



~Approved 5/27/2025~

**Regular Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 29, 2025**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Board Room & Teams**

**Board Members Present:**

Greg Anselmo – Itasca County Unorganized  
Greg Cook – Koochiching County Unorganized  
Kurt Fredrickson – Stokes Township  
Carol Gilbertson – Itasca County At-Large  
Dan Heinecke – City of Bigfork  
Tom LaMont – City of Effie  
Gordon Rahier – Pomroy Township  
Larry Salmela – Carpenter Township  
Sally Sedgwick – Wirt Township  
Dan Sursely – City of Big Falls  
Heidi Watson – Koochiching County At-Large

**Board Members Remote:**

None

**Board Members Absent:**

Clinton Cook – Bigfork Township  
Teresa Kittridge – Marcell Township

**Staff Members Present:**

Darla Anderson, Dr. Ed Anderson, Nathan Hough, Amanda Niemala, Jennifer Rissanen, Renee Tower

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**Staff Members Remote:**

Samantha Beckner, Kyle Buckingham, Alex Cleath, Sara Elioff, Jeff Fontana, Brandon Francisco, Katie Gilbertson, Dawn Jourdan, Heidi Powell, Ashlee Snyder

**Others:**

Bernie Hough, Gene Rajala

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Vice Chair Carol Gilbertson. The meeting opened with a prayer.

**A. Community Comments (3 minutes/speaker)**

There were no community comments.

**B. Approval of Consent Agenda**

1. Agenda
2. Regular Board Meeting Minutes 3/25/2025
3. Medical Staff Meeting Minutes 1/15/2025
4. Credentialing
5. Employee Appreciation

April Employee Appreciation Nominations:

- Daniel Vechell, MD (Radiologist - Imaging/Surgery Center)
- Alan Dettmer (Registered Physical Therapist – Physical Therapy)
- Gloria Madsen (Care Assistant – CNA – Med Surg)
- Belford “Billy” Olson (Housekeeper – Housekeeping)

A **motion** to approve the consent agenda was made by Dan Heinecke, seconded by Sally Sedgwick. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Information, Discussion and/or Action**

**1. Finance Committee Report**

Treasurer Kurt Fredrickson summarized the April 22, 2025 Finance Committee meeting.

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**a. Financials**

The Finance Committee made a **motion** to accept the financial report for March, seconded by Dan Sursely. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Accounts Payable**

The Finance Committee made a **motion** to approve the March accounts payable, seconded by Heidi Watson. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Governance Committee Report**

A summary of the April 22, 2025, Governance Committee Meeting was provided.

**3. Hospital District Bylaws**

The Governance Committee reported that the current Northern Itasca Hospital District Bylaws do not align with Minnesota state statute regarding board member terms of office and recommended amending the bylaws accordingly. Additionally, the language regarding the regular board meeting date needs to be revised to reflect that meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month.

Board members were asked to review the bylaws and submit any additional proposed changes to Renee Tower.

Once all proposed amendments have been identified, a redlined version of the bylaws will be presented to the full board for consideration.

**4. Legislative Education Committee Report**

Sally Sedgwick provided a summary of the April 22, 2025 Legislative Education Committee Meeting.

**5. CEO Report**

CEO Nathan Hough provided the following updates:

- **OCHIN EMR Implementation:** Progress continues with the transition to the OCHIN Epic electronic medical record system. The agreement was finalized and signed on April 23. A revision

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to the initial cost estimate was made: while the board had previously approved \$1,201,215.50 for the first half of the startup costs, the revised amount is \$1,188,800. This new EMR will eliminate redundancies in the current systems and include several add-ons previously purchased separately. Current EMR-related costs are estimated at approximately \$97,000 per month. After go-live, monthly costs with OCHIN are projected to be under \$60,000 (\$55,229.42 to OCHIN and \$4,678.08 to MultiView). Some overlap in EMR usage and related costs is anticipated during parts of 2026. Grant funding is still being pursued. A site visit from the Blandin Foundation, originally scheduled for this week, has been rescheduled for the following Monday.

- **Audit:** The audit is progressing well. A decision was made to apply bad debt and accounts receivable cleanup (from the current and previous years) to the 2024 financials, which will negatively affect the year-end bottom line. However, this cleanup has reduced the days in accounts receivable from 80 to 65, which is a positive outcome.
- **Employee Retention Credit (ERC):** Eide Bailly has completed the ERC review, and the submission has been sent to the IRS. Due to recent leadership changes, IRS processing is currently slow, but it is anticipated to improve once a new Commissioner is appointed.
- **Specialty Services:**
  - **Cardiology:** Planning is underway for a kickoff event this summer to raise awareness of heart health. Cardiology services will begin shortly after, with dates to be determined.
  - **OB/GYN:** Representatives from Sanford will be visiting this Friday. In addition, discussions are underway with Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital about their team potentially offering services at our facility.
  - **General Surgery:** Dr. Roy is scheduled to begin seeing patients in May. Dr. Margo is also adding days. Dr. Baich

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- is transitioning to reduce his surgical load and expand wound care services, with collaboration from Healogics.
  - Orthopedics: Dr. Baker has indicated plans to wind down his practice over the next 1–2 years. A transition plan will be developed to ensure continuity of services.
  - Recruitment continues for a Nurse Practitioner in Specialty Care and another for Psychiatric Services.
- **EMS:** Nathan met with Jessie Storlie of Bigfork EMS to discuss ongoing staffing challenges. A preliminary discussion took place about the potential of integrating EMS as a department within Bigfork Valley. Board members expressed support for continued discussions. Nathan will contact Itasca County to further explore this opportunity.
- **Facility Strategic Plan:** Discussions are in progress with a facility services expert experienced in infrastructure and capital energy projects. The goal is to develop a facility infrastructure strategic plan to guide capital improvements and reduce unnecessary spending. No costs have been proposed at this time; progress depends on securing applicable grant funding.
- **Easter Activities:**
  - An Easter egg hunt was held on Friday, April 18, and was well received. Unexpected participation from Villa residents added a joyful surprise. Planning will be adjusted next year to formally include Villa residents.
  - The Gift Nest organized an Easter plant/flower sponsorship program for LTC residents and hospital patients. The effort was strongly supported, resulting in more plants than needed for individual residents. Surplus plants and floral arrangements were used to decorate common areas and dinner tables. A total of 28 plants and 9 arrangements were delivered. Positive feedback was received from residents, staff, and families. Nathan expressed appreciation to the Gift Nest volunteers and staff for their efforts.
  - Greg Cook was thanked for providing Easter Sunday services at Bigfork Valley Communities.

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- **Additional Updates:**

- A Middle School Scrub Camp for grades 6–8 is scheduled for June 18. Heidi Powell will attend the next board meeting to provide more information.
- BVH and SRHS were honored as a 2024 Clinical Training Site of Excellence by the University of Minnesota’s Office of Academic Clinical Affairs, recognizing outstanding support for U of M health sciences learners.
- BVH has again been recognized as a Top 20 Critical Access Hospital in the U.S. for Best Practices in Patient Satisfaction by the National Rural Health Association.
- Drug Disposal Day is scheduled for Thursday, May 1.
- Contingency planning is underway in case of issues with the current laundry facility.

6. **Meet the Board: Website Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was included in the board packets as a way to spotlight board members on Bigfork Valley’s website and to help the community learn more about their elected representatives. Additionally, the financial auditors requested background information on board members as part of this year’s audit.

Discussion followed regarding how and where this information should be shared (e.g., website, newsletter, or TV display). Some board members expressed concerns about privacy and the potential risks of publishing personal details online, while others supported the idea of increasing transparency and public engagement.

There was general agreement that either all board members should participate or none, to maintain consistency and avoid the appearance of division.

Two separate needs were identified: (1) meeting the auditor’s request for board member information, and (2) developing public-facing content to spotlight the board for the community.

A **motion** was made by Dan Heinecke and seconded by Greg Anselmo to complete the questionnaire and bring back proposed content in the format that would be published or publicized for full board review

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and consideration. This content will be reviewed by the board before any final decisions on publication are made.

There was discussion regarding the recent data security breach. Board members were advised that any questions about the incident should be directed to Nathan.

Nathan reported that during today's board meeting, he was served a summons by the Sheriff. The summons is related to a class action complaint that has been filed against Bigfork Valley Hospital in connection with the recent data breach.

**7. Hospital Local Art Collection**

Sally Sedgwick provided an overview of the local art collection that the board allocated money for several years ago. She noted that the collection was advertised as district-owned at the time. Currently a few pieces are missing, and Nathan is working with staff to locate them.

Documents were distributed outlining the current status of the collection search, along with descriptions from the 2013 calendar featuring some of the pieces.

Sally will explore the cost of plaques to accompany the artwork, highlighting the local artists.

**8. Department Introduction: Billing**

Amanda Niemala provided an overview of Bigfork Valley Hospital's Revenue Cycle/Billing.

**9. Board Meeting Agenda Topics for Next Month**

"Meet the Board: Website Questionnaire" will be included on the agenda for the next board meeting.

**10. Open Discussion**

A board member inquired about potentially rescheduling the May board meeting, as it falls on the day after Memorial Day. After discussion, it was decided to keep the meeting on its regularly scheduled date of May 27.

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Community member Gene Rajala expressed his appreciation for the board, noting that it is composed of independent thinkers. He also shared that he believes hiring CEO Nathan Hough was a very good decision and commended him for doing a great job.

With no further business, a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 11:13 a.m. was made by Dan Sursely, seconded by Dan Heinecke. The motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes respectfully submitted by:**

Renee Tower

Executive Administrative Assistant

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