



Administrative Office, 105 Hall Street, Suite A, Traverse City, MI 49684

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

---

December 18, 2025

1:00 p.m.

---

**Board Members Present:** Christal Frost Anderson, Kim Morley, Vince Cornellier, Ruth Pilon, Dean Smallegan, Ben Townsend, Lynn Pope, Penny Morris, Ty Wessell, Dave Freedman, Tony Lentych, Mary Marois, Al Cambridge, Greg McMorrow.

**Others Present:** Lynda Zeller, Melissa Bentgen, Brian Newcomb, Kim Silbor, Daniel Mauk, Neil Rojas, Cindy Petersen, Danielle Arens, Marsha Brown, Lauren Van Hulle, Ashley Thompson, Greg Charter, Melodee Eastman, Hillary Rapphun, Alexandra Coon.

**Virtual Attendees:** Aimee Horton Johnson, Abby Schonfeld, Amanda Link, Amanda Ritchie, Amy Kotulski, Andrea Weiss, Angie Schroeder, Ann Ketchum, April Weinrick, Ashley Cross, Becky Brown, Brian Newcomb, Candace Kauska-Dietrich, Carol Balousek, Christina Hasty, Elizabeth Totten, Erica Smith, Erin Barbus, Gina Schlegel, Hannah Driver, Heather Sleight, Jennifer Edwards, Jeremiah Williams, Jillian Smithingell, Jordan Byington, Joseph Barkman, Judi Crane, Kaitlin Merritt, Kayla Skleener, Kellee Hoag, Lane Kiffen, Lisa Jones, Lisa Woodcox, Lori Stendel, Manda Clements, Mats Andtbacka, Melissa Trout, Meryah Martin, Michael Corby, Rob Palmer, Somer Quinlan, Sophorn Klingelsmith, Teri Dougherty, Terri Henderson, Tiffany Fewins, Victoria McDonald, 4 unknown.

**Call to Order:** 1:00 p.m.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Timekeeper:** Ruth Pilon

**Approval of Agenda:** Yes, no changes requested.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Celebrate Northern Lakes:** The Board of Directors and the Leadership team at Northern Lakes CMHA recognized the excellent work of the Grand Traverse and Leelanau County ACT Team.

**Stakeholder Recognition:** Cindy Petersen presented Danielle Arens with a certificate of appreciation for her contributions, past and present, to our community, consumers and Agency.

**Report of Officers:**

**Recipient Rights Report:** Brian Newcomb, Director of the Office of Recipient Rights, presented his report to the Board. The report can be found in the board packet. Mr. Newcomb shared that his department has filled one advisor position and has one advisor vacancy to fill. Mr. Newcomb spoke about the upcoming Board member recipient rights training that is scheduled to take place in February.

**Chief Executive Officer's Report:** Lynda Zeller, Chief Executive Officer of Northern Lakes, presented her report to the Board. Ms. Zeller used an updated reporting format that will better fit the parameters of the enabling agreement and the bylaws moving forward. The draft of the 2026 work plan was included in the Board packet and will be finalized in January. New graphs were included to better show key performance indicators. Ms. Zeller spoke about the annual submission that is due at the end of February that will include community data, needs assessments, and more. Ms. Zeller recommended for one of the next "Celebrate Northern Lakes" presentations that the N6CIS team be recognized for their excellent work in the community. There will be more information about the group's work that will be given to the Board to share with their constituents.

**Chief Financial Officer's Report:** Al Cambridge, finance committee chair and Board member, spoke for Melissa Bentgen, Interim Chief Financial Officer of Northern Lakes. There was no financial report to present this month while the agency transitioned into using a different template. Two months' worth of financial reports will be presented at the next Board meeting in January.

**Committee Reports:**

**NMRE:**

Ms. Pilon reviewed updates regarding the NMRE committee meeting. Ms. Pilon spoke about enrollment decline, movement in healthy MI, Statewide capitation and the current litigation involving CMHs and MDHHS.

**Executive:**

Mr. McMorrow, the Chairperson of the Board, brought to the attention of the Board that the Executive committee would like to create an employment contract with the Northern Lakes CEO, Ms. Zeller. A work agreement exists; a contract does not. The contract would have similar features to a county commission contract.

**Finance:** Mr. Cambridge shared that the next policy that will be up for review will be about reconciliation. The Board was given a list of contracts that will be voted on, deferring action for another meeting to allow review. Mr. Cambridge spoke about cost containment, bringing higher needs consumers back into our catchment and cash flow. Ms. Zeller added that each area is being worked on and the information will be shared with the NMRE as the Agency continues to take proactive steps.

**MOTION: Accept the purchasing policy presented at the last Board Meeting.**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER: D. Smallegan**

**SECONDER: A. Cambridge**

**MOTION: Accept the final 2026 budget as presented.**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER: D. Smallegan**

**SECONDER: M. Marois**

**Policy:** Mr. Freedman shared that the policy committee will meet in January.

**Personnel:** Ms. Pilon shared that the personnel committee will meet next on February 27.

**Community Engagement:** Ms. Frost Anderson shared that the community engagement committee met on November 20 and will meet again in January. The committee is currently mapping out community presentations that will be added to the agenda each month as well as Identifying partners and stakeholders to engage with.

**Unfinished Business:** Mr. Freedman mentioned that the *New York Times* article included in the Board packet is worth the read and is something that should be paid attention to.

**Public Comment:** Marsha Brown, a Home Supervisor for Northern Lakes, shared a story about a consumer who has been with the home for 21 years after multiple failed placements and who has done well in that environment.

**Announcements/ Board Member Reports/ Board Association:** Mr. Cambridge attended the ROOC Christmas party and encouraged future attendance.

Mr. Lentych shared that his agency set aside 1.7 million dollars for IDD services and spoke about the issues consumers face when it comes to housing.

**Next Meeting:** February 19, 2026 – Grayling

**Adjournment:** 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Coon, Interim Executive Administrator

---

---

Greg McMorrow, Board Chairperson

---

Lynn Pope, Secretary

---