

Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee
138 East Court Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

September 28, 2023

Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners
Hon. Alicia Reece, President
Hon. Denise Driehaus, Vice President
Hon. Stephanie Summerow Dumas, Commissioner

Re: Mid-cycle review of the Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services

Dear Commissioners:

Gwen McFarlin, Chair of the Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC), appointed a sub-committee to perform a mid-cycle review of the Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services (HCDDS), and as requested by the TLRC on June 17, 2019. The sub-committee members are Dr. Edward Herzig, Chair, Dr. Jenny O'Donnell, and Eric Landen, Esq. The subcommittee met with the leadership of the HCDDS on June 6, 2023, via Zoom teleconference. The leadership members are: Leia Snyder, Superintendent; Neil Townsend, Budget and Operations; Ashley Jackson, Assistant Budget and Operations; and Ryan Braun, Director of Community Relations. A comprehensive presentation was made, and the review was collegial. As always, Lisa Webb provided invaluable assistance and her expertise to both the HCDDS and the sub-committee.

HCDDS:

HCDDS is mandated by Ohio Revised Code Section 5126 to provide lifetime services to those who have developmental disabilities beginning before the age of 22. These disabilities can be physical, intellectual or both and impact major life activities (i.e., language learning, self-help, mobility, and independence). Currently, approximately 8600 people are supported.

At the last levy review, several recommendations were made. These were addressed in this mid-cycle review.

Leadership:

There have been several substantial leadership changes through retirement and an untimely death. Leia Snyder became the Superintendent in 2020. She describes the transition as being smooth, aided by the immediate past superintendent providing counsel and mentoring during the process. In 2021, new Director and Assistant Director of Budget and Operations were onboarded. This transition appears to have gone well.

Fiscal:

HCDDS is fiscally sound currently. The majority of income, approximately 80% in 2022, is provided by the Hamilton County tax levy. In addition, the State of Ohio provides approximately 4% and Federal government about 13.5%. of the income for HCDDS The carryover balance is

currently \$129.5 million. Since the services are mandated under Ohio law, any additional HCDDS expenses would be paid from Hamilton County general funds.

	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected
	2021	2022	2023	2024
<u>Revenue</u>				
Local Tax Levy Revenue	76,158,957	77,120,522	77,120,522	78,277,330
Local Revenue Other	\$1,344,855	\$3,362,481	\$2,808,396	\$9,985,532
State Revenue DODD	\$379,441	\$473,904	\$526,000	\$726,859
State Revenue ODE	\$868,618	\$874,373	\$921,670	\$921,670
State Revenue Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal Revenue	\$12,727,361	\$9,484,765	\$13,215,000	\$10,173,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$3,923,064	\$4,899,150	\$3,399,500	\$3,544,500
Total Revenue	\$ 95,402,296	\$ 96,215,195	\$ 97,991,088	\$103,628,891
<u>Expenditures</u>				
Personnel Expenses	\$28,430,982	\$30,518,885	\$33,508,613	\$37,118,121
Locally Funded Services	\$8,782,192	\$10,264,646	\$16,015,500	\$11,570,078
Other Expenses	\$5,923,316	\$7,655,618	\$9,620,000	\$8,864,752
Waiver Match	\$39,200,654	\$40,948,706	\$42,291,138	\$46,040,941
Total Expense	\$ 82,337,143	\$ 89,387,854	\$101,435,251	\$103,593,891
Ending Operating Cash Balance	\$126,074,032	\$ 132,901,372	\$129,457,209	\$129,492,208

As can be seen in the above table, waiver matches and personnel account for the largest share of the expenses. The waiver program is challenging due to (1) new waivers (2) the match rate (3) statewide rate increases and (4) utilization rates. The HCDDS leadership team is working with the Board to address these issues as well as inflation and personnel expenses.

Additional funding sources:

HCDDS is working to secure additional funding from state and federal sources as well as and to maximize its billing.

Wait list:

At the last levy review, the wait list for services had 6000 people on it. Additional staff was hired as recommended. By aggressively addressing this issue, the wait list was eliminated by 2020. This project has a cost of \$2.5 million annually. The benefit is that people's needs are being addressed quickly.

Rost and Fairfax schools:

The COVID pandemic affected the schools in several ways. First, the schools were closed only during mandated periods. Second, enrollment decreased by 14 students during that time. Enrolment is now projected to be 54-56 students total. Third, some school districts are taking more responsibility for educating students with disabilities. The current cost charged by HCDDS

for a student to attend Rost or Fairfax school is approximately \$50 000/student which cost is generally paid by each student's public school district. HCDDS has done extensive outreach to Hamilton County schools and is evaluating other services and better utilization of the space in the schools.

Finally, HCDDS is evaluating the future challenges both in budgeting and services. It is apparent, that HCDDS has addressed the concerns raised during the Lev review. It has successfully and commendably transitioned leadership during a fraught time.

Respectfully submitted:

Edward B. Herzig MD, Chair
Jenny O'Donnell PsyD
Eric Landen, ESQ