

MINUTES OF THE VERNON TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD MEETING, HELD ON APRIL 16, 2026, AT 6:30 PM, AT THE VERNON TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 3050 N MAIN STREET, BUFFALO GROVE, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 by Vice President Sally Thoren.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice President Sally Thoren led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Member Crutchfield, Member Garfield, Member Hossain, Secretary Lewis, Vice President Thoren

Present Remotely: None

Absent: President Noelle Moore, Treasurer Hirsch

A QUORUM WAS ESTABLISHED.

Also Present: Director of Constituent Affairs, Barrett Monie and Township Manager, Todd Gedville, Township Supervisor Tim Kobler, and representatives from Partners in Aging, OMNI, Hanul Counseling Center, D102 Homegrown Therapy Dogs, Lake County Partners in Aging, and Youth and Family Services.

President Moore arrived at the meeting at 6:39pm.

Treasurer Hirsch arrived at the meeting at 6:49pm.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Piyas Bhattacharjee from Healing Arts and Science Association (HAnSA) shared that her organization focuses on positive psychology and engages people of all ages including youth through seniors and focuses on how art can create a peaceful society. They are offering an upcoming program, "Reflect. Create. Lead with Values" on April 26, 2026 from 2-4pm at Cook Memorial Public Library.

Robbie Boudreau from Lake County Partners in Aging shared their focus has been on family caregiver support and transportation for older adults to their medical appointments as well as in home counseling services.

Jeanelle Moravek from Youth and Family Counseling provided a report and update. She shared that the fastest growing population being serviced is aged 6-12.

## 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 19, 2026, MEETING

Vice President Thoren made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Garfield seconded the motion.

No Discussion.

The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

## 7. REPORTS

a. President's Report: President Moore and township staff met with Apna Ghar and they are piloting a mobile outreach program. They will be following up with the township to possibly be present at food pantry days.

b. Vice President's Report: None.

c. Secretary's Report: None.

d. Member Reports: Member Hossain met with staff member Moody to discuss ways to measure the impact of the dollars our granted agencies are spending.

e. Attorney Report: None.

f. Staff Reports: Staff Member Monie reported that the grant application is currently open.

## 8. PRIOR BUSINESS

No prior business

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

### a. Presentations from Grant Recipient Agencies

#### i. Homegrown Therapy Dogs

Melissa Fasuna from Homegrown Therapy Dogs offered thanks to the board for their grant. She began inviting therapy dogs into her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom at Pritchett Elementary School for reading with students prior to the pandemic. The agency started in 2022 within the Aptakisic Tripp CCSD 102. Teams of dogs from our community are trained to provide comfort in our community. Therapy dogs are all certified and insured by the Alliance of Therapy Dogs. Their sole purpose is to bring comfort. There are over 20 teams in the program and it continues to grow.

ii. Hanul Family Alliance

Thanks were given to the board for their help supporting the counseling program in their Lake County office. The organization has been around for 40 years and currently has three locations (Chicago, Mt. Prospect, Buffalo Grove/ Lincolnshire). They serve mental health and programs for seniors, including meal delivery. Most clients are Korean-American but all are welcome. Bilingual/ bicultural therapists are available. 53.6% of clients received reduced price or pro bono counseling services with a high rate of attendance and follow through.

iii. OMNI

Doryce McCarthy, President of OMNI, introduced Mariia Drohomyska, a new community outreach staff, who was employed to meet the needs of the Ukrainian/ Russian speaking culture. She advocates for her clients when the system is a challenge and assists with SNAP, Medicaid, and related program paperwork and eligibility. Mariia shared success stories that have come out of the work she has been able to do to meet the needs of her clients. Since September 1, 54 adults have been provided services, 50 kids have received backpacks for school, and 78 youth received holiday gifts. Maria also assists at the Vernon Township Food Pantry every other week. When there are delays in service provision due to benefits lapsing, the township grant has been able to provide continued support to those clients.

b. Discussion and Possible Approval of Needs Assessment RFP

President Moore requested to move this agenda item to our next meeting.

c. Discussion of Grant Application Review Process

Staff member Monie shared a new process that will go through the staff to check grant applications when they are first received. Staff will follow up with agencies if there are questions or missing paperwork. Board members will review the applications and follow a rubric to provide feedback in advance of the meeting. This will allow for a more streamlined process for grant application review. The current round of applications is open until the end of May.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Member Garfield moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice President Thoren seconded that motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.