

Board Meeting
Monday, February 23, 2026
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, February 23, 2026, in the St. Vincent's Annex in West Branch. Vice-chairperson Matt Jordan called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. A virtual option via Microsoft TEAMS was also offered for public attendance.

b. Roll Call

Board members physically present: Matt Jordan, Bonnie Lixey, Mark Surbrook, Chuck Varner, Amy Knepp, Renee Diener, Rose Walsh, and Charles Wiltse

Board members present via video conference: Debbie Welsch

Board members excused: D. Jay O'Farrell

Board members absent: None

Staff present: Trish Otremba, Laura Zettel, Casey Carpenter, Jennifer Carr, and Joseph Chrivia

Staff present via video conference: Teresa McGee, Tyler Rood, Regina Demetrakeas, Jennifer Warner, Jennifer Verbeke, Coral Kujawski, Michon VanWormer, Kathryn Cook, Karen Hatley, and Lori Enos.

Staff absent: None

Guests: None

Guests via video conference: Jeanette Leathorn

A quorum was present.

c. Approval of Board meeting minutes

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Lixey to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2026, Board meeting as presented. All ayes, motion passed.

d. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Mr. Varner and seconded by Mr. Surbrook to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes, motion passed.

e. Correspondence

Ms. Otremba shared six newsletters with the Board: Agency Newsletter, IT Download, Training Newsletter, Recipient Rights Newsletter, CARF Newsletter, and the Trauma Informed Newsletter. She reviewed each and highlighted several key points for the Board. She specifically recognized new hires and staff achieving milestones in longevity as well as key training opportunities, and more.



Tawas City
1199 W. Harris Ave.
Tawas City, MI 48764
Phone: 989-362-8636

Access: 844-225-8131

West Branch
511 Griffin Rd.
West Branch, MI 48661
Phone: 989-345-5571

24/7 Crisis: 844-865-5569

Oscoda
5805 Cedar Lake Rd.
Oscoda, MI 48750
Phone: 989-739-1469

Visit us Online at [Wellvance.org](https://www.wellvance.org)

Mio
42 N. Mt. Tom Rd.
Mio, MI 48647
Phone: 989-826-3208

f. Legislative Updates

Ms. Otremba shared the preliminary FY27 budget from the Governor's Office. She stated this is the first draft and has not been approved by the legislature. She discussed several line items in the budget and discussed various points with the Board. The Board questioned opioid settlement monies; Ms. Otremba answered and explained what monies have been requested and awarded, to date.

Ms. Otremba said there are three editions of *This Week in Lansing* for the Board to review. She said there are several items worth noting and highlighted a few for the Board.

g. Announcements

Mr. Jordan announced the Ogemaw County Board of Commissioners has appointed Jeanette Leathorn to the Board. Ms. Leathorn will begin onboarding this week with Ms. Otremba.

Ms. Otremba announced Mr. Surbrook has been appointed to the NMRE Board of Directors.

i. Public Comments -- None.

2. BOARD EDUCATION

Ms. Otremba introduced Laura Zettel, Chief Operations Officer, to the Board. She said Ms. Zettel will be leading the CARF accreditation process and the whole process is a wonderful opportunity to bring all departments together.

Ms. Zettel said this process is a triannual requirement and we did very well last time and hope to do even better in 2026. She explained that CARF is the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Ms. Zettel says the process is long and arduous and she is trying to boost morale wherever possible.

She said we have adopted the motto ASPIRE to Excellence for this year and explained ASPIRE is Assess the environment, Set strategy, Persons served and stakeholders, Implement the plan, Review results, and Effect Change. Ms. Zettel introduced the team members who have already assisted in the process and said the list will grow as we continue.

Ms. Zettel shared the timeline and the changes. She said kickoff began in October with a projected assessment date of January or February. That was later changed to March/April and now to May/June. She said a nationwide lack of assessors has mandated the delays.

Throughout the process, we have identified strengths such as: Strong clinical practices, Effective risk management processes, High staff engagement in readiness activities, and Improvements in documentation. We have also identified areas to work on, including Documentation consistency, Policy alignment with CARF standards, Data collection or outcome improvement, and Safety updates. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Zettel said she has some fun activities to keep staff engaged throughout the process including our mascot: Carl the CARF Bear. She explained other fun activities scheduled

throughout the weeks to come. She then focused on the Board and what will be expected of them when the auditors are present.

The Board asked how CARF requests Board interviews; Ms. Otremba answered.

Discussions ensued.

3. REPORTS

a. Chairperson – None

b. Board Association – Ms. Otremba said the CMH PAC drive is underway. She stated she will continue the tradition of matching all Board contributions up to \$20. She reminded the Board of the work done this year to stop the PIHP-RFP process as a reason to contribute.

c. NMRE – Next meeting on Wednesday.

Ms. Otremba said the NMRE remains in a holding pattern concerning the PIHP-RFP. She shared the latest developments and said the goal is for the NMRE and the U.P. to be allowed to merge into one PIHP called Bridge-health. Discussion ensued.

d. Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Otremba shared insights inspired by the Olympic Games. She said she is very happy to see mental health is part of the conversation as many athletes are being open and candid about their history with behavioral health. Ms. Otremba shared several examples of Olympic athletes who have discussed their past and how they have become advocates for various groups.

e. Committee

(1) Human Resources – February 9, 2026

Committee chair Amy Knepp read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required Board action.

(2) Recipient Rights Advisory – February 10, 2026

Committee chair Rose Walsh read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required Board action.

(3) Recipient Rights Appeals – February 10, 2026

Committee chair Rose Walsh read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required Board action.

(4) Program – February 12, 2026

Committee chair Debbie Welsch read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required Board action.

(5) Facilities – February 12, 2026

Committee chair Mark Surbrook read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Walsh to approve the Emergency Procedures Manual. All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Mr. Wiltse to approve the Emergency Preparedness Policy Manual, as corrected. All ayes; motion passed.

(6) Executive & Finance – February 17, 2026

Committee chair Bonnie Lixey read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Ms. Welsch to accept the December Financial reports. All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Ms. Diener to approve the one single-service agreement (Henry Ford Hospital). All ayes; motion passed.

4. OLD BUSINESS – None.

5. NEW BUSINESS – None.

6. COMMENTS

a. Board – Mr. Wiltse asked if the Agency had any opinions on candidates in the 2026 election. Ms. Otremba said the Board Association usually provides background information on candidates and she will share this when received.

b. Public – None.

7. MEETING DATES

a. Board

(1) Monday, March 23; 5:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

b. Committees

(1) Human Resources – Monday, March 2; 4:00 p.m.; Microsoft TEAMS

(2) Recipient Rights Advisory – no meeting scheduled

(3) Recipient Rights Appeals – no meeting scheduled

- (4) Program – Thursday, March 12; 2:00 p.m.; Microsoft TEAMS
- (5) Facilities – Thursday, March 12; 3:00 p.m.; Microsoft TEAMS
- (6) Executive & Finance – Tuesday, March 17; 4:00 p.m.; Microsoft TEAMS

c. Other

- (1) CMHAM Summer Conference: June 8-10, Traverse City
- (2) Walk-a-Mile: September 23, 2026, Lansing
- (3) CMHAM Fall Conference: October 26-27, Traverse City

8. ADJOURN

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Walsh to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph L. Chrivia
Recording Secretary