



Herman S Robinson, Chair

Brenda Cronin, Executive Director

April 14, 2021

Board of Commissioners of Erie County:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this public hearing. My name is Jim Sass and I am here to represent the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Erie and Ottawa Counties. I do not represent an appointing organization. I was appointed to the Board to serve, as well as, represent the best interest of the citizens of the community.

In preparation for this meeting, our Board members have taken a close look at our accomplishments and we have summarized these results in a document titled **MHRBEO Summary of Accomplishments 2017-2021**.

First, during the past 4 years the Board completed six comprehensive assessment and planning exercises, all of which obtained significant input from a diverse group of community stakeholders. The results were the identification of gaps in services along with specific action plans to fill those gaps.

Second, additional services have been funded and implemented to provide a Continuum of Care for mental health and addiction for our citizens.

Board effectiveness can be summarized by the following examples:

- Adoption of 2 strategic plans by unanimous vote
- Fiscal responsibility and good stewards of taxpayer dollars
- Board levy passed by 75% in both counties
- 1.5 million reserve account for contingency planning
- Continuum of care in place for those with mental illness and/or addiction
- All activities listed on the Summary of Accomplishments

Based upon a majority vote of Board members, we are including in our written testimony documents that we believe will better inform you and the public about

the efforts of the Board. After today's meeting, these documents will be on our website for public access. They include the following:

- Complete public hearing written testimony
- Summary of Accomplishments
- 2020-2021 Strategic Plan
- Board's response to the January 13, 2021 Commissioner's meeting
- Clarification and Correction of Public Information
- Chronology of the Recovery Housing Program at 301 Superior St.

The Board is also in search of information from you and in our complete public hearing written testimony, the Board has documented a number of public records requests that we would like fulfilled.

In addition to the above, the Board seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What are the reasons for splitting the Board? While we have heard general terms being used, such as "dysfunctional" and "non-transparent", as justification for the split, we have not been able to obtain accurate and complete examples or issues that support these claims. What have you identified that is so bad that the only option available is to split the board?
2. How would splitting the Board resolve your list of failures of the Board relevant to O.R.C 340?

Our goal for this testimony and for providing you with the referenced documents is to ensure that you are making an informed decision regarding whether it is in Erie County's best interest, specifically the consumers, the providers, and the taxpayers, among others, to pursue splitting the Board. If there are service gaps that we have missed relevant to the Board's mission and charter, our hope is that you advise us so that we may review them as a Board and create a plan of action.

Thank you, I am available for questions.