



NORTH COUNTRY

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

MINUTES OF THE BOARD

January 15, 2026 2:30 PM

**North Country Community Mental Health
1420 Plaza Drive, Petoskey, Board Room**

Mr. Ginop called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM

ROLL CALL:

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Michael Newman, Ron Iseler, Jarris Rubingh, David White, Caroline Loper, Daniel CasaSanta, Annemarie Conway, Bob Baldwin, Ed Ginop

MEMBERS ATTENDING VIRTUALLY: Bob Boyd

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Dana Wingo, Ed Belitz, Daniel CasaSanta

STAFF: Brian Babbitt, Nancy Rhue, Tim Stapp Jr., Deb Freed, Kim Rappleyea, April Johnson, Katie Lorence

GUESTS: Carrie Borowiak, Fan Damoth Bigelow

Mr. Ginop welcomed board members and staff to the meeting. There is a quorum present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST: No board members expressed a conflict with any agenda item.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda includes the agenda overview, minutes of the previous meeting, privileging recommendations and contracts signed in the past month. Items requiring approval will be placed on the meeting agenda.

MOTION BY DAVID WHITE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA; SUPPORT BY CAROLINE LOPER :

MOTION CARRIED

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – BOARD ACTION*:

RRAC Minutes: The minutes of the December 11, 2025 meeting were included in the packet for the board to review.

Personnel Committee: Mr. Babbit reviewed the minutes of the January 6 meeting. Agenda items included the approval of November's minutes and the new Critical Staffing Policy.

**MOTION BY ANNEMARIE CONWAY TO APPROVE THE CRITICAL STAFFING POLICY;
SUPPORT BY BOB BALDWIN:**

MOTION CARRIES

Finance Committee Report: Mr. White reviewed the Statement of Cash on Deposit and Disbursements through December 31, 2025; Interim Financial Statements as of November 30, 2025 Revenue and Expense by Fund Source; Trending Revenue and Expenses as of November 30, 2025, and the NMRE interim financial report.

Mr. Ginop requested the financial reports be placed on file for audit.

PRESENTATION – Community Outreach Initiatives- Deb Freed- Ms. Freed shared the community outreach initiatives funded by the technology-based recovery grant. The grant began in 2023 and currently ends on September 30, 2026. The grant includes \$108,800 for advertising and \$3,000 for video explainers. Advertising goals are to increase awareness of NCCMH, position NCCMH as a prominent mental health resource for the local community, increase awareness of crisis and ongoing services and how to access help, and communicate the availability of the NCCMH website as a key information source. NCCMH utilizes billboards, digital/tv streaming, buses, and radio advertising. There are 6 billboards throughout the region with an estimated 3,992,420 impressions making the cost per impression 1 cent. Digital/TV streaming targeted adults 18 years and older in the 6-county region with 28,000 impressions per month making the cost per impression 2.4 cents. Antrim County Transportation, Charlevoix County Transit, Kalkaska Area Transit, Cheboygan Straits Regional Ride, Emmet Straits Regional Ride, Emmet County Friendship Center, and Otsego County Transportation all have installed exterior panel advertisements making the buses "rolling billboards." Radio advertising through Black Diamond and MacDonald Broadcasting groups were estimated to reach 58,500 and 88,200 people respectively, this estimate is low as it is based on Nielsen ratings for 2025 during the Ice Storm.

ACTION ITEMS WITHOUT COMMITTEE REVIEW: None

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT/COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. Babbitt referred to several items in his report. He attended the Bellaire safety center meeting on December 22nd. The executive team had a strategic planning meeting on January 7th and will be presenting that at the board retreat on February 19th. Mr. Babbitt drew attention to the executive team summary reports, noting the agency’s 3-year CARF accreditation and referring to the press releases from the Petoskey News Review and USA Today. The clinical team’s training on the managed care guideline system, Indicia which provides parity guidelines and decision support. The finance team has hired a new lead payroll accountant and continues to prepare for the upcoming financial and compliance audits which have been slightly delayed. The IT team continues staff education on SharePoint changes, personal device policies, and cyber security awareness. Two NCCMH staff presented apps that were created at the Improving Outcomes conference, this presentation was rated second highest at the conference. Mr. Babbitt drew attention to the notice not to continue the Reentry Services Waiver, which would have helped incarcerated individuals with transition planning prior to their release. Mr. Babbitt then drew attention to Judge Yates opinion regarding the MDHHS PIHP RFP. The earlier decision stated that MDHHS does have the right to decide the number of PIHPs and made plain that the PIHPs do not have a lot of legislative protection. The second set of hearings did affirm that CMHSPs are the entity that provides managed care functions and need to have a provider network and ability to contract. While not the subject of the Complaint, the opinion also puts the current Conflict Free Access and Planning and Mental Health Framework approach into question. The department was not told how to bring the RFP in alignment with the mental health code, but as the RFP is written it is not consistent with the code. Mr. Babbitt stated that he did not know what entities submitted proposals to MDHHS for the RFP, but he did know that The Michigan Association of Counties was one entity that submitted a proposal.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT UPDATE – None

NORTHERN MICHIGAN REGIONAL ENTITY- The November interim financial report was handed out ahead of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS – Mr. Babbitt explained that the Board Retreat will be an open meeting and will be held at The Perry Hotel on February 19. It will start at 10:00 AM with the Finance Committee meeting and Board Meeting directly following. Lunch menus were handed out to the board members in attendance.

NEW BUSINESS – None

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

BOARD & STAFF COMMENTS – Mr. Iseler has welcomed a new great grandchild into his family.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:31 PM by Board Chair Edward Ginop


Ed Ginop, Board Chair