussed the Department's goals including continued use of best practices when working with code violations and performing inspections, current efforts to understand and improve health equity, the implementation of new software to provide information to people looking to rent properties, and the increase of aid to General Assistance and Emergency Assistance recipients. She further discussed the EPLAN goals, partners and potential impact on the community, and closed by discussing the rodent abatement program. She addressed questions about ways people could become more involved and suggested that interested MHB members act as liaisons to committees formed as a result of the EPLAN.

#### Liaison Reports

Board members provided updates for Northwest CASA, Childcare Network of Evanston, Connections for the Homeless, Center for Independent Futures, Family Focus, North Shore Senior Center, Metropolitan Family Services, and Shore Community Services.

#### Public Comment

Cindy Castro with Presence Behavioral Health provided information about referrals to clinical services made to Trilogy, Inc. through the MHB funded Evanston Health Care Coordinator position. Jennifer Jenks with Metropolitan Family Services offered more information about the Parenting Fundamentals program run by the agency.

#### Discussion of Goals and Zoom Grants Questions

Ms. Sales opened the discussion by identifying three main themes for review provided by Board feedback and included in the packet. The first area of discussion was whether the Board should exclusively fund programs that provide direct mental health services or whether the Board should continue funding programs that provide direct and indirect mental

health services. She outlined two possible responses for programs that do not directly address mental health if MHB funds were restricted to direct mental health services: continuing to fund programs that include a case management component, or identifying other sources of funding. There was a discussion about currently funded programs and agencies that may not receive funding under new criteria. The Board considered the number of programs currently providing case management services and those providing preventative services. Members also discussed the effectiveness of provide funding to a wide range of programs versus funding innovative programs that directly address mental health concerns. The Board agreed to keep current funding priorities for the upcoming funding cycle, but decided to further investigate shifting funding priorities for 2019. The motion was seconded by Ms. Feiler and passed with 5 in favor and 1 abstention.

Ald. Revelle noted that the MHB has historically funded a broad range of social services and the proposal to restrict funding in FY 2019 to direct mental health services only constituted a policy change that did not align with the current MHB ordinance. In addition, the City does not have other sources of funding for programs that would no longer qualify for funding if funding were restricted to mental health services only. She encouraged the Board to provide information about the proposed changes to the Human Services Committee at its June meeting. Staff provided a brief historical perspective of the MHB's transition from a 508 Board with taxing authority to its current function as a recommending body to City Council to allocate funding for social services that address the needs of at-risk Evanston residents but are not provided by the City. It was agreed that the Board would develop a memo about their proposed changes to MHB funding in 2019 for the Human Services Committee at its June meeting. City staff will provide a memo about MHB's past funding policies and practices as background for the Mental Health Board and Human Services Committee.

Ms. Sales recommended that the current MHB funding priorities should not be numbered as it implies ranking of the priorities. The Board agreed that bullets would be used instead of numbers. Ms. Sales then discussed wording of the three priorities, beginning with the focus on youth violence. The Board discussed different ways to word priorities and whether preventative services should be considered for future funding recommendations.

The Board next discussed the use of ZoomGrants and ways it could be used when evaluating applications. It was agreed that staff will continue to provide the Board with information about currently funded agencies' capacity and program performance.

The Board debated including a fourth priority based on the City's Welcoming City Ordinance, programs that address the needs of immigrant families resettled in Evanston by the federal government, particularly those that address trauma and support social inclusion. Ms. Sales discussed the timeliness and importance of recognizing these needs; Ms. Ruetzel agreed and added her support for the fourth priority. Chair Johnson asked if specific funding would be allocated for this population. Ms. Flax explained that the City's role was to coordinate access to services by convening a task force of agencies already providing services to identify the types of services needed. No separate funding has been allocated by the City at this time and based on the federal government's action, it was not known when additional families would be resettled in the USA. Chair Johnson encouraged the Board to consider adding the new priority. Mr. Pierce noted that refugee populations would

be included in the wider definition of those in need of mental health services. Ms. Taylor suggested adding services to refugees as a component for reviewing applications; Ms. Ruetzel agreed and added that the Board should release a statement that priorities were up for review annually. Ms. Sales suggested that she and Ms. Feiler, as the working group charged with reviewing priorities, further review wording of ZoomGrants questions.

### **Staff Report**

Staff provided the following information:

- 2016 site visit letters were included in the packet for member review.
- Staff provided the 2016/2017 monitoring schedule.

Chair Johnson asked about Childcare Network and federal funding available for agencies providing child care. Staff confirmed that the Education Block Grant funding was expected to remain level for FY 2018.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Mr. Pierce announced that Ms. Ruetzel would serve the Board again as the Vice Chair. He acknowledged Chair Johnson's hard work and many contributions and recognized Ms. Taylor as the nominated Chair for the upcoming year. Nominations will be confirmed by a final vote at the next meeting and officers will assume responsibilities starting July 1, 2017.

### **Chair Report**

No Chair report.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Sales moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Ruetzel. The meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Wingader  
Grants and Compliance Specialist