

Board Meeting
Monday, August 25, 2025
5:00 p.m., St. Vincent's Annex
MINUTES

1. CONVENE

a. Call to Order

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Wellvance Board of Directors was held on Monday, August 25, 2025, in the St. Vincent's Annex in West Branch. Chairperson D. Jay O'Farrell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A virtual option via Microsoft TEAMS was also offered for public attendance.

b. Roll Call

Board members physically present: D. Jay O'Farrell, Bonnie Lixey, Chuck Varner, Mark Surbrook, Rose Walsh, Matt Jordan, Renee Diener, Amy Knepp, Charles Wiltse, and Debbie Welsch

Board members present via video conference: Gary Klacking

Board members excused: None

Board members absent: None

Staff present: Trish Otremba, Teresa McGee, Tyler Rood, and Joseph Chrivia

Staff present via video conference: Jennifer Carr, Cheryl Bronson, Erinn Trask, Jennifer Warner, Kathryn Cook, Laura Marentette, Regina Demetrakeas, and Michon VanWormer

Staff absent: None

Guests: None

Guests via video conference: Brian Babbitt, North Country CMH CEO

A quorum was present.

c. Approval of Board meeting minutes

It was moved by Mr. Varner and seconded by Ms. Knepp to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2025, Board meeting as presented. All ayes, motion passed.

d. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Walsh and seconded by Mr. Wiltse to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes, motion passed.

e. Correspondence

Ms. Otremba shared a letter she received from MDHHS approving her selection as Chief Executive Officer for Wellvance.

She said the Board packet contains three newsletters: The Agency Newsletter, the Download and the Recipient Rights Newsletter. Ms. Otremba pointed out various articles for the Board to review.

Finally, Ms. Otremba shared a “Thank you” card from Ms. Pelts with the Board.

f. Legislative Updates

Ms. Otremba shared one edition of *This Week in Lansing*. She highlighted the fact that a budget for FY26 has not yet been approved as well as other articles that contain significance to the Board.

g. Announcements -- None.

i. Public Comments -- None.

2. BOARD EDUCATION

Ms. Otremba introduced Brian Babbitt, CEO of North Country CMH to the Board. She said Mr. Babbitt has been instrumental in the region’s advocacy opposing the MDHHS plan for the PIHP Request for Proposal.

Mr. Babbitt began by stating he is opposed to litigation as litigation carries serious risks. However, he stated he believes there are more risks in not pursuing every avenue available to oppose the PIHP Bid-out proposal from MDHHS.

He said Region 1 and Region 2 will be requesting an injunction of the MDHHS Bid-out plan and all expenses will be incurred at the PIHP level. He stated this injunction is designed to incorporate a rural perspective and control the direction of the litigation.

Mr. Babbitt stated the Board Association (CMHAM) is filing separate litigation but regions 1 and 2 will not join that action. He explained there are differences between the rural model in Regions 1 and 2 that the CMHAM doesn’t adequately address.

Mr. Babbitt detailed the potential hazards of the PIHP Bid-out. Among issues, this proposal dismantles 70 years of partnerships between CMHSPs and the Counties; PIHPs have a 3% administrative costs and managed care exceeds 15% -- this will make less funding available for the citizens who need it. Mr. Babbitt said the CMHSPs will be competing with contractors they currently employ.

Mr. Babbitt emphasized there will be little or no local control in the proposed plan. The Board structure removes all contracted providers meaning the counties will have financial responsibility with no input.

He said several essential services will be at risk. Safety net services such as emergency services in jail may no longer be available. Without services such as ACT, high-risk citizens will end up in jails or hospitals. This would be more expensive and not appropriate.

Mr. Babbitt asked the Board for questions and comments. Mr. O’Farrell stated the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) has opposed these actions.

Discussion ensued on likely timelines for the litigation.

3. REPORTS

a. Chairperson – None.

b. Board Association – None.

c. NMRE

Mr. O'Farrell reminded the Board of Wednesday's meeting.

d. Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Otremba said her first month has been fast as she was forced to hit the ground running. She stated she was positively overwhelmed by the reception she has received from Staff and is very appreciative of everyone's support.

The first major event is the PIHP Bid-out proposal. She said every option is being explored and, regardless of the outcome, Wellvance will get through this. The Agency has been here for nearly 50 years and has been the support system for thousands of people.

Ms. Otremba reflected on the recent passing of a consumer. She said this consumer had been her first and the Agency had supported this individual in making the best possible life. Without the Agency, she doesn't know what would have happened to this person. This is why it is so important to ensure the Community Mental Health system remains.

She stated it is her role to protect the staff, Agency, and the consumers we serve. We will preserve our system.

e. Committee

(1) Human Resources – August 4, 2025

Committee Chair Amy Knepp read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Ms. Knepp and seconded by Ms. Welsch to change one Case Management (Grade 8) position to a Behavior Specialist Coordinator (Grade 11). All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Ms. Knepp and seconded by Mr. Jordan to approve the Substance Testing Policy as presented. All ayes; motion passed.

(2) Recipient Rights Advisory – August 12, 2025

Committee Chair Rose Walsh read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Ms. Walsh and seconded by Mr. Jordan to approve the Recipient Rights Policy Manual as presented. All ayes; motion passed.

(3) Recipient Rights Appeals – August 12, 2025

Committee Chair Rose Walsh read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

(4) Facilities – August 14, 2025

Committee Chair Mark Surbrook read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Welsch to accept the bid for the Norway Generator project from Primary Electric for \$14,300. All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Mr. Wiltse to accept the bid for the Generator maintenance project from Banning Electric for \$2,215. All ayes; motion passed.

(5) Program – August 14, 2025

Committee Chair Debbie Welsch read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

(6) Executive & Finance – August 20, 2025

Committee Chair Bonnie Lixey read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Mr. Surbrook to accept the June Financial reports. All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Mr. Surbrook to approve the CEO Consulting Contract as presented. Roll call vote. All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Mr. Surbrook to approve the five (5) contract amendments (ACORN, Encompass, North Arrow ABA, Autism Systems, and ABA Pathways). All ayes; motion passed.

4. OLD BUSINESS – None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Diener for Wellvance to enjoin the NMRE Litigation opposing the Proposed PIHP Bid-out. Roll call vote taken. All ayes; motion passed.

6. COMMENTS

a. Board – None.

b. Public – None.

7. MEETING DATES

a. Board

- (1) Monday, September 22; 5:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

b. Committees

- (1) Human Resources – Monday, September 8; 4:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex
- (2) Recipient Rights Advisory – No meeting scheduled
- (3) Recipient Rights Appeals – No meeting scheduled
- (4) Program – Thursday, September 11; 2:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex
- (5) Facilities – Thursday, September 11; 3:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex
- (6) Executive & Finance – Tuesday, September 16; 4:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

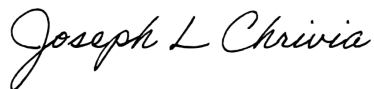
c. Other

- (1) CMHAM Fall Conference: October 27-28, Traverse City

8. ADJOURN

It was moved by Ms. Walsh and seconded by Ms. Knepp to adjourn the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph L. Chrivia
Recording Secretary