

Commission hears from National Alliance on Mental Health rep, discuss initiatives

by [ERICA TECHO](#)

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Allison Boyd (at podium) addresses the Shelby County Commission during its Dec. 11 meeting.

During its first meeting of December, the Shelby County Commission discussed ongoing and future mental health initiatives in the county.

Joan Elder, president of the National Alliance on Mental Health's Alabama Chapter, addressed the Commission regarding an upcoming summit and the new "Stepping Up" initiative from NAMI, a national mental health organization that aims to provide resources to families and individuals affected

by mental illness.

Last year's mental health summit attracted more than 400 attendees, said Elder, who is also on the board of NAMI Shelby County, and this year's summit has a local focus. The summit will be held Jan. 11 in Montgomery.

"We're focusing on local governments, asking them to attend, because what we're trying to do is expand," Elder said, adding that this year's focus would be "A day in the life of community mental health."

Last year's focus was crisis intervention training, in which Shelby County was actively involved, Elder said.

In regard to the "Stepping Up" initiative, Elder said it is a national effort to have local government sign a resolution "promoting awareness of mental health in our communities," Elder said, in addition to efforts to prevent individuals with mental illness from being imprisoned.

County Manager Alex Dudchock highlighted efforts from the Chilton-Shelby Mental Health Board and Probate Court, which have gone toward working to provide resources related to mental health.

"What's going on in this county with mental illness, I can say to you we are very committed to finding out an answer, to really being a leader," said Commissioner Lindsey Allison, who is a member of the Chilton-Shelby Mental Health Board.

Allison Boyd, probate mental health coordinator for the county, said that they have worked with NAMI as they work to train law enforcement and first responders. There have been two sessions for [Crisis Intervention Training](#) in the county, Boyd said, and they plan to continue those trainings in the future.

Also at the meeting, County Engineer Randy Cole and Water Services Manager Michael Cain both said their respective departments "dodged a bullet" with the winter weather that came through over the weekend. Had the temperature been a few degrees cooler, Cole and Cain said there could have been many more issues in the county.

Before the meeting adjourned, the commission voted for the finance committee to enter an executive session to discuss possible litigation. Dudchock said no action would be taken following the executive session.

Also at the meeting, the commission:

- Approved bids for cleaning, car care and hygiene items for the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.
- Approved a resolution related to the cost of work on the north side of the Cahaba River Trail. The county received a grant for a maximum of 80 percent of the proposed project cost not to exceed \$200,000, according to the resolution, and the project is estimated to cost \$285,520. The resolution stated the county would provide the required match of \$85,520 and noted that Dudchock would have the ability to take actions regarding this match.
- Approved a resolution regarding an ATRIP bridge project at Springcreek Road on Shelby County 24.
- Approved a resolution regarding a waiver for coal mining within 100 feet of Shelby 260.

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