

Executive Director Update: April 2026

Woods at Dairy Lane: On April 6th, Athens City Council approved our request for a change in zoning for the property. It will be effective upon transfer of the land to the Board. This is an important milestone!

We understand that the condominium agreements related to the transfer of the Ridges property are completed, going through final local review, and are expected to be sent to the state in early summer. We continue to work on identifying and securing funding and the development expertise needed for this project. This will be discussed at the full board meeting.

Svea and I attended a training session for the Federal Home Loan Bank application process.

Staff from Sunday Creek Horizons will attend and be able to answer board member questions.

Communications: Staff from MoDo Design were on site this month and work has begun on standardizing our “brand” in communications, update of the website, and work on the Annual Report.

Medicaid Changes: A statewide learning community is being created to help behavioral health agencies to assist their clients with meeting the new reporting requirements for Medicaid which go into effect in 2027. An initial training session was held April 24th. We encouraged our providers to participate and the Board will convene local discussions as this is a priority in our community plan.

Property Tax Amendment: A press conference was held on April 23rd by the group working to eliminate all property taxes. The group has not yet secured all of the required signatures. If they do not get the number of signatures needed (413,488) by July 1st, they will not be on the ballot in November 2026. Because the signatures are “evergreen”, they would continue to collect signatures with plans to put it on the ballot in 2027. We are on the ballot for the renewal of one of our levies in 2027.

Some context for our levies: Since 2011, the Board has only asked voters to approve *Renewal* of our levies. A renewal means that the tax collected on current properties will stay flat and not increase. While each of our levies is 1.00 Mill, a reduction factor is applied each year so that the amount collected from current properties does not go up. The 2025 Tax Year Effective Rate (Residential/Agriculture properties) for the levy we will renew in 2027 is 0.619374. In summary, the 317 Board levies are not the cause of the increase in property taxes.

Staff Updates: April has been an incredibly busy month at the office: Third quarter reports for all federal and state funding sources, gathering information for new Ohio DBH program and fiscal reports, and reviewing 59 funding applications for funding. Whew—Board staff are carrying a full load!

In addition to all of the internal work, Board staff participated in 133 meetings, trainings or events in the month of March. Here are a few highlights:

- Board staff met with the program lead and psychiatrist for ISBH's new ACT team;
- Board staff are working with the Appalachian Children's Coalition and other stakeholders as part of a new regional approach to workforce development;

- Staff met with a group from Columbus who received a grant to explore the need and viability of a youth overnight daycare program to prevent child custody relinquishment.
- Board staff participated in Vendor Compliance training related to Business Associate Agreements and how to reduce risks.
- Svea participated in the Ohio Tobacco-Free Recovery Forum. SE Ohio has been identified as a probable location for a future pilot project supporting SUD and MH recovery while abstaining from tobacco and nicotine products.
- Sherri and Tisha completed three days of NOVA Crisis Community Response Training.
- One of Amanda's key take-ways from the Auditor of State's Local Government Officials Conference is to be vigilant on all vendor address or banking changes for fraudulent activity and verify multiple different ways before completing the request.
- Tisha has been out and about:
 - Officially joined the Board of Tomcat Bridgebuilders in March 2026.
 - Mill Fest - risk reduction tabling - an important takeaway from this event - knowledge of what Narcan is, how to use it, and why it is important is becoming widespread. We had college students stopping and coming back to get Narcan and Fentanyl strips. 150 Narcan kits were distributed - everything that we had. Also 420 waters, dozens of snack and info packets, and 100 Crisis Line bracelets.
 - DD Awareness Fest - Mural was a big hit.
 - NAMI Try Something New Series was well-attended and reached a wide range of new and returning individuals.
 - Athens Community Baby Shower - made connections between organization representatives, promoted TLC Mama perinatal hotline.
 - Hocking County Prevention & Recovery Task Force (HCPRTF) - upcoming meetings will have planned speakers from community sharing their programs/organization.
 - Local Help Now - had a virtual meeting with tech & outreach leads - updates launch early April, which includes many enhancements.
- Kim Crum reports:
 - increased meetings this month related to forensic monitoring board to board agreements. She also attended a child fatality review in VC.
 - The Ohio Children's Alliance hosted the second in a new, statewide series of Community Conversations in Athens. The regional sessions are designed to elevate community voices and guide statewide action.
 - The Board hosted virtually a Motivating Behavior Change training session that over 30 community providers attended, all three counties were represented. We also assisted to bring an in-house PAX tool training at Groundworks in VC this month.