

Board Meeting
Monday, September 28, 2026
5:00 p.m.,
MINUTES

1. CONVENE

a. Call to Order

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Wellvance Board of Directors was held on Monday, September 28, 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, Chuck Varner, Renee Diener, Debbie Welsch, Amy Knepp, Rose Walsh, Mark Surbrook, Jeanette Leathorn, and Charles Wiltse.

Board members present via video conference: None.

Board members excused: None

Board members absent: None

Staff present: Trish Otremba, Laura Zettel, Tyler Rood, and Joseph Chrivia

Staff present via video conference: Regina Demetrakeas, Jennifer Carr, Jennifer Warner, Lori Enos, Laura Sisco, Jennifer Verbeke, and Kathryn Cook

Staff absent: None

Guests: Wyatt Knepp

Guests via video conference: None

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 July 27, 2026, Board meeting as presented. All ayes, motion passed.

d. Approval of Agenda

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

e. Correspondence

Ms. Otremba shared the Training Newsletter and highlighted key pieces including the efforts of Lacey Jones, Case Management Supervisor, as a trainer.

Ms. Otremba shared an Advocacy letter from the Board Association and said advocacy has been our best tool in preserving the behavioral health system in Michigan.

Ms. Otremba said she has been visiting each of the three Boards of Commissioners and her presentation to the Iosco County Board was captured in the paper and included in tonight's meeting book.

Finally, Ms. Otremba shared a copy of the CARF reaccreditation results with the Board. She stated Wellvance has received a three-year accreditation and thanked staff for their hard work. She thanked Ms. Zettel for jumping into the role and taking the lead to make this survey successful. Furthermore, she stated there were no clinical recommendations at all for this report. The Board applauded Ms. McGee and the Clinical Department for their work.

f. Legislative Updates

Ms. Otremba had nothing formal to share but stated the Board Association is meeting with representatives from John James' campaign to discuss issues. Also, she stated she met with Representative Hoadley during his recent visit to the area.

g. Announcements

None

i. Public Comments

None

2. PUBLIC HEARING

a. It was moved by Ms. Welsch and second by Ms. Lixey to suspend the regular monthly board meeting and convene the annual public meeting. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. Motion passed.

b. Ms. Otremba presented the Agency's FY2027 Needs Assessment, Long-term Plan, and budget for discussion. Ms. Otremba detailed each aspect of the needs assessment and long-term plan before moving to the budget. Ms. Otremba stated that despite assurances that increased funding is forthcoming, this budget is based on the same funding as the last fiscal year. She stated that when new data is received, this budget can be reevaluated.

c. Mr. O'Farrell asked if there were any public comments or questions concerning these items. No comments or questions were voiced.

d. It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and second by Ms. Welsch to adjourn the public meeting and resume the regular monthly board meeting. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. Motion passed.

e. It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and second by Ms. Lixey to approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Needs Assessment, Long-term Plan, and FY27 Budget as proposed. Roll call vote taken. All ayes; motion passed.

3. REPORTS

a. Chairperson – None.

b. Board Association – None.

c. NMRE

Mr. O’Farrell announced “Chip” Johnston, long-serving CEO of Centra-Wellness retired.

Mr. O’Farrell discussed the NMRE budget.

d. Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Otremba shared the report she gave to each of the Boards of Commissioners and discussed certain points. She discussed her journey during her first year as Wellvance’s CEO and appreciated the support of everyone along the way. She said that during her address to the Ogemaw County Board, Commissioner Surbrook stated the work requirements of the Big Beautiful Bill would not impact Ogemaw County as the county was exempt due to the unemployment rate. Ms. Otremba stated she did further research and discovered this is true of all three counties in the catchment area. Although recertification every six months is still required, the work requirements have been waived. Ms. Otremba stated she has yet to see this in writing, so Wellvance is planning on the requirements at this time.

Ms. Otremba said Wellvance served approximately 2,500 consumers last year and participated in various community partnerships, including Iosco EMS, embedded 911 staff, and more. Also, this year the Agency recertified with the State and with CARF for three-year terms. Additionally, Wellvance was awarded the 2026 Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health.

Ms. Otremba reminded the Board that Advocacy is a never-ending story and we must always be aware that unwanted changes to our system must be identified and combatted with the tools at our disposal. Mr. Varner added a story of how law enforcement is ignoring mental health calls in California at this time and said it is a cautionary tale that we do not want to see in Michigan. In response, Ms. Otremba said Northeast CMH, North Country and Centra Wellness just received grant funding for a pilot program for a community liaison law enforcement officer. She said she will share more details as she learns more.

e. Committee

(1) Human Resources – September 14, 2026

Committee chair Amy Knepp read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

(2) Program – September 10, 2026

Committee chair Debbie Welsch read the Committee meeting minutes.

There were no motions that required board action.

(3) Facilities – September 10, 2026

Committee chair Mark Surbrook read the Committee meeting minutes. Mr. Surbrook noted a typographical error and requested a correction.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Welsch to approve the bid from Cando Construction to replace the Cedar Lake AFC Roof with the shingle upgrade. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. Motion passed.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Lixey to the highest bid received for the 2014 Ford Focus and to accept the second highest bid if the winning bidder fails to complete the purchase. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. Motion passed.

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Lixey to the highest bid received for the 5x8 utility trailer and to accept the second highest bid if the winning bidder fails to complete the purchase. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. Motion passed.

(4) Executive & Finance – September 15, 2026

Committee chair Bonnie Lixey read the Committee meeting minutes.

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Mr. Surbrook to approve a 236 transfer of \$250,000 to Northern Lakes CMH. Discussion ensued. Roll call vote taken. All ayes; motion passed.

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

It was moved by Ms. Lixey and seconded by Ms. Welsch to approve one new contract (Arc of Bay County), sixteen renewals without a rate change (ABA Pathways, Acorn, AuSable in Home Care, Autism Systems, LeFear Consulting, Pinnacle Rehab, Premier Care Assisted Living (6 locations), SRS, Beacon Specialized Living Services, North Arrow ABA, Dr. Barba, Dr. Jafferany, Jessican VanHorn, Juliana Poletti, and Propio Language Services). Additionally, there was one single-case agreement (Camp Fish Tales). All ayes; motion passed.

(5) Recipient Rights Advisory – Did not meet

(6) Recipient Rights Appeals – Did not meet

4. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. O'Farrell reminded the Board that there is still a vacancy from Iosco County. Everyone is encouraged to recommend a candidate and to inform Ms. Otremba.

5. NEW BUSINESS

None

6. COMMENTS

a. Board

None

b. Public

None

7. MEETING DATES

a. Board

(1) Monday, November 2; 5:00 p.m.; Mio Annex

b. Committees

(1) Human Resources – Monday, October 5; 4:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(2) Program – Thursday, October 8; 2:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(3) Facilities – Thursday, October 8; 3:00 p.m.; St. Vincent's Annex

(4) Executive & Finance – Tuesday, October 20; 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 Fall Conference: October 26-27, Traverse City

(2) Agency All Staff: October 15; Ogemaw County Fairgrounds

8. LEGAL MATTER

a. It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Mr. Varner to move the Board into a Closed Session, pursuant to section 8e of the Michigan Open Meetings Act to discuss, with its counsel, the litigation titled Serenity Home v Wellvance. Also, during the closed session, the CEO Evaluation will be shared and a contract addendum will be negotiated. Roll call vote taken. All ayes; motion passed.

b. Closed Session.

c. Resumption of Open Meeting.

d. It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by Ms. Diener to approve the CEO Contract Addendum II, as proposed. Roll call vote taken. All ayes; motion passed.

9. ADJOURN

It was moved by Mr. Surbrook and seconded by MS. Knepp to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Chrivia".

Joseph L. Chrivia
Recording Secretary