

Minutes for Cass County Medical Care Facility and Board

Work Session

Monday January 26th, 2026

In Attendance: Dr. James Wierman (Board Chairperson), Jeff Carmen (Board Co-Chair), Vicki Vaughn (Board Member), Mercedes Schirripa (Administrator), Jenna Badner (Controller), Rie Shimada (Director of Rehabilitation), Lynda Newton (DON), Ambrosia Neldon (Cass County Marketing and Communications Manager), Jennifer Bennett (Recording Minutes).

Guests: County Commissioner Lawrence (Vice Chair District 2), County Commissioner Langley (District 1), Jodi Nestich (IT), Karen Salata (Director of MDS), Allison Mast (Director of Social Services), Jamie Gish (Director of Admissions/Emergency Management), Austin Morgan (Director of Maintenance/EVS)

Meeting called to order: Dr. James Wierman called the session to order at 10 ;29am. He states this is a work session to discuss approved Millage funds.

Jeff Carmen states that it is just past the 1-year anniversary of Cass County Medical Care Facility's current administrator.

Mercedes Schirripa gives a presentation:

She thanks all in attendance for coming despite the inclement weather and gives a brief history of the facility. The building was originally built in 1977. It has been a farm, an asylum, an infirmary, and currently a skilled nursing facility.

Capacity is 80 beds, 6 of those being private rooms. Of the 147 staff members, 50.3% of those live within Cass County. Average employee turnover rate for a skilled nursing facility is 82%, CCMCF turnover percentage is 32.44.

In the past year the CCMCF kitchen served 84,276 meals in comparison to the local jail serving 110 thousand and the council on aging in combination with meals on wheels serving 64 thousand in the same time frame.

Outpatient therapy served 131 members of the community.

CCMCF's oldest, current resident is 101 years old and our current youngest is 29, with 78 being the average age at the facility. The average short-term stay of a resident is 39 days with many shifting to a long-term stay.

Mercedes Schirripa presents a market area definition study showing admissions from all 7 zip codes of the county from 2023-2025. Of the 360 admissions to the facility, only 49 were from out of Cass County.

Jeff Carmen asks if the facility is required to accept locally while most for profit facilities do not have this requirement. Dr. James Wierman states, yes, Cass County residents take precedence. Vicki Vaughn asks if there is ever a waiting list for residents to admit to the facility and Mercedes Schirripa states that on occasion there is.

Jodi Nestich gives a presentation:

Jodi Nestich has been the IT director for Cass County since 2020. She states this is the first county in the state of Michigan to have county IT also provide services to a medical care facility. This is very beneficial as there are monetary savings as well as providing security, networking, and infrastructure also. This process took 1 ½ years to complete as the facility needed a lot of upgrading to be part of the county network.

The official rollout was in October of 2023, which included the help desk feature to troubleshoot issues on request. Currently IT has helped the facility with the new HVAC monitoring system installation as well as the call light systems.

Jodi Nestich states that the teamwork has been excellent throughout, even with multiple changes within leadership positions. She asks if anyone present has any questions or ideas going forward.

Jamie Gish asks what can be done about the current fax system often blocking automated faxes as spam. Most hospitals are turning to automated systems to send faxes for referrals among other purposes, and this is hindering the admission process. Jodi Nestich states that this is an example of technology being helpful as well as hurtful and that unfortunately this would have to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Karen Salata states that as residents are becoming more tech savvy, there have been complaints from residents about spam on their personal devices as well as needing help with their devices. She asks if there could be education provided for residents to address these issues or even facility provided devices to better troubleshoot. Jodie Nestich states that would be ideal to provide devices that would be part of the facility network as outside devices could prove a liability for cybersecurity, but that this option would need to be discussed further including budget concerns.

Jodi Nestich states that future plans for the facility currently include the approved overhaul of the security system which includes cameras and cabling.

Jeff Carmen states that he is appreciative of the work the IT department does and that providing services to more properties within the county helps the local economy vs paying outside companies for the same services.

Vicki Vaughn asks if old equipment removed during upgrades, such as PCs, can be resold to recoup any costs or help those in need as well as how long the process takes. Jodi Nestich states that the overall upgrade process is ongoing and is generally needed every 3 years due to technological advancements being increasingly fast. She states that due to that speed of improvement, unfortunately most outdated equipment is useless and is generally recycled to recoup some cost.

Mercedes Schirripa states that she would like guests in attendance to introduce themselves. From CCMCF administration Jamie Gish, director of admissions and emergency management, Allison Mast, director of Social Services and risk management, Karen Salata, MDS nurse, and Austin Morgan, director of Maintenance are all present. County Commissioner's Lawrance and Langley are also present.

Jenna Badner presents the budget:

58% of the facility revenue currently comes from Medicaid, with 10% from private pay.

The overall estimated revenue for 2026 is expected to be 14 million with estimated cost for the year also being 14 million which breaks even. This is not including millage funds and Mercedes Schirripa adds that this is figured using information from past years, as the facility has already begun improving financially those numbers may change.

Jeff Carmen asks of commercial insurance contributes to revenue, and Mercedes Schirripa states yes, but often those commercial plans are working in contract with either Medicare or Medicaid.

Mercedes Schirripa continues with the budget, breaking down the millage. The first year will provide 1 million and 540 dollars.

From September 2021 to September 2025 millage funding was 6 million 600 thousand dollars and the 10-year estimate of millage funding equals 13 million 200 thousand dollars.

Jeff Carmen asks if the bad debt write offs continue to be an issue as they previously were and Mercedes Schirripa states that the aging is looking cleaner and continuing to improve.

Mercedes Schirripa lists the current projects that have already received approval which are the classification and compensation study due to conclude in March 2025, the security camera upgrades, and the work study which is also expected to conclude in March 2025. These projects have also been factored into the budget presented. Adding dialysis services is still a priority for CCMCF and Mercedes Schirripa states she is in talks with Premier dialysis to provide free training to nursing staff and that any purchases of equipment or storage for supplies is also not enough to affect the budget as presented.

Jeff Carmen confirms regarding the work study that the last one completed was 3 years ago, Mercedes Schirripa agrees and states she would like to present the results of this one during a work session.

Mercedes Schirripa presents a list of projects to consider. The parking lot and outdoor walking paths need resurfacing, the carpeting inside is original to the facility which presents an infection control issue, the current nurses' station to be remodeled into a more living room set up as opposed to the clinical look it currently has.

Dr. James Wierman asks if any of these have been approved, Mercedes Schirripa states no and Jeff Carmen states there needs to be a projection for capital.

Mercedes Schirripa has begun preliminary inquiries for some of these possible projects. The PC's and technical equipment being retired, recycled, and replaced is an ongoing process. The current flooring tile is not available to replace as needed and so options need to be researched for replacing the flooring as a whole. Jeff Carmen asks if due to the age of the building would asbestos be a concern, Mercedes Schirripa states that it would need to be investigated once projects become more concrete. The activities department could also use a designated space, as where they operated previously was repurposed to Outpatient therapy, as well as more private rooms for residents added. Also, possibly a designated classroom space for local colleges, the facility hosts for their clinicals and a daycare for staff.

Dr. James Wierman states that a facility daycare could be beneficial not only to CCMCF staff but local community members as well.

Jeff Carmen adds that focus on short-term vs long-term projects should be considered as the data from the ongoing studies is produced, this can help determine which projects are best to focus on moving forward.

Vicki Vaughn asks if there is a possibility of reimbursement from the State for Capital improvement projects. Jenna Badner states that yes, long term reimbursement is a possibility if the project is qualified as a capital improvement. Mercedes Schirripa adds that depending on the project type there are also grant options such as what was utilized for the recent HVAC system upgrade.

Mercedes Schirripa states that is all for listing upgrades and agrees it would be best to wait for study results before deciding and moving forward on any. She adds that the fire panel upgrade at the nurses' station has been included in the security camera quote.

Dr. James Wierman asks that Mercedes Schirripa procures quotes for projects to present costs and priority order.

Mercedes Schirripa states she would like approval to move forward with the flooring project first due to infection control concerns.

Jeff Carmen asks if this list of specific requests could be presented at the February Board meeting or should there be a special meeting. Mercedes Schirripa states that no projects will begin until after the study results but that the February Board meeting will be fine to present quotes.

Vicki Vaughn makes the motion to receive flooring quotes; Jeff Carmen supports the motion. All are in favor and the motion passes.

Jeff Carmen asks if per the meal's numbers comparison, is the CCMCF kitchen at capacity for output or could it feasibly produce more, such as if wings are added, etc. Mercedes Schirripa will run numbers on that.

Dr. James Wierman asks if there are any other presentations or questions. There are not. Mercedes Schirripa thanks everyone for coming.

Public comment:

County Administrator Jennifer Rentfrow asks about the market study, could the results of that also be presented during the Board of Commissioner's meeting in April.

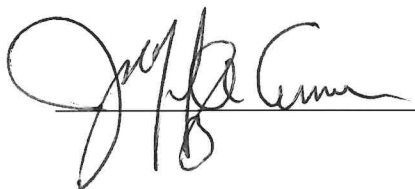
She states that IT has been performing admirably, adding that the cost of a cyber-attack can be quite substantial.


She also asks in regard to facility activities department space limitations, do residents ever utilize the Council on Aging for that. Mercedes Schirripa states that yes, not all but some residents regularly do so.

Regarding Mercedes Schirripa, Jennifer Rentfrow states that there is constant contact and collaboration between the two as well as between the county and the facility.

Dr. James Wierman makes the motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Carmen seconds. The motion passes, work session adjourned at 11:53am.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Bennett


Board Chairman ^{vice}


Administrator