



~Approved 7/29/2025~

Regular Board Meeting**Tuesday, June 24, 2025****9:00 a.m.****Board Room & Teams****Board Members Present:**

Greg Anselmo – Itasca County Unorganized
Clinton Cook – Bigfork Township
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:

Teresa Kittridge – Marcell Township

Staff Members Present:

Dr. Ed Anderson, Darla Anderson, Sam Beckner, Nathan Hough, Jennifer Rissanen,
Renee Tower

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Staff Members Remote:

Kyle Buckingham, Alex Cleath, Sara Elioﬀ, Katie Gilbertson, Dawn Jourdan, Josh Kinn, Sandra LeBlanc-Boland, Amanda Niemala, Heidi Powell, Ashlee Snyder

Others:

Bernie Hough, Teresa Kittridge, Brandon Mickelson, Gene Rajala, Christopher Virta

Note: Board member Teresa Kittridge joined the meeting online as a community member; Minnesota Statute 13D.02 requirements for remote attendance were not met.

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chair Clint Cook. The meeting opened with a prayer.

A. Community Comments (3 minutes/speaker)

Community member Gene Rajala commented that he recently saw Bigfork Valley’s advertisement on television and found it to be very well done. He noted that it helps raise awareness of the facility’s presence in the area and serves as a reminder to those living within the hospital district that they are part owners of the facility. Gene expressed his appreciation and thanked the organization for airing the advertisement.

B. Approval of Consent Agenda

1. Agenda
2. Regular Board Meeting Minutes 5/27/2025
3. Credentialing

A **motion** to approve the consent agenda was made by Carol Gilbertson, seconded by Greg Anselmo. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Information, Discussion and/or Action

1. 2024 Financial Audit Report

Brandon Mickelson, principal from CliftonLarsonAllen, provided an overview of the 2024 audit results.

After review, a **motion** to accept the 2024 audited financial statement was made by Larry Salmela, seconded by Sally Sedgwick. The motion passed unanimously.

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2. Finance Committee Report

Treasurer Kurt Fredrickson summarized the June 17, 2025 Finance Committee meeting.

a. Financials

The Finance Committee made a **motion** to accept the financial report for May, seconded by Heidi Watson. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Accounts Payable

The Finance Committee made a **motion** to approve the May accounts payable, seconded by Dan Sursely. The motion passed unanimously.

3. 2026 Tax Levy

Kurt Fredrickson reported on the Finance Committee's preliminary discussion regarding the 2026 tax levy. At this time, Nathan recommended keeping the current levy amount of \$975,000 unchanged.

The board discussed whether to maintain, reduce, or slightly increase the tax levy. One board member suggested implementing small, incremental increases annually rather than making no adjustments over multiple years. Another board member expressed concern about viewing the tax levy as a consistent revenue source, emphasizing that it should not be treated as a standard mechanism for generating funds or automatically increased based on cost-of-living adjustments. The goal, it was noted, should be to make the hospital financially self-sustaining rather than relying on tax levy funds.

There was also discussion about some townships and cities questioning the benefits of being in the hospital district.

The Board requested the following information be provided at the next meeting:

- Tax levy amounts and related revenue comparisons from the five other hospital districts in Minnesota.
- Historical tax levy data for Bigfork Valley.
- Confirmation of the 2026 tax levy certification deadline.

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4. EMS Services

Nathan reported that the Bigfork Ambulance Service Association will be holding its business meeting on Thursday, during which they will discuss the potential for Bigfork Valley to assume ownership of the ambulance service. Nathan anticipates having more information following that meeting.

An overview of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) proforma was provided. It was noted that there is some uncertainty surrounding the continuation of the annual stipend from Itasca County, including whether Bigfork Valley will continue to receive it and for how long that support will remain in place.

It was clarified that at the May 27 board meeting, the board authorized Nathan to negotiate the terms for accepting the ambulance service, should an offer be made.

5. CEO Report

CEO Nathan Hough provided the following updates:

- A cardiology screening event hosted by Sanford will be held on-site Friday, June 27.
- The Summer Kick-Off Party is scheduled for June 27 in the Aspen parking lot, including food trucks and live music.
- Work is ongoing to finalize agreements with both Sanford Bemidji and Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital to offer OB/GYN services.
- Dr. Benjamin Roy, General Surgeon, has begun seeing patients.
- Dr. Michael Baich will begin providing Wound Care services, with a target start date later this summer.
- A nurse practitioner candidate for specialty care was recently interviewed and appears to be a strong fit for the role.
- Recruitment efforts continue for a psychiatric nurse practitioner.
- Progress continues on the implementation of the OCHIN EMR system. The project kickoff meeting was held on June 18, with participation from the assigned project manager.
- Bigfork Valley has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Blandin Foundation to help support the costs associated with

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the implementation of the new electronic medical record (EMR) system.

- The latest Minnesota State Quality Indicators report for Long-Stay Residents was released. Bigfork Valley's facility score improved from 70.05 to 72.28, which is well above the current state average of 64.17.
- Bigfork Valley's application for the new Critical Access Nursing Facility (CANF) designation has been approved. This designation aligns federal Critical Access Hospital (CAH) reimbursement with the state's Medical Assistance (MA) payment model for long-term care. As a result, the facility will receive an additional \$13.67 per patient day.
- The state survey team visited our Assisted Living Facility recently. The visit went very well. A few minor areas for improvement were noted and addressed before the survey concluded.
- The onsite visit and orientation for the VA Nursing Home Program is this morning. The goal is for Bigfork Valley to become eligible to accept VA patients into the nursing home.
- Middle School Scrubs Camp was held on June 18. A media clip featuring the event was shared with the board.
- Television commercials promoting Bigfork Valley have begun airing in Northern Minnesota on WDIO/ABC. The commercials debuted during the 5:00 p.m. news segment known as *The Medical Minute* and were shown to the board during the meeting.

Board members suggested exploring additional advertising platforms such as YouTube, Peacock, cable TV, and other broadcast channels. Nathan indicated he would look into these options.

6. Governance Committee Report

A summary of the June 17, 2025 Governance Committee meeting was provided.

The committee continues to make progress on merging board policies; however, the work is still in progress. The updated CEO Job Description has been completed.

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7. Updated CEO Job Description

A **motion** to approve the CEO Job description as presented was made by the Governance Committee and seconded by Dan Heinecke. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Annual Meeting

After discussion, it was suggested that both the Regular Board Meeting and Annual Meeting be tentatively scheduled for Thursday, August 28, with the Annual Meeting beginning at 5:00 p.m. The board will consider the proposed date and vote on the final schedule at the July board meeting.

9. Board Meeting Agenda Topics for Next Month

Board members requested that the following topics be included on the agenda for the next board meeting: Annual Meeting Date, Medicare and Medicaid Changes, and Tax Levy Due Date.

10. Open Discussion

It was noted that board meeting packets take approximately a week to arrive by mail, which does not allow board members adequate time to review the materials prior to meetings.

Larry Salmela shared a handout regarding a new Minnesota law allowing motorcycle lane splitting and lane filtering, effective July 1, 2025.

With no further business, a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 11:16 a.m. was made by Dan Heinecke and seconded by Greg Cook. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Renee Tower

Executive Administrative Assistant

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