

## Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2026

### Meeting Was Held In-Person and Virtual

- Members Present:** Rhea Hopstetter, Chair, Heather Batin, Dr. Tom Davis, Justin Maiden, Dimitru Sabaiduc, and Shei Sanchez
- Members Virtual:** Maeve Gallagher and Anne Rubin
- Members Absent:** Tonya Bowden, JoAnna Carter, Dr. Ron Luce, Robert Orth, Patricia Robinette, Robert Salizzoni, and Dr. Wenda Sheard
- Guests Present:** Reid Courtney, Sunday Creek Horizons, and Zack Space, Sunday Creek Horizons
- Guests Virtual:** Brittany Ekert, MSP, Mateja Holter, MHS, Kelly Madewell, MSP, Ellen Martin, HRS, and Darla Merola, TASC
- Staff Present:** Amanda Conrath, Kim Crum, Svea Maxwell, Beth Mohammed, Diane Pfaff, Kim Robinson, Tisha Springer, Board COMCorps Volunteer, and Sherri Tyree

Ms. Hopstetter called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and announced a Consent Agenda would be used due to board members attending virtually and roll call votes are required.

**I. Adoption Consent Agenda Items: Agenda and Minutes**

**26:04:52**

Dr. Davis moved to approve the April 27, 2026 agenda and March 23, 2026 minutes; Ms. Sanchez seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**II. Public Comment**

None

**III. Agency Updates**

**1. Ellen Martin, Health Recovery Services**

Ms. Martin reported that HRS was awarded extra funding from the Women's Treatment grant from ODBH.

**2. Kelly Madewell, My Sister's Place**

Ms. Madewell reported 28 people attended the training in Hocking County with Dr. Jacqueline Campbell which focused on domestic violence danger assessments. She also said she and staff attended an End Violence Against Women training in New Orleans.

**3. Darla Merola, TASC of Southeast Ohio**

Ms. Merola reported the hiring of a second clinical supervisor, Justin Saunders, who will serve Athens, Hocking, and Vinton counties alongside Shelly Neff. She also noted that TASC will begin offering mental health services in the near future and they are organizing a statewide training for all Ohio TASC programs in August.

4. **Mateja Holter, Memorial Health Services**

Ms. Holter reported on the Maternity Journey program, which supports pregnant women in recovery throughout their pregnancy. She also noted continued partnerships with NAMI Athens and Integrated Services for Behavioral Health.

IV. **Staff Updates**

1. **Sherri Tyree, Quality and Planning Director**

- Ascend Innovations has initiated work on the data integration and analytics platform aimed at improving coordination during behavioral health crises. The system will send real-time crisis notifications from hospital emergency departments to community providers, provide a population-level dashboard showing trends across systems, and identify individuals frequently interacting with multiple systems to support better coordinated care planning. Ascend Innovations is an Ohio-based company with experience developing tools for mental health boards, healthcare organizations, and public health agencies. A federal grant is paying for this work.
- The ARPA Final Report in the Board handouts, summarizes the results from the \$489,876 grant from the American Rescue Plan Act aimed at strengthening the mental health crisis response system in the AHV and GJM regions. Efforts focused on improving patient safety, enhancing care environments, increasing system coordination, and building data-driven decision-making capacity. The investment has positioned the region with a strong foundation for continued progress, system integration, and ongoing performance monitoring to improve outcomes.

2. **Amanda Conrath, Fiscal Director**

- **SOS Grant Update:** At the halfway point of the grant period, spending is on track and aligned with the funding timeline.
- **FRAQ (Fraud Risk Assessment):** Board members are reminded to complete to the required form from the Auditor of State. Failure to respond will lead to additional audit procedures and a noted internal control deficiency.

3. **Kim Crum, Community Services Manager**

Ms. Crum reported that staff participated in an Earth Day cleanup of Dairy Lane.

4. **Tisha Springer, COMCorps Volunteer**

NAMI Athens is providing mental health services and awareness activities on Ohio University's Athens campus for finals this year.

5. **Svea Maxwell, Deputy Director**

Ms. Maxwell reported that on April 6th, Athens City Council approved the rezoning for the Woods on Dairy Lane, contingent upon Ohio University transferring the property to the Board.

V. **Executive Director Report**

Ms. Pfaff reported that her full update is available on the website, including resources from a statewide coalition formed to address the property tax ballot initiative. She emphasized that property taxes account for two-thirds of local revenue in Ohio. Since 2011, the Board has only sought renewal levies, meaning tax amounts do not increase for property owners. The Board's two 1-mill levies are subject to a reduction factor, so as property values rise, the effective rate decreases. For the levy expiring in 2027, the effective rate was 0.619 in 2025. She stressed that the Board is not responsible for increases in individuals' property taxes.

## **VI. Executive Committee Report**

The Executive Committee met, but did not conduct official business because of the lack of quorum.

### **Approval of Financials**

**26:04:53**

Ms. Conrath reminded members that monthly financial reports are available on the board member website and offered to walk through the reports. Ms. Rubin asked for clarification on the Serenity Village statement in the March financials. Ms. Conrath explained the new information is from the Athens Real Estate Company financial system, which manages rent collection and payments for the Board. This report will be included as an additional report to the Board. Dr. Davis requested Ms. Conrath's review of the financial reports and asked for this review to occur at each meeting. MS. Batin moved to approve the reports to be accepted as presented, submitted and filed for audit; Mr. Sabaiduc seconded. A roll call vote was taken with the following results: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Yes, Ms. Gallagher, Yes, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Yes, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **VII. Old Business**

### **1. Woods at Dairy Lane**

**26:04:54**

Ms. Pfaff presented a high-level overview of the soft costs associated with the Woods at Dairy Lane project. With the total estimated project budget of \$4–\$5 million, soft costs are estimated at 20-25%, which equals about \$1 million. A PowerPoint slide was also shared, covering site status, development plan, funding commitments, and potential funding sources.

Ms. Pfaff provided a brief history of the Board's work with Sunday Creek Horizons and introduced the Zack Space, President, and Reid Courtney, Director of Government Relations. Ms. Pfaff requested approval to extend the consulting agreement for an additional 10 months through February 28, 2027, at a rate of \$4,000 per month. She noted the agreement includes 30-day cancellation option and an option to extend the agreement through July 1, 2027, to align with Ohio's biennial budget cycle.

Mr. Space and Mr. Courtney provided an overview of the firm's services related to legislative engagement. Ms. Rubin asked several questions about the contract and other clients. Mr. Space affirmed the contract language is standard; they are not working on an appropriation request with any other clients in Athens; they have many other clients throughout the Appalachian region because they are the only firm of their kind; and they notify clients when conflicts are identified and he does not see any current conflicts. Ms. Rubin also referenced the alignment of this work with the Board's strategic plan.

Ms. Pfaff agreed that increased legislative engagement is part of the strategic plan and noted an upcoming meeting being facilitated by Sunday Creek Horizons with Representative Ritter and Senator Chavez, to discuss Board priorities and the Woods at Dairy Lane project. Mr. Sabaiduc asked how the firm would approach legislative advocacy on behalf of the Board. Mr. Space responded that their approach is done through relationships with legislators and helping them to understand the project and how it aligns with the elected official's priorities. Mr. Courtney emphasized how they work to keep the issue at the "top of the stack". Dr. Davis spoke to the problem of southeast Ohio not receiving their share of resources.

Mr. Sabaiduc moved to approve the extended agreement with Sunday Creek Horizons with the agreed upon terms presented by Ms. Pfaff; Ms. Gallagher seconded. A roll call vote was taken

with the following results: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Abstain, Ms. Gallagher, Yes, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Yes, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes. The motion was approved with one abstention.

## **VIII. New Business**

### **A. Nominating Committee**

Ms. Hopstetter asked for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee for the election of the SFY 2028 Chair. Ms. Batin, Ms. Sanchez, and Mr. Maiden volunteered to be on the committee. Ms. Hopstetter appointed Ms. Batin as the Chair of the committee.

### **B. Service Continuity Funding Recommendation**

**26:04:55**

Ms. Pfaff reminded members of the Board's partnership with the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, through which each entity contributed \$300,000 to establish a Service Continuity Fund. To date, three organizations have been awarded \$50,000 each, leaving a remaining balance of \$450,000.

Ms. Pfaff reported that My Sister's Place submitted an application requesting \$21,135 to address a loss of funding for housing services. She explained that providing housing support would allow clients to transition out of the shelter into stable housing, which enables the shelter to assist more individuals. Ms. Pfaff recommended approval of the request and authorization to amend the contract for this amount. Ms. Batin moved to approve the recommendation; Mr. Sabaiduc seconded. A roll call vote was taken with the following results: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Yes, Ms. Gallagher, Yes, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Yes, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **C. SFY 2026 Budget Amendment Resolution**

**26:04:56**

#### **Resolution 26-04-16**

Ms. Conrath explained the revisions to the budget include \$8,160 for the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority, \$15,000 for Health Recovery Services Women's Treatment program, and the Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail \$2,635 for their behavioral health drug reimbursement. Mr. Maiden moved to approve Resolution 26-04-16 SFY 2026 Budget Amendment; Ms. Sanchez seconded. A roll call vote was taken with the following results: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Yes, Ms. Gallagher, Yes, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Yes, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **D. Contract Authorization Resolution**

**26:04:57**

#### **Resolution 26-04-17**

Ms. Pfaff explained the contract authorization is authorization to amend agency contracts for the budget adjustments previously approved in the budget amendment. Dr. Davis moved to approve Resolution 26-04-17; Ms. Batin seconded. A roll call vote was taken with the following results: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Yes, Ms. Gallagher, Yes, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Yes, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **E. Policies**

#### **1. Draft Financial Risk Management Policy**

Ms. Pfaff presented the draft Financial Risk Policy outlining the four key components: Reserve Fund, Insurance, Policies and Procedures, and Legal Counsel. The draft policy specifies the parameters for a Reserve Fund within the General Fund. Historically, \$1.3 million has been informally set aside, representing about 46 days of coverage for operating expenses. The draft policy allows the Board to consider additional contributions depending on the current budget environment.

Dr. Davis asked whether the funding would be used for agencies. Ms. Pfaff responded that it would support both agency funding and Board operations. Ms. Pfaff discussed funding risks related to federal and state funding and outlined a particular risk related to \$550,000 in SOS funding which is critical for recovery houses.

Ms. Sanchez asked questions about annual contributions and if the 5% limit could be increased if needed. Ms. Pfaff explained that under Ohio Revised Code (ORC), no more than 5% of the Board's funding from the preceding fiscal year may be allocated to a reserve fund. However, consistent annual contributions could gradually increase the reserve balance if funds are not utilized. She also noted that maintaining reserve funds in the presence of competing public needs would require clear justification to the public.

Dr. Davis inquired about next steps. Ms. Pfaff responded that the Board attorney had provided approval in principle, and staff had consulted with the county auditor, but want to further clarify the Budget Commission's expectations. Ms. Pfaff invited members to email her with any questions regarding the policy in advance of the May Board discussion. Ms. Pfaff stated she would like to see the governing board act on the level of reserves before releasing any new funding opportunities.

## **2. Personnel Policy**

**26:04:58**

Ms. Pfaff explained the updates to the Personnel Policy provided by Clemens, Nelson & Associates, a private consulting firm that originally developed the personnel policy manual and has updated it over the years. She noted there are eleven updates, including two new policies related to artificial intelligence and weapons. She stated that none of the updates have any financial impact and are intended to clarify existing policies. Ms. Pfaff briefly reviewed each of the proposed updates. Ms. Batin moved to approve the updated Personnel Policies; Ms. Sanchez seconded. A roll call vote was taken with the following results: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Yes, Ms. Gallagher, Abstain, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Abstain, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes. The motion was approved with two abstentions.

### **F. Strategic Plan Update**

Ms. Tyree reviewed the Strategic Plan update, noting that sixteen priorities have been identified and action has been taken on the majority of them. The Strategic Plan will be updated quarterly.

### **G. Agency Funding Applications**

Ms. Tyree reviewed the SFY 2027 Funding Application recommendations and noted that recommendations for Hopewell Health Centers and Health Recovery Services will be brought before the Board in May. Ms. Pfaff explained that the Board's grant management process is risk-based and may include more frequent reporting requirements to monitor and address any identified issues.

**IX. Other**  
**26:04:59**

- A. Dr. Davis recommended a formal resolution recognizing Ms. Martin for the exceptional work she has done with Health Recovery Services. Dr. Davis moved to recognize Ms. Martin; Ms. Batin seconded. The motion passed unanimously with the following votes: Ms. Hopstetter, Yes, Ms. Batin, Yes, Dr. Davis, Yes, Ms. Gallagher, Yes, Mr. Maiden, Yes, Ms. Rubin, Yes, Mr. Sabaiduc, Yes, and Ms. Sanchez, Yes.
- B. Ms. Rubin discussed her concerns with the involvement of the Board's Serenity Village property manager with an unregistered, for-profit recovery house that came into Athens between October and February. She noted that the Board has worked with Athens Real Estate Company for two years and requested that staff explore alternative property management options. Ms. Pfaff responded that such services are limited but that staff would investigate other providers offering similar support.
- C. Mr. Maiden reported that he reviewed the tax returns and completed a cash flow analysis for the Clem House based on discussion from the March meeting and confirmed that it does have positive cash flow.
- D. Ms. Pfaff announced that Kim Robinson will retire in July.

**X. Adjournment**  
**26:04:60**

Ms. Batin moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Sabaiduc seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Submitted by:

---

Diane Pfaff  
Executive Director

---

Rhea Hopstetter  
Chair