



PROCESS: Notifying the Public of Lorain County Board of Mental Health (LCBMH) Meetings

As a public body, the LCBMH realizes the importance of compliance with Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Sunshine Laws. We endeavor to be transparent with our stakeholders as we plan, fund, and monitor public mental health services. Below is a list of our meetings and the specific process to notify the public:

I. REGULAR MEETINGS (that have regularly-scheduled meeting dates/times):

Board Meetings - Typically, ten (10) Board of Directors meetings are held fourth Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. at the Amy H. Levin Conference & Learning Center, 1165 North Ridge Rd. East, Lorain, OH 44055. There is no July Board meeting. Also, there is no November Board meeting due to Thanksgiving. Instead, this meeting is deferred to the first Thursday in December. There is no fourth Thursday meeting in December due to Christmas. The week prior to regular Board meetings the Manager of Human Resources and Special Projects sends public notices and agendas to media outlets and to any requestors.

Committees - The LCBMH has six (6) standing Committees:

1. **Finance** – The Finance Committee shall review all expenditures of the Board and monthly financial statements and shall report on these to the full Board. The Committee will review the annual budget proposed by the Executive Director and shall make recommendations on the annual budget to the full Board. The Committee shall review results from the annual county financial audit and monitor the implementation of any corrective action plans required by the audit. Meetings are held on the Tuesday of the week prior to Board meetings at 4:30 p.m. at the Board.
2. **Executive** – The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Officers of the Board. The Executive Committee shall serve to consult with the Chairperson of the Board on items including but not limited to the development of the Board agenda. The Chairperson of the Board shall chair the Executive Committee. Meetings are held on the Tuesday of the week prior to Board meetings at 5:15 p.m. at the Board.
3. **Membership** – The Membership Committee shall propose a slate of candidates for Board officer positions by the June Board meeting each year. The Committee shall also conduct interviews of potential Board members and shall make recommendations for appointment to the appointing authorities to fill vacancies. The Committee shall endeavor to insure that the composition of the Board reflects the demographic characteristics of Lorain County. Standing meetings are held first Tuesdays in April, June, Sept; and other meetings as needed at 4:30 p.m. at the Board office.
4. **Joint Mental Health and AOD Committee** – The delegation of Board Members from the Lorain County Board of Mental Health to the Joint MH/AOD Committee shall be comprised of not more than three members. This Committee is responsible to meet with members of the Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Board of Lorain County to explore



opportunities to enhance cooperation and collaboration as well as to look for opportunities for administrative efficiencies. Meetings are held second Tuesdays every other month at 7:30 a.m. In this case, the meetings rotate between the offices of the Board of Mental Health and the ADAS Board.

5. **Governance** – The Governance Committee shall review Board policies and recommend policy revisions to the full Board for adoption. Any Board member or the Executive Director may suggest policy changes for the Governance Committee to consider. All discussions regarding policy changes shall include input from the Executive Director. The Governance Committee shall monitor and conduct self-evaluation surveys of board members to inform the future educational training needs of the Board. These surveys shall be conducted by June of each year. Meetings are held first Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. at the Board office.

6. **Community Plan and Review** – The Community Plan and Review Committee shall evaluate new programs and determine service gaps and unmet needs in the community. The Committee shall also establish methods to be used to monitor the performance of programs funded by the Board. The Committee shall facilitate the development of a schedule of regular presentations to the full Board pertaining to current programming and emerging needs in the community. Meetings are held second Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. at the Board office.

Ad Hoc Committees – There are times when a Board Member or Staff may propose to the Board Chair the need for an Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee’s work is time limited and task specific. The Board Chair disbands the Committee upon the completion of its tasks.

Annual Meetings – The Board’s annual meetings are typically held in May in recognition of May is Mental Health Month. The lunchtime meetings have been held at DeLuca’s Place in the Park or at the LCCC Spitzer Conference Center. The Communications and Community Relations Director is planning future meetings at other venues as a way to showcase Lorain County.

Annual Retreats – Retreats are annually-required board member educational work sessions that must be pre-approved by OhioMHAS. They have typically been held on a Saturday morning in March at the Amy H. Conference and Learning Center, 1165 North Ridge Rd. East, Lorain.

II. SPECIAL MEETINGS AND EMERGENCY MEETINGS (Not considered regular meetings)

Rare occasions necessitate special meetings and emergency meetings, and they will be held at the Amy H. Conference and Learning Center, 1165 North Ridge Rd. East, Lorain. Twenty-four hour advance notice will be provided to media outlets and to any requestors about special meetings. Immediate notice will be provided to media outlets and to any requestors about emergency meetings.



III. DEFINITIONS: Below are some definitions from Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Sunshine Laws:

Public body – Statutory definition – R.C. 121.22(B)(1) The Open Meetings Act defines a “public body” as any of the following: any board, commission, committee, council, or similar decision-making body of a state agency, institution, or authority, and any legislative authority or board, commission, committee, council, agency, authority, or similar decision-making body of any county, township, municipal corporation, school district, or other political subdivision or local public institution; any committee or subcommittee thereof; or a court of jurisdiction of a sanitary district organized wholly for the purpose of providing a water supply for domestic, municipal, and public use when meeting for the purpose of the appointment, removal, or reappointment of a member of the board of directors of such a district or for any other matter related to such a district other than litigation involving the district.

Public official – Per Ohio Revised Code Section 117.01: Any officer, employee, or duly authorized representative or agent of a public office.

Meetings – The Open Meetings Act requires members of a public body to take official action, conduct deliberations, and discuss the public business in an open meeting, unless the subject matter is specifically exempted by law. The Act defines a “meeting” as: (1) a prearranged gathering of (2) a majority of the members of a public body (3) for the purpose of discussing public business. (A member of a public body must be present in person at a meeting in order to be considered present, vote, or be counted as part of a quorum unless a specific law permits otherwise. In the absence of statutory authority, public bodies may not conduct a meeting via electronic or telephonic conferencing).

Regular Meetings – Regular meetings are those held at prescheduled intervals, such as monthly or **annual meetings**. A public body must establish, by rule, a reasonable method that allows the public to determine the time and place of regular meetings. **Retreats** – Per Ohio Revised Code 340.02 (F) each year each board member is required to attend at least one in-service training session provided or approved by OhioMHAS. It is still considered a meeting as it is conducted by a public body and discusses public business among a majority of the members of a public body at a prearranged time.

Special meeting - A “special meeting” is any meeting other than a regular meeting. A public body must establish, by rule, a reasonable method that allows the public to determine the time, place, and purpose of special meetings and conform to the following requirements:

- Public bodies must provide at least 24-hours advance notification of special meetings to all media outlets that have requested such notification, except in the event of an emergency requiring immediate official action (see “emergency meetings,” below).
- When a public body holds a special meeting to discuss particular issues, the statement of the meeting’s purpose must specifically indicate those issues, and the public body may only discuss those specified issues at that meeting. When a special meeting is simply a



rescheduled “regular” meeting occurring at a different time, the statement of the meeting’s purpose may be for “general purposes.”

Emergency meeting - An emergency meeting is a type of special meeting that a public body convenes when a situation requires immediate official action. Rather than the 24-hours advance notice usually required, a public body scheduling an emergency meeting must immediately notify all media outlets that have specifically requested such notice of the time, place, and purpose of the emergency meeting.

Executive Session-During a regular, special or emergency meeting the Board may go into an executive session that is not open to the public. Executive sessions are only permitted for the purpose of discussion of topics listed in Ohio Revised Code 121.22. Executive Sessions must be preceded by a specific motion stating the specific topic(s) to be discussed, a second, and a roll call vote. Board Meetings must always begin and end in open session and cannot adjourn from Executive session.

Responsible Parties

The Manager of Human Resources and Special Projects, who also serves as the Public Records Custodian, is responsible for sending public notices to the distribution list below. All notices are posted on the www.lcbmh.org website, and include the meeting date, time, location and purpose.

Lorain County Board of Commissioners
Legislators
Local Mayors
Tracy Plouck, Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
The Chronicle-Telegram
The Morning Journal
The Plain Dealer
Mental Health Network of Lorain County
WEOH
WOBL/WDLW
WNZN
Lorain County Board of Mental Health Staff

The Communications and Community Relations Director is responsible for posting on the LCBMH website Board meeting minutes that the Board of Directors officially adopt by resolution and have been signed by the Board Chair and the Board Secretary. The Manager of Human Resources and Special Projects sends official Board meeting minutes to the Lorain County Board of Commissioners (per a recent public records request that they receive minutes from all Lorain County Departments).

Committee information extracted from the LCBMH Board of Directors Policy Manual.

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/149.011>

<http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/yellowbook>