



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

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

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February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

NLCMHA Grayling Office

1:00 p.m.

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**Board Members Present:** Kim Morely, Ruth Pilon, Dean Smallegan, Ben Townsend, Lynn Pope, Penny Morris, Dave Freedman, Tony Lentych, Mary Marois, Al Cambridge.

Quorum was confirmed.

**Others Present:** Hillary Rappuhn, Alexandra Coon, Kim Silbor, Jeremiah Williams, Brian Newcomb, Lori Stendel, Mark Crane, Melissa Bentgen, Lynda Zeller

**Virtual Attendees:** Aimee Horton Johnson, Amanda Link, Ann Ketchum, April Weinrick, Becky Brown, Caleb Gomez, Candace Kauska-Dietrich, Carol Balousek, Christina Hasty, Curtis Cummins, Daniel Mauk, Erica Longstreet, Erin Barbus, Erin Brotherton, Heather Sleight, Jennifer Hemmes, Joseph Barkman, Kaitlin Merritt, Kellee Hoag, Kirstie Maier, Kristin Page, Mats Andtbacka, Michael Corby, Neil Rojas, Rob Palmer, Somer Quinlan, Sue Hamel, Terri Henderson, Tiffany Fewins, Trapper Merz, Victoria McDonald, 3 unknown.

**Call to Order:** 1:00 p.m. by Vice Chair, Penny Morris

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Timekeeper:** Dave Freedman

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

**MOTION: Approval of Agenda**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER: T. Lentych**

**SECONDER: D. Smallegan**

**MOTION: Approval of Consent Agenda (Minutes) with added language to include committee nominations.**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER: M. Marois**

**SECONDER: D. Freedman**

**Public Comment:** None.

**Celebrate Northern Lakes:** The Board of Directors and the Leadership Team recognized Facilities Supervisor, Doug Nielsen, for his excellent work across 17 facilities within 6 counties.

**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 along with the Annual Report. 104 complaints have come in; there are currently 48 open investigations. Compliance remains at 100%. The recipient rights team completed 91 total hours of training last year and has implemented online training for those who work in the adult foster care homes. The State has not responded to the Annual report yet.

**Chief Executive Officer's Report:** Lynda Zeller, Chief Executive Officer of Northern Lakes, presented her report to the Board. The report can be found in the Board packet. Ms. Zeller shared that she will be attending several upcoming County Commission meetings. She intends to attend/present at all counties NLCMH serves before summer. State (MHDDS) Annual submission reports will be on time with the bulk of them due 2.28.26. We will be requesting an extension from the State for the Financial Status Report (FSR) and EQI end of year report.

Ms. Zeller spoke about the challenges the Agency is facing regarding having to place consumers who do not have insurance or Medicaid on to a waiting list. The most effective long-term solution to serving more people from the waitlist issue is increased non-Medicaid funding, which can be classified as "local" funding.

Ms. Zeller shared that Munson, rather than NLCMH, will be leading the Crisis Residential Unit (CRU) of the Grand Traverse Mental Health Crisis and Access Center. There will be very close collaboration between Munson and NLCMH at the CRU, but it will be under the ultimate direction of the Munson team.

Mr. Cambridge requested a 12-month efficiencies report instead of a 14-month report so that only finalized numbers are presented to the Board and the Counties.

**Chief Financial Officer's Report:** Melissa Bentgen, Interim Chief Financial Officer, presented an update regarding the current and future reports to the Board. Ms. Bentgen has been working closely with Centra Wellness to provide a more in-depth financial report moving forward. Ms. Bentgen shared that the Agency has received 375k more in Medicaid Capitation than budgeted and 91k in Healthy Michigan more than what was budgeted, General Fund is tracking as expected and grants are light and tracking as

expected. The Agencies' personnel expenses were 790k under budget. Medicaid expenses are on track with capitation with a variance of 1%. The IT and Reimbursement departments are taking a deep look at every service that pulls from General Fund.

**Committee Reports:**

**NMRE:**

Ms. Pilon shared that EK North Care met with CEO Bob Sheehand from CMHAM to discuss future efforts regarding Bridge Health and the two regions collaborating. Combining efforts across the two regions would produce administrative efficiencies. Ms. Pilon shared that Ms. Zeller gave a great report and that the Board members are invested in the success of NLCMHA. The RFP was pulled by the State and NMRE would like to take a wait and see approach as it may still be possible for MDHHS to make 3 regions instead of the 10 that currently exist.

**Executive:**

Ms. Morris, Vice Chair of the Board, shared on behalf of Mr. McMorrow that the executive committee met on 2.11.26 and the details of this meeting will be discussed under unfinished business.

**Finance:** Mr. Cambridge shared that the April finance committee meeting will be on a different day than the April Board meeting due to the recipient rights training for Board members happening that day. Mr. Cambridge also shared that the finance committee meetings are an open meeting and that they have received great input from staff members. Last month, the finance committee presented the reconciliation policy for approval and to be voted on at the February Board meeting.

**MOTION: Approve the reconciliation policy presented at the last Board meeting.**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER: A. Cambridge**

**SECONDER: D. Smallegan**

Mr. Cambridge provided a cash flow update, stating that the Agency on average cash flow has leveled out. The current issue is having enough funds for payroll at the end of each month, as most capitation is front loaded to the beginning of the month. The past several months the Agency has been granted an advance from NMRE, not a loan, to meet their monthly financial obligations. Each month seems to be improving slowly, and the Agency is getting closer to not needing to receive advances.

Mr. Cambridge spoke about cost containment. Ms. Zeller and staff are looking at everything. Most recently the Agency cancelled a copier contract saving \$45,000. Ms. Zeller also reported a \$200,000 decrease in rent for the Crisis Center with Munson Healthcare, due to the changes at the CRU. Mr. Cambridge shared that the Agency renewed residential contracts that mostly pertain to last year. They were behind in completing these due to lack of staff. The contracts are for "out of network hospitalizations" for singular individuals. Since the contracts are not specifically listed in the prior approved budget, the finance committee asks the Board to approve the contracts.

**MOTION: To accept the presented residential contracts.**

**RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER: M. Marois**

**SECONDER: L. Pope**

**Policy:** Mr. Freedman shared that the policy committee has not met and there will be no meeting next month.

**Personnel:** Ms. Pilon shared that the next personnel meeting will take place on 2.27.26 where they will go over the annual report for Human Resources and the climate survey that was distributed Agency wide.

**Community Engagement:** Ms. Marois shared the community engagement report provided by the committee in the absence of Ms. Frost-Anderson. An MDHHS required Community Stakeholder Survey was conducted in February 2026. The survey received 47 responses from a broad range of community stakeholders across the region. There are 17 individuals that requested a follow-up, the committee will do so to gain more in-depth feedback. The survey showed that stakeholders strongly value NLCMHA's role, that they are experiencing increasing demand with limited system capacity and sees an urgent need for expanded access, workforce support, crisis response, and housing. The stakeholders are asking for solutions that are earlier, more preventative, more affordable, and easier to navigate. The Community Engagement Committee sees this feedback as a critical tool to help guide strategic planning, advocacy, and prioritization, moving forward.

**Nominations Process:** The Board Chair has initiated appointing an Ad Hoc Nominating Committee. The following Board members will make up the committee: Mr. Cambridge, Ms. Marois, Mr. Smallegan. Mr. Cambridge and Ms. Marois conveyed that Ms. Morris, and Ms. Pope are interested in being reelected to their position. Ms. Pope is willing to step up in the ranks if need be. The March Board meeting will include a slate of officers, and the committee asks those who are interested in a leadership role on the Board to indicate that to the nominating committee members. Ideally, each county will be represented on the nominating committee.

**Unfinished Business:** The annual workplan was updated to reflect requested edits from last month's meeting. The Bylaws and requested changes were included in the Board packet for review with the intention of bringing the amended version to a vote at the next Board meeting. Mr. Lentych suggested that the changes be seen by the Agencies' lawyer before coming up for a vote, Ms. Zeller will follow up. The Annual Report will need to be accepted by the Board before going public. The 2024 FY draft will be sent out to the Board as well. Ms. Zeller spoke of the strategic planning process that was previously being worked on and suggested bringing the vision/mission forward for consideration as that is within the Boards purview.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Announcements/ Board Member Reports/ Board Association:** Ms. Marois provided a CMHA conference report. Ms. Marois was able to spend quality time with Ms. Zeller. There was an underlining tone of enthusiasm regarding the RFP being pulled back but also a feeling of caution. The main theme of the conference was to take advantage of the opportunity to redefine the mental health system and how it meets needs as well as how it can improve.

**Next Meeting:** March 19th, 2026 – Traverse City

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

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Coon, Interim Executive Administrator

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Greg McMorrow, Board Chairperson

Lynn Pope, Secretary

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