

708 GENEVA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2021 7:00 P.M.
109 James Street
Geneva, Illinois

Visitors are welcome to all City meetings; however, pursuant to Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-43 limiting gatherings of no more than 50 people (or 50% of room occupancy) and a requirement to wear a face covering in public places, physical attendance at public meetings may be limited or restricted. For more information please see the "[Notice Regarding Meeting and Public Comment Rule Modification Due to COVID-19](#)".

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Chair Shogren called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Present: Gabriel (present at 7:20PM), Gaines, Hamilton, Kautz, Shogren, Wagner

Absent: Hollman

Others Present: Geneva Police Chief Eric Passarelli

2. **AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

None

3. **OMNIBUS AGENDA (OMNIBUS VOTE)**

All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine by the Mental Health Board and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a board member or citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the Omnibus (Consent) Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Regular Agenda.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES, PAYMENTS**

*A. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2021

*B. Approve Payment to Recording Secretary for Services

Motion to approve Gaines second by Wagner.

Voice Vote: Aye: 6 No: 0

Motion Carries

5. **Guest Speaker:** Geneva Chief of Police Eric Passarelli

Chair Shogren welcomed Chief Passarelli, and round table introductions were made. Chair Shogren explained why the Board appreciates community leaders to come in occasionally and talk with the board.

Chief Passarelli spoke of the Police Department's contract with AID and accessibility through contract to a social worker to assist in offering support and service to the community. As needed, social workers will respond to their call within 30 minutes per the contract in place. More recently in October of 2020 and as an added resource and part of a pilot program from AID, Geneva Police have an onsite social worker one day a week, currently Wednesdays to build and maintain continuity with the community, the department, its officers so that the same person is there consistently and working with Geneva residents. It has already shown to be of benefit to both the Police Department and service to the residents of the City of Geneva. A similar program has been in place with the St. Charles Police Department and also seems to work well for them, with an onsite social worker believed to be at two days a week in St. Charles.

Chief Passarelli noted how difficult this past year has been; noting a 24% increase in calls where a social worker was brought in and having access to that social worker has been very beneficial. The dispatcher is able to identify calls that are mental health in nature. In FY 2020 there were a total of 130 cases with AID. This FY year already there are 148 calls for the social worker. Total

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clients serviced last year was 229, this year it is already 323. The direct service hours are up 16% from 442 hours to 515. Total service hours are up 86% from 565 to 1050.

Some of the things the Geneva Police Department has done within their department; they've assigned police officer Mark Russo as a mental health advocate. Officer Russo has a degree in psychology in addition to his tenure and experience as a police officer. Officer Russo serves as a liaison between the department, the community and the social worker to ensure care for the interests of the community served. Three specialists are assigned including a senior care/dementia officer and a domestic violence advocate to work with the social worker. Together they review cases of these types also to ensure the needs and best interests of the community are being met. Over 70% of officers on the force are crisis intervention trained (CIT). Their goal is 100% however there are a percentage of newer officers on the force. The State of Illinois requires an officer to be on the department and served three years before they will offer the training. Going forward the plan, through new legislation in the state, will be to offer this training while officers are still in the Police Academy. The Geneva Police Department has recently created their Citizen at Risk Program, two residents who have already signed up. In the process of implementing a departmental chaplain program. Residents have asked for Also in the plans currently is a start of a Police Department peer support program. The program is with an organization called We Never Walk Alone and was started in Des Plaines. It offers opportunity for officers to speak to peer members and while Geneva is fortunate to not see some of the violent crime other areas may see, however stressors are cumulative. Chief Passarelli believes if the officers are healthy, they're going to be able to take good care of the community.

Chair Shogren asked if the police department sees homelessness as a significant factor in Geneva. Chief Passarelli states they've seen some increase, one reason they've heard directly from those that are homeless is that people in Geneva are nice to them. They offer them food and or money and they feel safe here. Generally speaking, the homeless for whatever reasons, are not willing to accept services which are offered through the police department.

Question by Board Member Kautz asking if the social worker travels with an officer to the scene or if they're on call, do they simply come out?

Answer: It could be either depending on the stability of the scene.

Board Member Wagner asked about situations in the high school currently.

Answer: It hasn't been as prevalent in the schools this year, likely due to the fact that students are still doing some remote learning. The high school liaison this year is detective Paul Van Dorn.

Question from Board member Kautz asked Chief Passarelli to describe the dynamic between the police department and the social worker; recognizing that sometimes it can be challenging to appropriately advocate for all parties involved in a situation. In example, a police officer might need information but a person in a mental health crisis situation may not be willing to comply in the moment, the question becomes 'how have they been able to work together in these situations and have there been any obstacles to overcome?'

Answer: Chief Passarelli believes it really hasn't been an issue to date because he believes the goals are the same. The preference of the Police Department is resolution through assistance of a social worker as much as possible.

Chair Shogren referenced a publication recently read about a program, referencing a response to Governor Pritzker's Criminal Justice Overhaul and likely more geared for larger Urban areas, but

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the program contains provisions for people with mental health conditions, that contains six components they are promoting; training related to stigma, mental health screening for police officers, mandated specific trainings, specific polices with regard to use of force, and deflection programs. The question is what is a deflection program?

Answer: Chief Passarelli in response identified communities that likely have a social worker on duty all the time, that they have to meet certain criteria set forth by the state for this to be their course of action. Some of these components of the six named already have to be met by police officers through their normal course of training.

Board member Kautz asked how the stigma against law enforcement has affected, if at all the police department in Geneva.

Answer: Chief Passarelli stated he recognizes how fortunate the Police force is in Geneva in receiving a great deal of community support, also recognizing this is not the case throughout the country. It was noted however, that police officers in general do have concern about these legislations, as it can make a difficult job, *much* more difficult. It was noted that some officers in some areas are deciding to retire early or if they're newer to the police force, they're opting to leave for another career. A department nearby experienced two officers quitting the last week of police academy as new legislation passed, noting what it would mean for police work. What was at one time 600 candidates is 60 today.

Chief Passarelli discussed how fortunate the local area departments are to work together often; Batavia, Geneva, Elburn, St. Charles but during the time in the summer of fair amounts of civil unrest police officers were spread throughout the state to help with situations.

Board member Kautz asked if there was anything that could be done to help people in the community be able to recognize situations with people experiencing mental health issues that could make interactions better. Unfortunately, there is not a program like this.

Chair Shogren asked if Chief had an opinion as to why the rising suicide among males in late teen and early 20's.

Answer: Chief Passarelli feels it's typically related to some addiction problems. The department will continue their on-call contract with AID having them present on Wednesdays and then an on-call person the other six days as needed 24/7.

Board member Hamilton asked Chief Passarelli's opinion on the biggest unsolved problems he sees.

Answer: Chief Passarelli stated this is a tough question because he's been in some diverse places in his career, and they do look different in different places. In his opinion it's probably domestic related perhaps alcohol related situations where they've offered help and people want it the day of but then don't follow through or want it later and repeat visits are made for same situations. Their goal is to try to help get a resolution on the first call. Chief Passarelli noted the social work services offered through their department are at no cost to residents and people can get as many hours of service as they need.

Chief Passarelli remarked how much he appreciates these strong partnerships with other departments and boards in the City and feels strongly that they help to truly provide best service to residents in Geneva.

6. **Chairperson's Report:**

Chair Shogren shared the following items:

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Fox Valley Hands of Hope has a new Executive Director Jonathan Shively
Ecker Center had an unveiling of the Sustainer's Wall which included a tile with the City of Geneva Mental Health Board

7. **ACMHAI Report:**

A. Member Dues Invoice 2021

Chair Shogren advised the invoice was held a couple of months ago but will be sent by the end of March.

ACMHAI sent a survey asking to help identify health needs. Chair Shogren believes it's mostly for the Boards that are also providers, however unless there was objection from this Board Chair Shogren will seek to respond to this jointly with Vice-Chair Hamilton.

An email came from the Division of Community Mental Health, the governor outlined his budget which will include funding for suicide prevention services.

There are currently nearly 7000 bills in the general assembly due to last years' demand and delay due to the pandemic.

SB1883 and SB 1649 currently in the Senate, are attempts to amend the current legislation pulling 20% of funding to be deposited for county jails' mental health services. It was noted that this has been attempted in the past and did not pass.

B. Illinois Public Health Association Survey

Chair Shogren and Vice-Chair Hamilton with board ok will respond to the survey online that was sent through ACMHAI.

8. **New Business:**

A. Guest Speaker for April

Chair Shogren followed up with Doug Drexler the assistant principal at the high school to discuss the student liaison. Mr. Drexler states he could identify 3-4 groups in the school that would want to potentially participate.

9. **Old Business:**

May Mental Health Month/GHS Student Involvement

Due to connection made with Dr. Drexler, Ms. Lisa Meister faculty leader responded she would love for her S.A.D.D. group to participate in May Mental Health Month. Chair Shogren would like to see a student-generated idea of messaging to bring to the community. Round table discussion ensued with various methods and thoughts on best ways to involve students in this initiative. Chair Shogren thought perhaps using resources already created by Mental Health America to help guide the students. Chair Shogren will reach back to Ms. Meister and perhaps seek to have a call with her to further discuss.

10. **Public Comments, Mail**

Chair Shogren shared the following mail:

Ecker Center thanked the Board for funds received from the 708 Board

Tri-City Family is hosting a virtual gala March 20th

Lazarus House sent a newsletter

Lazarus House was honored with a Civic Image Award as part of St. Charles' Charlemagne awards.

AID sent their newsletter

11. **Adjournment**

Chair Shogren asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Kautz second by Gabriel

Voice Vote Aye: 6 No: 0

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM

All Scheduled Meetings for the 708 Geneva Community Mental Health Board to begin at 7:00 PM unless specifically noted

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