MINUTES FOR:
CASS COUNTY MEDICAL CARE FACILTY BOARD MEETING

September 28th, 2026

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

Meeting called to order: Dr. James Wierman called the meeting to order, with Board agreement. Meeting called to order at 10:15 am.

Guests: Rie Shimada (Director of Rehabilitation), Lynda Newton (DON), Jennifer Rentfrow (County Administrator), Ambrosia Neldon (Cass County Marketing and Communications Manager)

No Public Comment.

Additions/deletions to Agenda:

Mercedes Schirripa asks that item 5D, the quarterlies be removed from the agenda as well as moving the closed session to the end of the outpatient meeting. Jeff Carmen agrees with these changes.

Dr. James Wierman makes the motion to approve the agenda; Jeff Carmen seconds and the motion passes.

Dr. James Wierman moved to approve of the minutes as presented. Vicki Vaughn seconds and the motion carries.

Lynda Newton reported her story.

Lynda Newton presents an example recently of a resident who passed away recently. Family of this resident are in the process of admitting another family member to the facility. There has been friction with this family and administration staff in the past but despite that the care received was at a level that the trust is still present.

Per QAPI Lynda Newton states that they are approaching ending the meetings for falls specifically. Policies and procedures have been updated and are in place.

For poly pharmacy, medication percentages have stayed steady. Lynda Newton feels this is not expected to improve until the prescribing doctors receive long-term care education in February, and she notes that changes in census also affect these numbers.

The check register was reviewed.

Jeanette Hamel states that August has been typical for expenses and asks if there are any questions from the Board.

Jeff Carmen asks about a payment to the Herald Palladium. Mercedes Schirripa states this is advertising for the facility. She confirms with Ambrosia Neldon who spearheads the advertising and website that the Leader publication was bought by the Herald Palladium.

Vicki Vaughn notes several date discrepancies stating some of the charges are dated for August as expected but some are also dated for April. She also notes that check numbers are not matching between the 2 reports. Mercedes Schirripa states it is most likely an issue with Excel, and corrected check registers will be sent out that afternoon.

Census:

Jeanette Hamel states that the census is looking good and maintaining the occupancy needed to cover facility costs. She notes however that phase 3 of the flooring project is fast approaching where census will need to be monitored more closely to maintain open rooms until completion.

Cash position:

Jeanette Hamil states that there is about 2 million in the operating account for cash on hand as well as 2.9 million in the investment account equaling 5.36 million total currently.

Lynda Newton states we have had no covid or influenza. Dr. James Wierman confirms that there were no covid or influenza positives and asks when immunizations will be offered. Lynda Newton states that the pharmacy the facility works with, Aurora, offers a vaccination clinic and will do so at the facility the second week of October for both staff and residents.

Rie Shimada present for the therapy department.

Rie Shimada states that census is up in both inpatient and outpatient therapy departments. She notes that she included July numbers as well as August and asks if there are any questions. There are none.

Mercedes Schirripa states that she is monitoring the therapy PIP that is active until the end of October which is currently hitting its goal and that she would like to regroup on that when it concludes.

Administrator's report:

Mercedes Schirripa would first like to address a question Jeff Carmen posed in August regarding taxes the facility pays to Jefferson County. She states that per the Jefferson County assessor those are taxes paid for the rented farmland. Dr. James Wierman asks for clarification on this and Jeanette Hamil states that while the facility is utilized for government purposes and serving the community, the rented farmland is not and is generating a profit so that is why it is taxed.

Mercedes Schirripa states that she has spoken with Dussels about adding the spring landscaping project to their services. They are interested and would like to come to the facility to fully discuss

all that would entail and provide a quote. Dussels is also donating pumpkins to the facility for an activity with the residents.

The paving project is underway. Mercedes Schirripa states that the path around the facility as well as the path to the pond is complete. The employee parking lot is in process and expected to be completed soon with the visitors parking lot to be started next.

The new fire panel and updated smoke detectors are all installed so that project is complete.

As stated, the floor project is nearing phase 3 which is the final phase of the project.

Mercedes Schirripa had sent a quote for the new generator to Board members but asks that they disregard it at this time as she needs to seek more information on that project and would like to discuss it further at the next meeting.

Mercedes Schirripa would like to discuss upcoming changes with the direct care wages. These are commonly known as covid pay, which is the added $3.40 an hour for medical workers and $0.85 an hour for non-clinical workers. Beginning October 1st direct care wages will be paid out by Medicaid days billed as opposed to all days billed monthly, so these extra wages will only be able to reimburse Medicaid days billed in a month. Mercedes Schirripa suggests waiting to see how other facilities handle this change, if they choose to pay only the Medicaid billable rate and/or offset the difference in pay, but to not shock employees in the meantime continuing the hourly rate through the holidays at a cost of $25 thousand from the facility budget.

Jeff Carmen makes a motion to offset the Medicaid reimbursement of the direct care wages to facility employees at a cost of $25 thousand dollars, Dr. James Wierman seconds and the motion passes.

Mercedes Schirripa states that the transportation grant for behavioral health the facility applied for was awarded at an amount of $200 thousand dollars. This money will be used to purchase a transport van as well as pay wages for a driver to offset resident needs when County transportation is not available.

Jeff Carmen asks if there is an implied responsibility to continue service for a set amount of time. Jeanette Hamil states that her understanding is that if rural health remains a priority the grant will be renewable, with staff being the only facility responsibility once the grant is no longer available.

Questions per the employee roster.

There are no questions.

Resident council minutes:

There are no questions on the resident council minutes. It is noted that the residents are consistently concerned with the food.

Mercedes Schirripa states that the facility will be hosting a trunk or treat again this year on October 9th from 5:30-7:30pm. There will be games and pizza provided as well.

Mark Nottley gives a presentation via zoom on the wage classification and compensation study report.

Mark Nottley states that while the actual report provided is quite lengthy, he would like to stick to the important points. The objectives of this report were to ensure that employees were compensated properly to each other and the labor market. Also to create a payment structure and step system to ensure equitable payment presently with a path to wage increases over time.

There were 4 phases to this study which included classifying the current pay rates of facility employees, analyzing the market, creating a new salary structure for the facility and implementing that structure within the facility.

Mark Nottley states that some employees may be overpaid at present and recommends freezing those salaries until such time as the market matches and surpasses that pay grade. There are also several employees being underpaid in comparison to the local market and Mark Nottley states the cost of raising those wages to equitable to be at about $80 thousand. The cost to implement full pay increases where necessary facility wide is $169,458, and implementing the step system is more cost efficient for this.

He notes that the administrative executive position is presented separately in this analysis as it is a contractual position and not part of the step system.

Mark Nottley states that the healthcare coverage costs to the facility are high and that from his research he does not see the facility paying into any retirement funding. There is also currently no buyback programs in use for unused sick pay which Mark agrees with as that can be a liability.

Jeff Carmen states that he does not feel it is accurate that the facility is not contributing to any retirement programs for employees of the facility. Mercedes Schirripa agrees and states she will investigate that further within the facilities policies for accuracy on that point.

Mark Nottley states he will be happy to update the report with that information and to please provide any changes before he finalizes the report.

Public comment:

There is no public comment.

Any other business:

No other business.

Board moved to recess at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer Bennett



_____ (Board Chairperson) _____ (Administrator)