



County of Onondaga  
Department of Children & Family Services

Child Welfare • Mental Health Services • Juvenile Justice • Youth Bureau • School Based Initiatives

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*Deputy Commissioner*

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**Jennifer Parmalee**  
*Deputy Commissioner*

Community Service Board  
Meeting Summary for December 12, 2022

Participants: Jim Yonai, Sara Boll, Liz Nolan, Monika Taylor, Vincent Schmidt  
Staff: Jennifer Parmalee, Amy Cunningham, Karla Silva-Gardner

Review September 12, 2022: Meeting Summary tentatively approved (Jim Yonai & Monika Taylor were the only voting members in attendance, so it was decided to vote to approve September minutes during the March 2023 meeting when there were more attendees.)

Updates:

- Open Meetings Law:

Jennifer Parmalee notified the board that the requirement of compliance with Open Meetings Law requires us to think & look a little differently at how the CSB meeting is run. There are regulations on levels of notification for when meetings take place & we need to allow for the public to observe the decision making process. Meeting notes must reflect motions made, votes taken, and minutes should be posted on the CSB section of the county website.

Based on preliminary review of Open Meetings Law, it is believed that we must livestream or have a recording of the meeting, whether if we are meeting in person or virtually, available to the public. Jim Yonai raised the question of whether or not the legislature has already come up with rules for entities within Onondaga county to follow since they need to also abide by the same Open Meetings Law as the Community Services Board. He questioned if it was a possibility to look into how the county legislature currently publicizes their meetings & what venues they use to do that, whether it be electronic notification or notification via the newspaper or a combination of processes. It was agreed that a good central location for CSB notifications and meeting notes would be the Onondaga County Mental Health Division website. Sara Boll stated that she was under the impression that it was sufficient to make one yearly announcement stating meetings times & location (i.e. publicly posting that the meeting is held every first Monday of the month at XYZ location). The agreement was to follow whatever the county guidance suggests in order to remain compliant.

Monika Taylor expressed surprise as to why this has not been brought up previously, but Jim Yonai clarified that these regulations had been put on pause due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Vincent Schmidt raised the point that other counties have also been discussing how to move forward to accommodate the Open Meetings Law while maintaining consideration for hybrid and virtual options. Ultimately, there is confusion surrounding the acceptable forms of virtual accommodation and it has been a moving issue for some time now. Coming into her current role, Jennifer Parmalee was not aware of anything that would make the Community Service Board exempt from Open Meetings Law. With this being said, our next meeting must be in person. Different suggestions to promote meeting attendance include having an evening meeting instead of a lunch meeting, returning to lunch meetings & providing food, and using the Law Office conference room on the east side of the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the John H. Mulroy Civic Center.

- Subcommittees:

We need to reestablish the DD (Developmental Disabilities) subcommittee. A focus group was done with OPWDD volunteer agencies as well as a separate focus group for family members of those with developmental disabilities & individuals who are OPWDD consumers. These focus groups seemed eager to meet & had great reflections on the struggles and difficulties of the moment. They seemed open to discuss the system pressures and where the systems were negatively impacting them. When the pandemic began, our DD subcommittee became dormant so there is a need to reinvigorate it. The Quarterly Drug Task Force is being used as our OASAS subcommittee. The SPOA Monthly Provider Meetings are being used as our OMH subcommittee.

Jennifer Parmalee believes we could be doing more robust work with our subcommittees, but admits this is something that has become more difficult as positions within the county have shifted. Jim Yonai agrees we have lost track of our subcommittees and how they function. He states he is unsure if this is a human services delivery system issue, or if this is an issue with Medicaid funding. These issues have ultimately created an indifference in subcommittee participants.

- Membership:

The current rules for Community Services Board membership state that membership can be up to 15 members that can serve no more than 2 consecutive terms, terms are 4 years. Appointments are through the county executives offices. These rules are written into Mental Hygiene Law but there is something that allows for local governments to amend that if they so desire.

Jim Yonai is our current chairperson. Ideally we want representation for mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities. For example, both Tania Anderson & Beth Hurney being from Arise leaves us needing additional representation. Monika Taylor is the only hospital-based representation on the Community Services Board. Ideally, we would also like representation from Upstate, St. Joseph's Health, CPEP, & Contact Community Services as well. It was proposed we think about including representatives from Syracuse Central School District & another county school district (ideally a rural school district), Syracuse University (Falk School & Maxwell College's Lehrner Center specifically), Lemoyne College, Onondaga Community College, DSS Economic Security, PEACE, Syracuse Community Health Center, Southwest Community Center, Catholic Charities or Hope Connections, independent peers & peer organizations, interfaith services, homelessness services (i.e. someone from tiny homes for good, rescue mission, or catholic charities shelter), and/or Syracuse Police Department or sheriff's office as well.

- Meeting in Person:

More than 15 people will require a larger space. BOCES was proposed as an option as well as the public library and Salt City Market conference spaces. The OneGroup location was also proposed & it seems like the best option due to accessibility concerns like parking & location.

Jim Yonai expressed concerns over his ability to meet in person as chairperson & wanted to confirm if a hybrid option would be acceptable for him due to personal circumstances as well as scheduling conflicts. Jennifer Parmalee replied with a direct quote from Open Meetings Law stating "Members shall be physically present unless such member is unable to be so due to extraordinary circumstances" & agreed that in his circumstance hybrid attendance would be acceptable since this includes disability, illness, caregiving responsibilities, etc. If this were to be an issue, Jim expressed his willingness to resign from his position of chairperson to which Jennifer Parmalee replied was not necessary at this time.

Karla Silva-Gardner proposed moving meetings to the second Monday of every quarter as opposed to the first Monday of every quarter in order to avoid running into conflicts with holidays. This motion was approved by both Jim Yoai & Monika Taylor as the two present voting members of the Community Services Board.

- Local Government Plan:

Our Local Government Plan was submitted on time. The plan we submitted was much more extensive than New York State asked for. The state was asking for very minimal in terms of information from the county. This is understandable due to there being 62 counties, but is also frustrating because it then presents an inability to provide a level of depth that we would like the state to be aware of in terms of our concerns and what we are working on.

A new requirement is that we have to start looking at a 3 to 5 year plan moving forward & we'll have to put a plan in place for how we'd like to do that. A discussion on creating a calendar for planning that we can review as a Community Services Board will be added to next meeting's agenda. This can also be an opportunity to begin to bring the subcommittees into the planning process looking at the different aspects of mental hygiene.

- Staffing:

Novelette Pierce is moving from Director of Children's Mental Health to Director of Mental Hygiene. This title change is made so that we can be clear that we are referring to the populations of OPWDD, OASAS, & Mental Health. This means that Novelette is overseeing the ACCESS team (youth intake team) as well as Adult SPOA & Transition Age Youth (TAY) team. This change is to help us align our adult and youth mental health work that we do.

We are in the process of hiring a Director of SPOA & Crisis Services and a System of Care Manager for the adult team. These two positions will be doing a lot of the complex case work & Novelette will be supporting them in that process. Both positions are posted & we are actively interviewing for these positions. Hopefully with the filling of these two positions, it will allow for the infrastructure to be built for the Adult Team to handle more complex cases.

Adjourn – Next Meeting: March 13, 2023