



NORTH COUNTRY

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

MINUTES OF THE BOARD

May 1, 2026 4:00 PM

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

Mr. Ginop called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

ROLL CALL:

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING: Annemarie Conway, Bob Baldwin, Dale Eschenburg, Dana Wingo, Dan CasaSanta, Dave White, Ed Ginop, Jarris Rubingh, Michael Newman, Bob Boyd, Ron Iseler, Sarah Bronson

MEMBERS ATTENDING VIRTUALLY: None

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Aimee Bissonette, Ed Belitz

Public Comment:

Mike Hurcihk said yesterday Bergmann Center had a meeting. He passed out a copy of a formulation which shows how Bergmann spends money for clients. He states that this comes out of The MDHHS rule book. He states that page 1 shows the formulas and the next pages are what Bergmann Center thinks the formulas say and what NCCMH thinks formula say. He states that this document shows Bergmann Center with a \$388,000 deficit. He states that they will be at \$322,000 for this year based on formulas and that is why Bergmann is closing. He states that they are underfunded for services that they are supposed to support. He states that he didn't appreciate Mr. Babbitt's email that said he saw no sense in meeting. He says that in litigation there are only 2 winners, that those are the attorneys. He states that another reason to not close is status quo for clients. He states that if the path continues in a couple months employees of Bergmann Center will be gone, the non-profit will still be around for 3-4 months and will sell assets. He states that Bergmann Center will not retract anything as he feels that there is nothing to be retracted. He states that concerns have been brought to NCCMH for last 2 years. He states that he is frustrated that this is the way NCCMH wants to go.

Please see the attached statement from Brian Greene:

Ms. Evans from GTI states that she is here again to appeal for the 71 individuals served by Bergmann Center and the 200 whom the day programs all serve together. The people who receive services made a fair and passionate pleas for what they mean to them. She is asking for support, for everyone here to do the work. She was sad that the meeting was cancelled and did not get the information until the day before. She then read an email from Amy Carter from Straits Area Services. She states that they want to serve the people and appealed to the board to think about that.

Bill Hefferan is the Antrim County Board of Commissioners Chair, he said that he does not profess to understand all of the nuance, but the Antrim Bounty BOC is in support of GTI and sister industries. He asks the NCCMH Board to please remember the clients and not to get caught in the noise, these are our neighbors, these are our friends.



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MOTION BY DAVE WHITE TO MOVE IN TO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL LITIGATION AND ALTERNATIVES ASSOCIATED WITH BERGMANN CENTER CLOSURE; SUPPORT BY BOB BOYD:

Discussion:

Mr. Rubingh stated that he has mentioned to board that he has 7 children and they don't always get along. There are disagreements and arguments, but communicating and collaborating to come to an understanding, agreement and peace is what happens. He states that he thought that was what we were going to do and asked if something happened after he left the meeting in April.

Mr. Baldwin stated that he does not believe that there was any change in direction for the anticipated meeting on the 30th

Mr. Rubingh asked if any other board members thought that it changed and if that did not change then he sees no reason to go into a closed session and believes we should be sitting around the table with all parties involved and we should be doing in to open session.

Mr. Eschenburg agrees with Mr. Rubingh and stated that he did go to the meeting but not under official capacity. He states that he has read the documents and doesn't think that there has been enough time to do right with the clients and find them alternate places to go. These are people with troubles and traumas. He thinks if there is a review of Bergmann's numbers and NCCMH's numbers we can do much better.

Mr. Baldwin states that he finds himself in difficult position. He states that the role of the NCCMH board is policy and financial consideration not operational decisions. He states that he does not like being involved in operational decisions. He stated that the people we serve are the most needful people that organization supports. He states that he sent letter to Ms. Laporte-Montero and Mr. Babbitt requesting to have a meeting before any action is taken and requested Bergmann Center to withdraw the notice of closure. He states that he has a lot of questions and wants them answered in closed session. He states he is not in favor of litigation before exhausting all options.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: RON ISELER, DAN CASASANTA, DANA WINGO, SARAH BRONSON, DAVE WHITE, MIKE NEWMAN, ANNEMARIE CONWAY, BOB BOYD, ED GINOP

NAY: BOB BALDWIN, JARRIS RUBINGH, DALE ESCHENBURG

ABSENT: ED BELITZ, AIMEE BISSONETTE

MOTION CARRIES

Board moved in to closed session at 4:30



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The board came out of closed session at 5:55

MOTION BY BOB BOYD TO FOLLOW DIRECTION OF COUNCEL; SUPPORT BY ANNEMARIE CONWAY;

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Rubingh asked If Mr. Babbitt or Mr. Cooke could give a small statement about what was discussed in the closed session.

No statement was made

AYE: ANNEMARIE CONWAY, BOB BOYD, DAVE WHITE, DAN CASASANTA, DANA WINGO, MIKE NEWMAN, SARAH BRONSON, DAN CASASANTA, ED GINOP

NAY: JARRIS RUBINGH, DALE ESCHENBURG, BOB BALDWIN

ABSENT: AIMEE BISSONETTE, ED BELITZ

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION BY DAVE WHITE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING; SUPPORT BY BOB BOYD:

MOTION CARRIES

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM


Ed Ginop, Board Chair

- 4/15/26 at the Board of Directors meeting for NCCMH, the CEO of the Bergmann Center provided 30 days' notice that unless the funding issue can be resolved, the Bergmann Center will be forced to close on 5/15/26.
- 4/15/26 the Board of Directors for NCCMH directed its CEO Brian Babbitt to have a meeting with all the service providers leadership on 4/30/26, along with Ed Ginop, the President of the board, in an attempt to figure out a resolution.
- 4/27/26 Brian Babbitt issues a cease-and-desist order to the CEO of the Bergmann Center. The order states "Finally, as the Bergman Center has given us a 30 day notice of discontinuation of services and the Bergman Center has made the notice "irrevocable", NCCMH must immediately make arrangements to assure that the affected beneficiaries of services are provided with alternate arrangements for their services. In this regard, I see little point of a meeting on April 30th." This is in violation of the NCCMH BOD instructions to meet with providers on 4/30/26. The meeting did occur, but neither Brian nor any of the BOD attended the meeting (in an official capacity). As for "irrevocable", that is completely false. NCCMH could fund the current contract till the 15th then reissue another as they have been operating on a month to month contract for over 3 years.
- 4/28/26 My wife and I had the monthly service plan for our son Dawson. I asked our social worker if she had a Notice of Adverse Determination, which is supposed to be issued within 30 days of whatever event it is covering, which in this case is the Bergmann Center closure. Our SW said no. They were told that they were waiting on the pending meeting on the 30th for updated guidance. Yet the day before the cease-and-desist order was issued, so NCCMH already knew that they were not going to attempt to help the Bergmann Center. This is in violation of my son's rights, his IPOS, Medicare policy and mental health codes.

As it stands, my son and 70 other families have no alternative when the Bergmann center shuts down. They cannot attend the other service centers due to distance from Petoskey and the fact that the other service centers are next in line to shut down due to the same funding issues. This will leave northern Michigan with no adult day service programs, impacting 200+ families. During the 4/15/26 CMH BOD meeting, the budget/audit review showed that NCCMH had around \$2.1m in surplus Medicare funding available and over \$8m cash on hand. As someone who has worked in and around government for most of my adult life, at the end of every fiscal year, the goal of any government affiliated agency is to be near \$0 cash on hand. That means they expended their budget as planned. I understand and appreciate keeping a reserve on hand, but a reserve in excess of 12% of yearly funding is excessive. NCCMH has the funds available to resolve this issue, even if temporarily while long term details are worked out. This has become a political/personal battle between NCCMH leadership and the service providers who are speaking up questioning the lack of proper funding, using my son as a pawn. I have sent these data points to the six county board of commissioners and I am asking the Board of Directors to intervene in whatever way possible to direct NCCMH to keep Bergmann and the other adult day programs open and funded until a long term resolution can be found. I am requesting the BOD to question the leadership of Brian Babbitt and how this simple issue got blown up to the point of where it is today. Why is a special meeting being called to discuss legal options against Bergmann rather than sitting down, as previously directed, to find a funding solution to keep Bergmann and the other adult service programs open? Thank you.

Brian Greene
813.362.7470