

ATHENS COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.
Beacon School – 801 W. Union Street

**The Mission of the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities is to serve our
community with compassion, innovation, and transparency**

1. Margaret Demko, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
2. Arian Smedley did roll call.

BOND	Present
CONNER	Present
DEMKO	Present
GÜT	Present – virtually
JOLLEY	Present
LEWIS	Present – virtually
OCHES	Present

Staff / Others in Attendance:

Dr. Kevin Davis	Superintendent
Arian Smedley	Assistant Superintendent
Scott Zielinski	Director of Finance
Gwen Brooks	Director of HR
Chris Linscott	Director of Facilities & Transportation
Stephanie Kendrick	MUI Coordinator
Autumn Brown	Director of Integrate Athens
Becky Martin	Director of Education
Clayton Ray	SSA, PGO
Crestlyn Chaney	Beacon, ABEA
Doug Mitchell	Transition Services, ABEA

3. Oches read the Mission Statement.
4. Dr. Jolley motioned to approve the agenda.

MOTION#: 2-27-24-1
MOTION: JOLLEY
SECOND: OCHES
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES

5. New Business:

Items for review and discussion:

- a. Dr. Davis provided the board members a budget update, which covered the following items:
- Upcoming union negotiations – PTO and Teamsters negotiations are coming up this summer. Scheduling is forthcoming; board members invited to join. Dr. Davis requested to know by the March board meeting if a board member would like to serve on either or both.
 - Updated cost projections will be provided at the March board meeting. These projections will be used for future planning. Dr. Davis stressed the importance of understanding that these are estimates, but as close to accurate as possible. A number of variables can impact the actual expenses. There was brief discussion about comparisons with other counties, and the use of a new standardized tool provided by DODD.
 - Levy Committee – Dr. Davis reminded the board that the agency will seek to add a levy onto the ballot next fall. This means a levy committee will be formed this year. It is important that no person employed by the agency is serving on the levy committee during their work time. Board members can serve with no issues. Dr. Davis also walked the board members through a handout detailing the levy options. No decision has been made yet as to which type of levy to pursue.
 - Strategic Planning – Dr. Davis shared we are in the last year of the agency's three-year plan. We will be forming a committee this summer to design the next three-year plan. The goal is to have a draft plan to the board in October and have it approved at the December meeting. Board members are invited to participate.
 - 2023 Annual Report – Dr. Davis walked the board members through the report.
- b. Dr. Davis walked the board through the exhibit on the agency's FSS program (Exhibit 1, Page 1). The exhibit included the number of individuals on the FSS wait list. The discussion included the following topics:
- The way the program operates currently, including details about the first-round vs the second-round of funding
 - The purpose of the FSS program, including what is eligible
 - The ways in which the agency addresses emergency situations, which is not through the FSS program
 - The cost to finance everyone who applied, even those who applied after the deadline
 - Whether the agency should consider increasing the annual FSS allocation
 - The concern about increasing the allocation for individuals on the wait list and the slippery slope that could create
 - Acknowledging any increase would be a decrease somewhere else in the budget

- Board members decided to continue thinking about options and revisit the state of the program later in the year
- c. Dr. Davis walked the board members through the proposed Finance & Personnel meeting schedule (Handout).
- d. Dr. Jolley motioned to approve the updated Personnel Policies, with the noted change (changing ODE to ODEW) (Exhibit 2, Pages 2-8).

MOTION#: 2-27-24-2
 MOTION: JOLLEY
 SECOND: LEWIS
 AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
 CARRIES: YES

- e. Dr. Davis walked the board members through a handout that outlined an update on the Staff Engagement Survey Workgroup. First meeting was hosted on Feb. 22, 2024. Updates included the group unanimously agreeing to the following:
- Next meeting is March 21, 2024 – length of the meeting this day will depend on the flow of the meeting
 - To allow for the most open conversation, Dr. Davis will only attend the tail-end of any meetings to get an update
 - Gwen Brooks, the agency’s HR Director, will serve as the mediator
 - An invitation will be extended to an ESC paraprofessional to be member of the workgroup
 - The charge of the group is to be a forward-thinking group designed to brainstorm ways to address the agency’s 13 opportunities for improvement from the survey – goal would be to reach average or above average in those areas
 - Recommendations go to the leadership team and the board, as necessary
- f. Dr. Davis shared information about the upcoming Developmental Disability Awareness Month activities (Exhibit 3, Page 9).
- g. Board members discussed future meetings/trainings:
- Board training: Tuesday, March 26, 5:00 p.m.
 - Next regular meeting: Tuesday, March 26, 6:00 p.m.

Motions for vote:

- a. Oches motioned to approve 2024 Organizational Meeting Minutes (Exhibit 4, Pages 10-13).

MOTION#: 2-27-24-3
MOTION: OCHES
SECOND: GÜT
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES

- b. Dr. Lewis motioned to approve 2024 January Board Meeting Minutes (Exhibit 5, Pages 14-21).

MOTION#: 2-27-24-4
MOTION: LEWIS
SECOND: JOLLEY
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES

- c. Bond motioned to approve resolution expressing appreciation to the Albany VFW for hosting and organizing the sixth annual Polar Bear Plunge and their subsequent donation to the Beacon School PTA (Exhibit 6, Page 22).

Discussion: Dr. Davis shared that over the last five years, this event has generated approximately \$55,000 for the Beacon School PTA. This most recent event was the sixth. We do not yet know the total donation for this year, but we have been told it will be more than last year. Plans are to use the proceeds to cover the cost of the purchase and installation of a motorized pool chair lift, which costs \$14,100. The chair should arrive by the end of March.

MOTION#: 2-27-24-5
MOTION: BOND
SECOND: LEWIS
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES

- d. Bond motioned to approve disbursement of approved DODD / ARPA grants (Exhibit 7, Page 23).

Discussion: Dr. Davis shared DODD made ARPA funding available to county board statewide. Smedley, Brown, and Zielinski worked together to write proposals for three projects, which were all fully funded. The agency received \$26,000 for all three projects. He walked the board members through the exhibit in the packet that provides details for each project.

MOTION#: 2-27-24-6
MOTION: BOND
SECOND: OCHES
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES

- e. Oches motioned to approve FANs COMCorps Agreement, pending prosecuting attorney's approval (Exhibit 8, Pages 24-26).

MOTION#: 2-27-24-7
MOTION: OCHES
SECOND: LEWIS
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES

6. Board Reports:

- a. Superintendent, Dr. Kevin Davis (Exhibit 9, Pages 27-35).
Report stands. He added that he has been invited to speak to the county's school superintendents at the ESC on March 15. This is an opportunity to talk about finances, excess cost, transportation, ESC paraprofessionals, and other things regarding Beacon School.
- b. Director of Education, Becky Martin (Exhibit 10, Page 36).
Report stands. She added the preschool program has been designated as a five-star program, which is a great accomplishment.
- c. Director of Finance, Scott Zielinski (Exhibit 11, Pages 37-44).
Report stands. He highlighted that the funds that were approved to be moved to the capital funds has happened, however the finances in the board packet do not reflect that. It will be reflected in next month's information.
- d. Director of Human Resources, Gwen Brooks (Exhibit 12, Pages 45-47).
Report stands. She updated the board that the search for the summer camp director is now complete. She will let Brown provide additional details.
- e. Director of Facilities and Transportation, Chris Linscott (Exhibit 13, Page 48-49).
Report stands. He added the fire inspection of the school building is scheduled for tomorrow.
- f. MUI Coordinator, Stephanie Kendrick (Exhibit 14, Page 50-53).
Report stands. She highlighted the MUI Annual Analysis is included with her report. This is a mandatory report the MUI department does annually. Data is compared over multiple years to look for internal trends and patterns. No surprises were found.

- g. Director of Service and Support, Tristin Lawrence (Exhibit 15, Pages 54-58).
Report stands.
 - h. Director of Employment Options, Angela Carter (Exhibit 16, Page 59).
Report stands.
 - i. Director of Integrate Athens, Autumn Brown (Exhibit 17, Pages 60-63).
Report stands. She shared Paul Richard has been hired as the camp director. He also serves as a sub driver. He will bring a great deal of experience to the role of camp director. Camp applications will be made available in early April. Eligibility is first grade through age 21. Both Peer Volunteers and Camp Assistants will be part of camp again this year. In addition, she is heavily promoting the DD Awareness Month activities. She also highlighted Open Gym and Unified Volleyball at the Athens Community Center.
 - j. Assistant Superintendent, Arian Smedley (Exhibit 18, Pages 64-68).
Report stands. She highlighted the work done by Doug Mitchell, Transition Coordinator. When looking at his caseload numbers, we have seen a 42% increase since 2022 in the number of transition-age youth receiving transition-specific services. This is due to his hard work in standardizing the agency's transition services.
7. No comments from Visitors relative to the agenda.
 8. No comments from Unions relative to the agenda.
 9. Regarding comments from the Board, Dr. Jolley commended leadership and others for making the decision to close the school during the COVID-19 spike. He added he understands this was not an easy decision to make. But he thinks this was the right decision.
 10. Bond motioned to adjourn at 7:07 p.m.

MOTION#: 2-27-24-8
MOTION: BOND
SECOND: CONNER
AYES: BOND, CONNER, DEMKO, GÜT, JOLLEY, LEWIS, OCHES
CARRIES: YES