

**MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**CORTLAND COUNTY**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD MEETING**

**Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2019 – 3:00 P.M.**  
**Room 302 – County Office Building**

**Vice Chair: Ellen Wright**

**Director: Mark Thayer**

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**Members Present:** Ellen Wright (Vice Chair), Christopher Hyde, Elizabeth Larkin, Susan Thomas and Leslie Wilkins

**Members Absent:** Cynthia Guy and Darlene Latten

**Others Present:** Mark Thayer, Director, Christopher Driscoll (Coordinated Children's Services Initiative), Julie Partigianoni and Kathryn Carstens (Director and Senior Peer Services WWC, div. Catholic Charities of Cortland County), Sarah Tarrow (Director of Counseling for School Success, Racker Center at BOCES), Jamee Sobko and Patty Schaap (Cortland County Mental Health Department – FSS and SPOA), Erika White (JM Murray, Employment Connection) and Gail Spitzer (Secretary)

**Call to Order:** 3:05 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes**

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**Agenda Item:** Introductions

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**Agenda Item:** Approve Minutes of October 15, 2019 Any additions or changes

✓ There being none, Ellen Wright requested a vote to approve the minutes – unanimously approved

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**Agenda Item:** Membership Discussion – two vacancies

Vice Chair, Ellen Wright: Several names had been brought forward as possible candidates, each bringing interesting ideas – Mark asked that anyone interested, contact Gail – three members first terms are expiring and Betsy Larkin and Susan Thomas both agreed to accept reappointment – Darlene Latten has not responded to email requests and has not attended meetings in recent months – Ellen: as a member, there is the expectation to attend meetings to ensure quorum -

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**Agenda Item:** Agency/Department/Coalition/Hospital Reports and Updates

~Julie Partigianoni (CCOCC) – Introduced and welcomed Kathryn as the new Senior Peer Specialist, with Charities for four years and has done an amazing job working with peers in the community; most recently stepping up to get the HCBS services going / still looking for two staff persons for Wellness Center, starting interviews this week – once back to full staff, looking into more experiential activities in community / OMH did a site visit recently – great meeting; hand selected out of five agencies, based on a scale – encouraged discussion of some of their programs, such as outreach into the jail, hospital – have a very positive impact in the community – they were suggested to visit WWC because of their 'rave reviews' / Re: HCBS, serving one person, three others dropped out of qualifying process

~Elizabeth Larkin (County Clerk) – NAMI Family to Family presentation in January – 12 week course, held at ATI by Kathy Taylor and her husband; highly recommended – target audience parents, siblings, friends – or just go for information – no charge

Christopher Driscoll (CCSI) – have been attending Regional Social Workers meeting – social worker have been concerned with an increase in aggressive behavior – struggling and not equipped to handle these types of situations/behaviors – do not know how to respond / another conversation related to children being taken from the school to the hospital and what type of communication goes on with the school social worker and someone from the hospital / Leslie Wilkins discussed an evidence based program that "Stand Up to your Emotions" taking precautionary steps to help children understand their emotions and how to communicate appropriately – she offered to bring more information into the school to see if it would be an assistance (\*\*)/ DSS identified that they do not make Health Home referrals and would like that to begin – working on a process to implement on a more regular basis / still many questions within the community about barriers to CFTSS and HCBS services for youth; many problems, some relating to staffing, etc. – referrals were made last May and June, although services are still not available – hoping for help expediting that process

(\*\*)Ellen Wright: Owns two documentaries and the rights to show them – "The Mask You Live In"; geared to boys and Miss Representation, for girls, both intended to dispel some of the social norms and stereotypical behavior for teenage audiences – each movie is 90 minutes long – can be prescreened by parents – Chris would like to preview

Patty Schaap (Mobile Crisis Team Member, CCDMH, MHA) – staff changes, Angela Adams overseeing Cortland's coordination – number of calls have stabilized or decreased slightly – Mark: talk of increasing the available hours of service to 24/7 has hit a financial roadblock and will depend on sustainability in billable services and collection of insurance information to offset the cost – OMH met with CNY Directors to discuss finances / Patty: SPEAK UP Cortland – Suicide Prevention Coalition training December 6 from 1 to 4:00 p.m. in the training center behind the Cortlandville Fire Department; Garra Lloyd-Lester will be there to do the "Safe Talk" – ideally these trainings will be more available in 2020 at no charge / Starbucks has agreed to "Talk Saves Lives" training in Cortland store, attended by regional directors and local staff

Jamee Sobko (Director FSS, CCDMH) – continues to serve between 30 to 35 families each month, working to become billable and provide CFTSS services and HCBS – it has been a struggle, staff shortage – trying to get through trainings and learning the electronic health records – trying to keep lines of communication open although not currently able to provide those services / passion is to make sure children get the services they need – entire staff is attending Safe Talk, suicide prevention / continuing to service group respite until more information comes from State

Erika White (JM Murray) – Adult HCBS services are up and running – doing PSR, Pre-Voc., rehabilitation – she is doing the work and staying out of the billing – work is going well – JMM’s OMH contracted programs have received referrals from Family Counseling

~Susan Thomas (Racker Center at OCM BOCES) – Children’s Day Treatment currently have 38 children enrolled – 7 on waiting list – 4 discharged (1 back to their school and 3 to regular BOCES classes) – 2 discharged, one dropped out, one on extended suspension / also have seen the aggression in school Chris Driscoll referenced / when possible, having success with the hospital by contacting the psych evaluator on the phone (GCMC), accompanying child to ER and waiting until child is evaluated / “Stand Up” program Leslie referenced is a successful; teaching mindfulness of the child and help with emotional regulation, decrease violence / After school program is making a great difference, hired 2 new staff – great dynamic SUNY Cortland students as staff – 10 activities, 6 more new programs will be starting, 4 to 6 weeks long / staff trained in suicide assessment and follow through (Columbia protocol) – better to have a systematic way of assessing and follow through / Cortland Post Trauma Response team – no activations recently – spreading word that they are available to help groups; prevent PTSD and debriefing and help connect to appropriate services

Christopher Hyde – COTI program continues to grow, doing a lot of outreach and marketing / many more outside referrals / one referral from Herkimer and meeting with Helio to discuss reciprocal referrals / bravely relayed a personal situation and the benefit of having Narcan kits in the home and knowing how to dispense

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**Agenda Item:** Director’s Report (copy provided) Mark Thayer

In the interest of time, Mark will review just a few items in the report – happy to answer any questions, once report is reviewed

Budget scheduled to come to a vote this Thursday (November 20) – Mental Health Department has not been asked for any major changes

Continuing to work with Family & Children’s Counseling Services; Jen Baier providing some preliminary services within the Jail and coordinating with the COTI program as people are released – partnering with Helio and developing lines of communication as people are discharged from treatment programs to assist as the return to the community

Bail Reform committee being led by Legislator Cathy Bischoff, meeting to proactively prepare for anticipated changes – open meetings and anyone interested can participate – biggest changes will involve appearance tickets for lesser crimes – presents challenges, possibly losing the opportunity to guide someone toward seeking help for mental illness or substance use disorder, based on evaluations done at time of arrest

This Thursday, Resolution to accept grant will be brought before Legislature - Contract from Columbia University (HEALing Communities Grant) currently requires County fronting money to be reimbursed, which presents problems – still working with Columbia to negotiate better process

Betty Hathaway Fund committee has been refining application process to award remaining funds while adhering to original goal of community education – Guthrie Cortland Medical Center’s new CEO, Jennifer Yartym sat in on last meeting – discussed enhancing the mental health educational services provided in the emergency room – will meet to discuss this further

NYS Medicaid deficit pushed into next year’s budget – continues the same gaps and challenges and have not balanced their budget – potential changes and reform next year / DSRIP involvement has been beneficial in highlighting that behavioral health is an underlying factor in most of the health of the highest needs individuals

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**Agenda Item:** Adjourn Vice Chair, Ellen Wright asked for a motion to adjourn

✓ Motion by Susan Thomas, seconded by Leslie Wilkins – meeting adjourned at 4:15

Ellen expressed her gratitude to Mark and to this group for their great work in this community

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**Next Regular MH Subcommittee meeting Monday, February 10, 2020**

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**JOINT CSB AND SUBCOMMITTEES’ MEETING DECEMBER 17, 2019  
2:00 P.M. AT THE CORTLANDVILLE FIREHOUSE**

Minutes submitted by Gail L. Spitzer

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607-428-5482

Approved minutes available on County Website:

[www.Cortland-Co.org/433/Mental-Health](http://www.Cortland-Co.org/433/Mental-Health)