

The Mercer County Board of Developmental Disabilities held its regular meeting on February 2, 2026 in the conference room at the Administration Building at 7:30 p.m. with **Teri Spoltman** presiding.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

OATH OF OFFICE - Superintendent Shawn Thieman welcomed new board members Jacque Leverette and Tori Heck, read the Oath of Office to the Board, and all members signed the Oath of Office document.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President – Teri Spoltman

Vice President – Mike Linton

Recording Secretary – Mona Berning

A motion was made to elect these Board officers by **Karla Butler** and seconded by **John Werling**.

DESIGNATION OF FUTURE MEETINGS The Board agreed to continue meeting on the 4th Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m., consistent with past practice. Meetings are typically not held in July or December unless necessary. No changes to the meeting time were requested. The approved schedule will be posted on the website and made available to the public.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP – ORIENTATION AND IN-SERVICE OBLIGATIONS – All Board members are required to complete four hours of in-service training annually. The Board plans to schedule training by extending select regular meetings by approximately one hour, with the goal of completing training over four meetings during the year. Shawn will be in contact with the Board members 1 week prior to the meeting to make sure all members will be in attendance.

EXPLANATION OF COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS – Committees were streamlined from prior years, with two Board members assigned to each committee while ensuring appropriate oversight in key areas as needed.

The meeting was called to order and a roll call revealed that a quorum was present.

Members Present: Mona Berning, Karla Butler, Tori Heck, Jacque Leverette, Mike Linton, Teri Spoltman, John Werling

Members Absent: n/a

Others Present: Sarah Flenar, Beth Gehret, Melissa Kaup, Shawn Thieman

Consent Agenda (Attachment):

The Consent Agenda was accepted by a motion from **John Werling** and seconded by **Jacque Leverette**. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

n/a

NEW BUSINESS:

DODD Accreditation – Completed accreditation review on January 14th & 15th with 8 citations. Plan of correction has been drafted; once completed, DODD will review and respond.

Vendor Report – 5-year snapshot of vendor expense was reviewed. The report is provided primarily for transparency and to give Board members a clear, long-term perspective on spending trends.

Cash Balance – Mercer DD maintained a balanced budget in 2025; however, the Board anticipates future annual deficits as a result of increasing waiver match costs.

ARC Housing - The Board reviewed an invoice and cost summary from The ARC, which owns approximately 18 homes or 21 units occupied by individuals served by Mercer DD. The Board approved an annual \$2,500 per home stipend, totaling \$52,500, to help cover costs such as pest control, lawn care, landscaping, snow removal, and occasional special cleaning or maintenance expenses that individuals cannot afford. The prior year summary showed these costs are significant, and the stipend helps offset these expenses.

A motion to approve the annual stipend to The ARC in the amount of \$52,500 was made by Karla Butler and seconded by Mike Linton. The motion carried.

Superintendent Discussion

Awards Banquet - Discussed re-evaluating the November staff awards banquet due to mixed attendance and the amount of staff time required to plan the event. Alternative options were supported, including incorporating staff recognition into the summer in-service day and recognizing the Albert Heckler Award separately, while ensuring staff continue to feel valued and appreciated.

Board In-service - Discussed future in-service training plans, including using extended regular meetings rather than scheduling separate special meetings. Potential topics include program-specific updates, rule reviews, and Board member responsibilities, as well as inviting a representative from OACB to provide statewide updates.

SEC - The Superintendent reported that he will continue to serve as Treasurer of the statewide superintendents' association (SEC) for the next two years before reaching term limits.

Property Tax & Levy - The Board discussed levy and property tax issues, noting that replacement levies are no longer allowed and only renewal or new levies may be placed on the ballot. The Board has two levies expiring in approximately two years and will need to determine an appropriate ballot strategy at that time, with guidance from legal counsel, though planning is cautious due to current uncertainty. A statewide initiative to eliminate property taxes is still circulating and, if passed, would significantly impact schools, county boards, fire/EMS, and other local services. Locally, Mercer County organizations are sharing information on how property taxes support community services, and the Board supports educating the public on their value while recognizing the right to question tax use.

Motion was made to adjourn by Jacque Leverette and seconded by Tori Heck. Motion was carried. Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting will be held in the Board Room in the Administration Building at 7:30 pm on February 23, 2026.