

Board Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 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 Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 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, Matt Jordan, Bonnie Lixey, Amy Knepp, Renee Diener, Jeanette Leathorn, Debbie Welsch, and Rose Walsh

Board members present via video conference: Chuck Varner and Charles Wiltse

Board members excused: Mark Surbrook

Board members absent: None

Staff present: Trish Otremba, Teresa McGee, Laura Zettel, Tyler Rood, Jennifer Warner, Jennifer Carr, and Joseph Chrivia

Staff present via video conference: Cheryl Bronson, Scott Izzo, Jennifer Verbecke, and Laura Sisco

Staff absent: None

Guests: Leah Chrivia, Kennedy Shannon, and Christina Schaub

Guests via video conference: Alexander Tyler, Anthony Parker, Kenneth Wayne, and Brandon Gadbury

A quorum was present.

c. Approval of Board meeting minutes

It was moved by Ms. Welsch and seconded by Ms. Knepp to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2026, Board meeting as presented. All ayes, motion passed.

d. Approval of Agenda

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

e. Correspondence

Ms. Otremba shared six newsletters with the Board: Agency Quarterly, IT Download, Recipient Rights Newsletter, Training Newsletter, and the Empowering Connections Newsletter. She reviewed each and highlighted several key points for the Board.



Ms. Otremba stated she received a letter from Shannon Kennedy, owner of Serenity House. She said the letter is in the board packet for each member to read. She highlighted key portions of the letter and stated the goal of the Agency is to continually look at placements and bring people closer to home whenever possible. Additionally, she said financial concerns of some placements are also a factor.

f. Legislative Updates – none.

g. Announcements – none.

i. Public Comments

Kennedy Shannon, owner of Serenity House, addressed the Board. She stated she wanted to add clarity to her letter. She explained a situation she had with Recipient Rights and her view of events. She stated she was informed by the guardian of four consumers currently residing in Serenity House that she was pressured to remove all consumers from their current locations. She said all residents of Serenity House are stable. Ms. Shannon also stated she believes Serenity House has been “blacklisted” by Wellvance and showed a paper showing no new placements authorized. Ms. Shannon said this has nothing to do with finances as no rate increases have been requested. She said she believes she upsets people with her advocacy for her residents. Ms. Shannon said the guardian was informed that she had to “get it done” by June 1st which she believes meant sign consent to move residents. Ms. Shannon said she believes all actions taken are retaliatory because she upset someone and has nothing to do with the services her home provides to residents. Ms. Shannon said she does not want to file a lawsuit, but she is prepared to do so if necessary.

Leah Chrivia, public guardian, addressed the Board. She said she is a public guardian for approximately 90 clients, many of whom receive services by Wellvance. Ms. Chrivia said she was approached by two case managers who said we wanted to pull her people out of Serenity House. She said during her nine years as a public guardian, she has visited numerous homes throughout the state and Serenity House is a good place for her wards. Ms. Chrivia gave a personal account of each of her four wards who reside in Serenity House. She stated how they are doing in that environment and stated they are “thriving” there. She said she does not do contracts, she does people and her people are doing well where they are. She said she was asked to sign a consent form to relocate her people, and she will not do so. She said she was given multiple reasons for the relocation, cost, proximity, and culture. Finally, she said she was told Ms. Shannon is just “not good” but Ms. Chrivia said she is not comfortable moving people due to a personality conflict. Ms. Chrivia requested the Board to conduct an internal review of this process.

2. BOARD EDUCATION

Jennifer Warner, Accounting Manager, introduced Christina Schaub from Rosland, Prestage, and Company. She said this is the firm that conducted Wellvance’s 2025 financial compliance audit.

Ms. Schaub began by explaining the duties of the auditor and what the audit entails. She summarized by saying Wellvance had a clean audit with no instances of non-compliance to report.

Ms. Schaub briefly reviewed all sections of the report and detailed the Agency's assets, liabilities, and overall net position. She stated the Agency had an increase in net position from \$5.8M to \$6.1M during Fiscal Year 2025.

Ms. Schaub asked the Board if they had any questions, the Board did not.

It was moved by Ms. Knepp and seconded by Ms. Lixey to accept the FY25 Financial audit as presented. All ayes; motion passed.

3. REPORTS

a. Chairperson – None.

b. Board Association

Ms. Otremba reminded all Board members attending the summer conference to wear Wellvance gear on Tuesday.

c. NMRE

Mr. O'Farrell stated they are meeting tomorrow and discussing current events in the region.

d. Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Otremba shared an article concerning CEO Mental Health. She stated the role of leadership is not simply about drafting policies and procedures, it's about building a culture of teamwork.

She quoted, "The strongest leaders are not the ones who ignore stress; they are the ones who build systems that help them carry it wisely. CEO mental health, leadership resilience, burnout prevention, and workplace culture are deeply connected. Organizations that recognize this connection are better positioned to make sound decisions, sustain performance, and create workplaces where people can thrive. The message is simple and powerful: when leaders care for their capacity to lead, they strengthen the capacity of the entire organization."

e. Committee

(1) Human Resources –May 4, 2026

Committee chair Amy Knepp read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

Ms. Walsh inquired about the number of open positions, Ms. Otremba shared various strategies the Agency is employing to recruit applicants.

(2) Program – May 14, 2026

Committee chair Debbie Welsch read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Ms. Welsch and seconded by Ms. Walsh to approve creation of the EVV Coordinator Position and Full-time Peer Support Specialist. All ayes; motion passed.

(3) Facilities – May 14, 2026

Committee member Renee Diener read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Welsch to approve the vehicle auction bids as proposed. All ayes; motion passed.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Lixey to approve the purchase of a dump trailer. Roll call vote taken. All ayes; motion passed.

Ms. Walsh inquired about the speeding violations and what repercussions follow when staff drive at excessive speeds. Ms. Otremba responded.

(4) Executive & Finance – May 19, 2026

Committee chair Bonnie Lixey read the Committee meeting minutes.

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

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Mr. Jordan to approve one single-service agreement (Munson Medical Center).

(5) Recipient Rights Advisory – May 12, 2026

Committee chair Bonnie Lixey read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

(6) Recipient Rights Appeals – May 12, 2026

Committee chair Bonnie Lixey read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

4. OLD BUSINESS – None.

5. NEW BUSINESS – None.

6. COMMENTS

a. Board

Mr. Wiltse apologized for having technical issues during the meeting. He asked how the Board would follow up on the issue with Serenity House. Ms. Otremba stated she would be available to all Board Members and would provide answers in any manner they request.

b. Public

Ms. Kennedy said she hopes there will be Board action concerning the issues she raised earlier. Furthermore, she stated she submitted a FOIA request for various documents and is awaiting a response. Ms. Kennedy finished by stating she is looking for an independent look at the processes at a Board level.

7. MEETING DATES

a. Board

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

b. Committees

(1) Human Resources – Monday, June 1; 4:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(2) Program – Thursday, June 11; 2:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(3) Facilities – Thursday, June 11; 3:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(4) Executive & Finance – Tuesday, June 16; 4:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(5) Recipient Rights Advisory – No meeting scheduled

(6) Recipient Rights Appeals – No meeting scheduled

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 Ms. Welsch and seconded by Ms. Lixey to adjourn the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph L. Chrivia
Recording Secretary