

**MINUTES FOR:  
CASS COUNTY MEDICAL CARE FACILITY BOARD MEETING**

**May 19th, 2025**

In attendance: Dr. James Wierman (Board Chairperson), Vicki Vaughn (Board Member), Mercedes Schirripa (Administrator), Jennifer Bennett (Recording Minutes).

Meeting called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Guests: Rie Shimada, Lynda Newton

Public Comment: None

Additions/deletions to Agenda: None.

Vicki Vaughn made the motion that the agenda be accepted as presented. Dr. James Wierman supported the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Vicki Vaughn made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. James Wierman supported the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Lynda Newton reported in her story that residents state they would rate facility an A plus and during care conferences residents and family members stated this facility as best in comparison to others locally.

Falls continue to be monitored. Some residents have repeated instances with 6 falls alone being attributed to 1 resident. Continue to create interventions specific to the resident. For example, this resident keeps getting up to see what is going on outside of their room, so a sound machine has been placed in their room to help mitigate the distraction.

Bowel and bladder educations continue as well to improve on both falls and incontinence caused decline. This was also a measure State wanted improved.

Late loss ADL is declining more than expected, counteracting this with restorative program and bowel and bladder educations and improvements.

For Poly Pharmacy, currently aiming for residents to have 8 or less medications, with 30 of residents prescribed 8 medications or less. That is about 20 residents, up from 17 last month. 70% of residents are still prescribed 8 medications or more.

Working on that issue with physicians as well as pharmacy consultants to bring overall medication numbers down. Examples of steps taken include not prescribing statins after age 75, not prescribing unnecessary supplements, and reviewing necessity of prescriptions over time.

The check register was reviewed; Vicki Vaughn questioned an administrations charge which is the quarterly insurance through the county, as well as a charge for the air handlers and chillers. Vicki

Vaugh also questioned Fitzsimmons, these charges are for oxygen, air mattresses, and bariatric beds among other things. Lebenbom and Rothman charges are facility attorney fees; these also cover the firm reviewing policy which helps prevent liability issues related to policy. Citrine and Cooperman charges are for the billing company the facility outsources to; this will no longer be a charge once the facility billing director is fully trained. Vicki Vaughn questioned the charge of village to Cassopolis, this is Dave Rief who does water management and maintenance of larger issues as needed. Mercedes Schirripa will investigate whether he is employed by the county or village.

Dr. James Wierman moved to approve the check register, Vicki Vaughn seconded, approved unanimously.

Mercedes Schirripa gave brief report on Financials.

In December of 2024 there was just under \$700,000.00 in facility accounts, currently there is just over 1 million. That is a marked improvement.

Per the millage, all 2025 tax values have been sent to the attorney for review and the timeline is aiming for November.

As per facility, write-offs on overdue accounts. Some have been reversed and are being collected while others are waiting for confirmation from attorneys on if they are collectible before writing off officially.

For Census Mercedes Schirripa states we are currently 72.2 days outstanding billing days. This number is up from last month due in part to the billing company rebilling patient pay room adjustments from as far back as 2023.

There was a brief discussion of the pros and cons to agency hires when staffing is an issue. The cost is larger in the short-term even without paying benefits than paying hired staff higher wages to employ long-term workers.

Mercedes Schirripa reported there were no staff members or residents positive for covid or Influenza in April.

K & L Gates presentation.

Rob Silverblatt, employed by K & L Gates at their Washington DC office gave a presentation through zoom. He has experience with white collar and tax cases and would be aiding the facility with the ERC case claim denial from the IRS.

ERC was employee retention credits that MCF's, or medical care facilities, received during covid that the IRS now wants repaid. K & L Gates will help Cass County Care Facility make the case that there was an appropriate claim to ERC at said time and depending how the IRS responds can possibly file a complaint in federal court.

100% victory is best case scenario that is possible though not likely. A negotiating solution will most likely result in a split or compromise between facility and IRS. Losing completely would be a loss of the ERC which would have to be paid back, plus interest, plus lawyer fees.

1.7million in ERC was received that the IRS wants paid back. 100% victory facility will not have to pay that amount back and will receive an additional \$740, 000.00.

Mercedes Schirripa provided an administrator's report. Continuing work on PTO and ESTA hours. Facility to halt cash-out option for PTO hours. Allow instead up to 80 PTO hours to roll over annually, with ESTA minimum at 75 covered. PTO roll over on approval. Facility may have to pay a portion back but is still more cost effective even with lawyer fees than having to pay back full amount.

Vicki Vaughn is moving to hire K & L Gates for this purpose. Dr. James Wierman seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Mercedes Schirripa gave report on capitalization policy.

The current capitalization policy has not been updated since 2009 and is limited to \$5000.00. Mercedes Schirripa does not feel that amount is appropriate as higher requests require emergency board meetings, she requests a cap of 40 or 50 thousand dollars.

Vicki Vaughn states the lower caps on spending keep everyone aware of purchases through approvals

Dr. James Wierman proposes a cap of 25 thousand, which Vicki Vaughn agrees to. Mercedes Schirripa states capitalization policy will also be updated to show who approves of what charges.

Vicki Vaughn is moving to approve a new capitalization policy under these terms. Dr. James Wierman seconds the motion. Motion passes.

Mercedes Schirripa provided an administrative report.

Skilled nursing week has just passed and was a success at the facility. There were themed days and a food truck from The Prized Pig in Niles, MI provided an outdoor lunch for staff and residents. Everyone fully enjoyed it.

State approved a desk review for citations received and therefore will not be returning to the building.

2 residents in the facility have tested positive for legionella's disease. It is highly likely they contracted this from a hospital stay but to be safe the facility has been testing water and air quality in the plumbing and HVAC systems as well as replacing filters in sinks, drinking water, and showers. Lynda Newton and Austin Morgan are also both certified for legionella in the building.

A new Facebook page has been created for the facility to keep the community updated and informed. We are working closely with Ambrosia, our marketing and county workers, on this.

A family member who wanted to file a grievance has not done so yet. They are receiving requested medical notes with a waived fee in the meantime.

Mercedes Schirripa proposes the facility purchase a van to aid in transportation costs.

The facility currently uses Cass Transit which cannot fulfill all transportation needs and does not run after 5pm. To offset this the facility uses Area Wide and Michiana Mobility at a great cost. A van purchase to the facility would allow for more daily, after-hours transport, as well as dialysis transport's which would aid in admissions as well.

2 CNAs would also be needed to drive the newly purchased van as well as the facility bus.

The upfront costs would be high but would pay for themselves overtime and save expenses.

Vicki Vaughn is moving to purchase a van for the facility. Dr. James Wierman seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mercedes Schirripa clarifies approval for hiring extra employees as well for drivers, this is also ok'd.

Mercedes Schirripa gives report on employee roster.

There are no questions or concerns.

Mercedes Schirripa gives report on resident council minutes.

Residents have complaints about gumbo stuffed pepper meal. The menu has since been updated for spring with no complaints so far.

Mercedes Schirripa states the facility is looking for V shaped garden boxes to be purchased or built to allow wheelchair accessibility.

There are new activities being planned for June. This includes a Father's Day event, and a facility picnic planned for the 18<sup>th</sup>.

There are no questions.

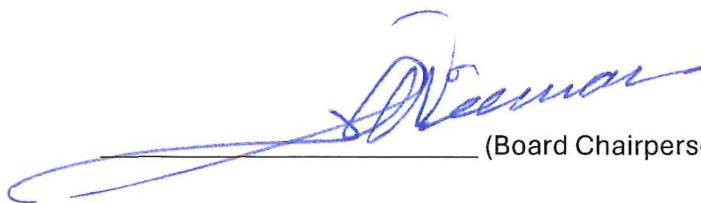
Next board meeting to take place June 23<sup>rd</sup>. All present in agreement.

Dr. James Wierman moves to recess. Vicki Vaughn seconds motion.

Recess started at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer Bennett

  
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(Board Chairperson)

  
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(Administrator)