

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
AD-HOC MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 17, 2025

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Lynn Gallagher called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM on Thursday, July 17, 2025 in the Stockton Village Hall in Stockton, Illinois.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was answered as follows: Present – Lynn Gallagher, Steve Endress, LaDon Trost, Dianne Allendorf, John Schultz, Kevin Stewart, Tracy Bauer. Present: 7. Present electronically - Sandra Schleicher. Present electronically: 1. Absent – Stephanie Cocagne. Absent: 1.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve minutes of the June 18, 2025 Ad-Hoc Mental Health Committee meeting was made by Steve Endress and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

There were two citizens in attendance, Officer Schubert of Stockton Police Dept and a local pastor, Scott Hess.

For the citizens in attendance for the first time, Gallagher read the Committee's mission statement, excerpted from R2024-25 and also read goals developed by the Committee. She gave a brief synopsis of where they are at currently; gathering data, collecting survey responses and more recently, setting up meetings for the beginning of the school year to get input and community members to assist in gathering data as well. Trost informed those in attendance of the 708 Mental Health Board, which is funded by tax dollars. His goal has always been that we can find funding for a full-time provider with offices throughout the county, to allow citizens to have easier access to mental health services. The state is totally incompetent in regard to mental health services. When Trost was in law enforcement in Stockton, he said that a third of his time was devoted to mental health issues, and that has not changed to this day. Member Bauer accounted her experience in the hospital system. There is outpatient and inpatient, and so many individuals end up in the emergency room. She said that trying to find placement and transportation is basically impossible. She continued to explain the issues she's experienced first-hand and how it is a terrible cycle.

V. Unfinished Business

Gallagher read through the Committee's action items and summarized each of them. She also mentioned that she had sent out the 2014 assessment for anyone to update or help. She encouraged anyone that finds a certain area particularly interesting, to please help write that portion. Gallagher opened up the meeting to conversation, inviting anyone in attendance to speak if they felt inclined to do so. Trost introduced Scott Hess, the pastor of one of the churches in Stockton. Hess thanked the Committee for inviting him to speak and share his experience with mental health and also drug abuse, which is fairly common to go hand-in-hand. Hess said he is a recovering addict and that one of

his core problems was self-obsession; there is a lot of that in the world today. For someone like him, addiction has always been classified as a mental illness. Overall, Hess explained that it was a problem of a series of bad choices, and that if we can get help to individuals at a younger age, it will assist them in making good choices. He was a graduate of the now closed Sojourn House in Freeport. He said that the closing of the Sojourn House hurt the community. Although 1 in 10 made it, he asked how many in 10 are making it now without the facility. Hess went on to tell his story of addiction and mental illness and noted some individuals that helped him along the way. He believes that he could not have done it without the help of the community members that supported him on his journey. Hess has now been sober for over ten years. Gallagher asked, since Hess is no longer associated with the same groups of people these days, in his opinion, if it is still an issue in this community. Hess answered with definitive confirmation that it is a huge issue, and it has not improved. Retired Stockton Chief of Police and Committee member, Kevin Stewart, spoke. He noted how it starts with drinking at a young age and only spirals from there. Stewart mentioned how there are plenty of functioning addicts; they hold jobs, own homes, and function in society. That is a large issue that a lot of people do not realize. Member Endress asked Officer Schubert to explain what their department has to deal with on a regular basis in the Village of Stockton. Schubert noted how he feels Stockton is stuck; they are in proximity to Freeport and a bit further from Galena. There is typically one person per shift in their department. If there is a call, there's typically nobody to support while he is away, and it can put their department in a difficult spot. Schubert appreciates that there are departments throughout the county and that they all work very well together; at the very least, they can collaborate and work as a team. Trost noted how Illinois is ranked 6th in the nation for mental health deserts and 7th in the nation for mental health coverage under Medicaid. This is a state-wide issue; not just Jo Daviess County.

VI. New Business

VII. Reports

VIII. Citizens' Comments

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Trost wanted to state how this has been the most productive meeting the Committee has had since forming.

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 03:04 PM by Dianne Allendorf and seconded by John Schultz. Motion carried by voice vote.

The next regular meeting is Thursday, August 21, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. at the Jo Daviess County Administrative Offices, Former Galena Primary School, in Galena.