

Good Morning, Commissioners,

I am Christina Hurr, Superintendent of the Butler County Board of MRDD.

I want to thank you for giving me and Mr. Crain a moment to make a couple of remarks prior to action on the MRDD Union Contract. We will be glad to address any questions you may have.

Mr. Crain will review the major provisions in the contract. **I want to set the stage for where the Board of MRDD is sitting at this point.** I think this is important because as everyone knows, the County Budget is in a serious situation today because of the impact of the current economic crisis.

So my first point is : The Board of MRDD operates with 0 County General Funds. We operate with levy funds, state and federal monies. ***If we did operate with County General Funds, we would not be here today asking for this contract to be approved.***

The fact is, the Board of MRDD is in a different place than the County offices. We have been in tumultuous financial times since 2005 because of a series of state funding decreases and Medicaid funding changes. Because we have been experiencing ongoing financial “challenges” we have made numerous changes in how we do business so that we could continue to serve an increasing number of individuals with less resources.

We did this quietly but deliberately, we didn’t come back and ask to put a tax levy on the ballot. We didn’t come to tell you we overspent our budget. We struggled to adjust to the revenue decreases so that we could maintain quality services and do the best we could to keep up with the needs of individuals who needed our support. This year alone, we decreased our planned budget by \$3.9 million from last year.

Since 2005, we have reduced our staff by 27%. We decreased some of our direct services and learned to encourage and rely on other providers. We adjusted and reduced existing contracts for services.

Each year we present to you our budget, we project for you a budget scenario for 10 years out, we do contingency planning and we spend within our budget. The Board has operated on 3 mils since 1984.

Over the last 5 years, the average annual increase for staff salaries has been 2.9% with no annual step increases. We have worked hard to keep our cost of health insurance low.

Finally, whatever decision you make today, we want you and the public to know that we recognize that we can only provide what the public can bear and we have been highly aware of the need to be accountable to the public. We operate on defined annual goals and outcome measures, we give wage increases contingent on performance and attendance requirements, our wages for direct service staff (the group impacted by this union contract) fall below the average when compared to other county boards of MRDD employees in the state.

We know that finances will continue to be a challenge. We know that the public, including ourselves, are critical of public entities, especially in times like these. The public expects us to do the job of supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. This includes maintaining a stable direct service staff that is highly trained. Historically, the public has supported us through tax levies. We do not take that for granted.

The Board and I will continue to be resourceful, vigilant and do what it takes to gain and keep public trust and support so that we can serve individuals with developmental disabilities in Butler County, as we are charged to do.

Thank you.

