**Governance Board Meeting Minutes**

**Northwest Louisiana Human Services District**

**April 17, 2023**

1310 N. Hearne Avenue – Shreveport Behavioral Health Clinic – Shreveport, LA

Called to Order: By Matthew Linn at 5:43pm

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Matthew Linn

Roll Call: Trudie Abner, Don Pledger, Matthew Linn and Kristie Copeland were present. David Hoey, Bridgette Salsberry, Tray Murray and Carolyn Carter were excused. Bienville Natchitoches, Sabine and Governor Appointee #3 have no board representative at this time. A quorum of 4 out of 8 board members confirmed by Kristie Copeland, Board Secretary. Doug Efferson, Executive Director was present.

Approval of Agenda: Moved by Don Pledger to add “Non-Appropriation Request for Shreveport First Floor Breakroom Renovation” to the agenda under Board Business, seconded by Kristie Copeland, and unanimously approved. Moved by Don Pledger to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Trudie Abner, and unanimously approved.

Approval of the Minutes for February 20, 2023 and March 20, 2023: Moved by Don Pledger to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Trudie Abner, and unanimously approved.

Guest and Public Comments: None.

Executive Limitations: Doug Efferson gave a summary of his written report for March 20, 2023 on Financial Conditions and Activities and Communication and Support to the Board. A lengthy discussion was held regarding the request by Matthew Linn on February 23, 2023 that Doug Efferson obtain and give him a copy of the immunity language needed for 911 calls to be transferred to 988 without a liability concern. Doug Efferson informed the Board that, in a phone conversation with Janet Miller, Executive Director for the Louisiana Association on Compulsive Gambling, she stated she was not in possession of such legislative language and that her attorney could not find such language proposed or in place in other states. Doug Efferson then informed the Board that he had contacted Pam Breedlove, the District attorney, to get her input on the matter and, while she confirmed the fact that 988 would not have any immunity protection if they took 911 calls, she cautioned the Board on getting involved in legislation that the district would not be a party to. Matthew Linn then requested that Doug Efferson request Janet Miller provide her response to this enquiry in writing since her comments were received by Doug Efferson verbally. Don Pledger, Trudie Abner, and Kristie Copeland agreed with the request. Doug Efferson then reported to the Board the following answers to their questions regarding Merakey in the February board meeting:

1) Bridgette Salsberry, our Board member for DeSoto Parish who works with the courts, mentioned some advocacy activity by Merakey. I was asked to get additional information regarding this. Answer: Court attendance is part of Merakey’s ACT service line, not a Mobile Crisis Service activity.

2) Don Pledger, our Board member for Claiborne Parish, mentioned they had some issues with requesting services from Merakey. I was asked to get additional information and meet with Don in Homer to see if there are some process issues limiting your services there. Answer: Merakey has not received a request for services from Claiborne Parish, either directly or via one of the 6 Medicaid plans. If a client contacted their Medicaid insurance provider and was referred to 911, ER, or other services, Merakey would not be aware of the request or referral to other service providers.

3) Matthew Linn, our Board Chair, asked what our district can do to help Merakey grow these services and be successful. Answer: Our district was complemented on the fact that we have repeatedly send out the Crisis Service flyer to our clinicians, contract providers and have posted it on the District Facebook page. We were asked to continue to do this every few months. Since we did so in January when Humana was added, I told Merakey we would do so again this month.

Doug Efferson then informed the Board of five new initiatives being rolled out by the Louisiana Department of Health, the third of which is Building on the Foundation for Statewide Youth Crisis Services by extending the current crisis services to youth by 2024.

Doug Efferson then gave his April summary on Financial Conditions and Activities, Communication and Support to the Board, and Compensation and Benefits. Of note was the call on April 4th from Adrian Perron, Executive Director of Operations at the Merakey-Shreveport office, stating that Merakey would be ending their Crisis Services agreement with the Louisiana Department of Health on May 1, 2023. On the same day, notice was received that the Shreveport Crisis Response Leadership Summit scheduled for April 17th was being postponed due to the Merakey announcement. Doug Efferson reported attending both the House and Senate finance committee budget hearings and that Senator Milligan supports our budget request for two additional positions. Doug Efferson also reported that billboards will be going up in Shreveport and Minden advertising for Social Workers and Professional Counselors in an effort to fill current vacancies. Doug Efferson pointed out that, due to the extended vacancies, both the Shreveport and Minden clinics are on restricted admissions and that self-generated revenues was down over $100,000. Don Pledger moved to accept the ED Board reports for March and April with the March report being amended to correct a typographical error, seconded by Kristie Copeland, and unanimously approved without any policy changes.

Board Business: Matthew Linn led a review of the Financial Conditions and Activities, Communication and Support to the Board, Compensation and Benefits, ENDS Statement and Board Committee Principles policies. Kristie Copeland motioned to accept the policies without change, seconded by Trudie Abner, and unanimously approved. The Board reviewed the Stakeholder Survey Summary and found no issue requiring an amendment to the ENDs statement. The board discussed the Members Term Wishes Sent to Parishes and found none to be sent. They also discussed that this activity is ongoing and not needed as an annual agenda item going forward. For Board Development, the Board reviewed the Board EXCELerator Online Training as a preferred Board member training option and agreed that the Board Member Orientation manual should be updated to include this training. They also requested the training be made available to current board members interested in taking it. Doug Efferson stated he would make the orientation manual changes and send out an email to all board members to see who would like to take the training. Matthew Linn appointed David Hoey as Executive Director Evaluation Committee Chair and asked him to choose two other Board members to serve on the committee. The Board reviewed the Non-Appropriation Request for Shreveport First Floor Breakroom Renovation for $43,797.00. Matthew Linn suggested approving up to $44,000.00. Trudie Abner motioned to approve the expenditure as submitted, seconded by Don Pledger, and unanimously approved. The February Board Compliance Monitoring Summary Report was reviewed and accepted. The April Board Compliance Monitoring Tool was completed and given to Doug Efferson for summary. The next meeting date/time was agreed to be May 15, 2023 at 5:30pm.

Announcements/Acknowledgements: Doug Efferson reminded Matthew Linn of his concern that Board resignations needed to be reviewed and approved by the Secretary of State before they are effective. Matthew initially requested a legal opinion from our District attorney but, after a brief discussion, the Board requested Doug Efferson contact the Secretary of State directly to see if we are operating in compliance with current reporting requirements.

Adjournment: Kristie Copeland moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:53pm, seconded by Don Pledger, and unanimously approved.

Minutes Prepared by Kristie Copeland, Board Secretary