



~Approved 5/26/2026~

**Regular Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 28, 2026**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Board Room & Microsoft 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:**

Teresa Kittridge – Marcell Township

**Board Members Absent:**

None

**Staff Members Present:**

Nathan Hough, Heidi Powell

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

**Staff Members Remote:**

Nelly Becker, Samantha Beckner, Annette Buckingham, Kyle Buckingham, Alex Cleath, Sara Elioff, Josh Kinn, Mark Lyons, Jennifer Rissanen

**Others:**

Ellen Bomstad, Bernie Hough, Christopher Virta

**Remote Participation Statement**

Board Member Teresa Kittridge participated in the meeting remotely pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §13D.02 due to being out of state.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Clinton Cook. 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 – March 31, 2026
  - 3. Credentialing

Clarifications to the March 31, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes were discussed as follows:

- Page 4, *under Resolution Authorizing Line of Credit*: The amount of additional capital remaining accessible should reflect \$2.4 million rather than \$1.4 million.
- Page 3, *under Introduction of Mark Lyons*: the minutes should note that Mark Lyons is serving as Interim CFO.
- Page 3, *under Accounts Payable*: the minutes should reflect that credit card balances are paid in full each month.

Sally Sedgwick will provide the corrections to Renee Tower.

A **motion** to amend the March 31, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes as noted and to approve the consent agenda was made by Sally Sedgwick and seconded by Carol Gilbertson.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

**Roll Call Vote (conducted due to remote participation):**

- Greg Anselmo – Yea
- Clinton Cook – Yea
- Greg Cook – Yea
- Kurt Fredrickson – Yea
- Carol Gilbertson – Yea
- Dan Heinecke – Yea
- Teresa Kittridge – Yea
- Tom LaMont – Yea
- Gordon Rahier – Yea
- Larry Salmela – Yea
- Sally Sedgwick – Yea
- Dan Sursely – Yea
- Heidi Watson – Yea

Motion carried unanimously.

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

**1. Finance Committee Report**

Treasurer Kurt Fredrickson summarized the April 21, 2026 Finance Committee meeting.

Complete financial reports for March were not yet available. Questions and discussion from the committee meeting are documented in the Finance Committee minutes included in the board packet.

Due to challenges associated with implementation of the new Multiview system and to allow additional time for report preparation, Finance Committee meetings will be held on Thursdays prior to the Board meetings rather than Tuesdays. This change will provide Interim CFO Mark Lyons and Alex Cleath additional time to complete the financial reports.

Kurt Fredrickson noted that Medicare currently owes Bigfork Valley over \$1 million.

Mark Lyons reported that, over time, the organization expects to establish a routine process to calculate the Medicare settlement on a

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

monthly basis. He noted that, based on current volumes and costs, the organization would likely show a receivable position, which could have a positive impact on the bottom line; however, this remains speculative until the calculation process is completed.

**a. Financials**

A **motion** to approve the January and February financial reports was made by the Finance Committee and seconded by Greg Anselmo. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Teresa Kittridge remained connected to the meeting but did not participate in voting for the remainder of the meeting.

**b. Accounts Payable**

Nathan Hough reported that OCHIN was paid \$554,000 and that \$350,000 was transferred back into investments. He further noted that if additional ERC funds are received, the organization may prioritize bringing accounts payable more current rather than transferring additional funds into investments at this time.

It was also noted that the payment to OCHIN was made prior to the printing of the accounts payable aging report.

The Finance Committee made a **motion** to approve the March accounts payable. After discussion, the motion was seconded by Greg Anselmo and passed unanimously.

**2. Line of Credit Update**

Nathan Hough reported that the organization is awaiting revised documents from TriState reflecting the correct information.

A resolution was distributed for Board review. Board Secretary Sally Sedgwick noted that the resolution included in the documents provided by TriState is the version she is required to sign; however, its wording differs from the resolution approved by the Board on March 31, 2026.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

Following review, a **motion** was made by Dan Heinecke and seconded by Gordon Rahier to approve the resolution dated April 28, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

### 3. **CEO Report**

CEO Nathan Hough provided the following updates:

#### **EMS Services**

- EMS operations continue to run smoothly, with 19 runs completed in March. Due to delays in payor credentialing across Minnesota, reimbursement is now beginning to be received for services dating back to the beginning of the year. Medicare is reimbursing at approximately 60% of charges, while commercial payers, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, are reimbursing at approximately 87% of charges.
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) completed 46 rides from January through March, totaling approximately 1,800 loaded miles. Of those, 35 rides required use of the lift.

#### **Grants Awarded (as of Mid-April 2026)**

- Blandin Foundation: \$150,000 to offset ambulance service operational costs associated with go-live (funding to be received June 2026).
- Blandin Foundation: \$100,000 to support development of an in-house EMR help desk (50% payable June 2026; 50% payable March 2027).
- Minnesota Department of Health – Home and Community-Based Scholarship Program: \$23,525 to support CNA and TMA training for Villa Assisted Living and Long-Term Care.
- Minnesota Department of Health – Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Program: \$116,000 toward lifesaving equipment upgrades for ambulances and the emergency department (25% match required).
- FTA Section CRRSA and ARPA funding: \$4,129 reimbursement for insurance costs associated with the 5310 MnDOT vehicle (2020–2023).
- Operation Round Up (Spring): \$150 for Gift Nest display fixtures and \$320.89 for senior fitness class props.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

- Employee Retention Credit: \$1.5 million received on April 9, 2026 (Q2 2021).

### **EMR Update**

- Representatives from OCHIN are on site.
- The hospital is scheduled to go live with OCHIN Epic the weekend of May 16, 2026.
- Long-term care EMR implementation has been rescheduled and will occur no later than August 1, 2026.

### **Rural Health Transformation Funds**

- If applying at this time, proposed funding priorities would include: implementation of community health workers, EMS ALS service expansion, outpatient behavioral health/psychiatric services, and EMR enhancements (including reporting, patient engagement, continuity of care, community wellness, and telehealth). These initiatives total approximately \$1.5 million.

### **Long Term Care**

- Long-term care has again received a five-star rating.
- On April 25, Senior Services hosted the Bigfork High School pre-prom walk at both the Villa and Long-Term Care, which was well received.

### **Additional Updates**

- The Gift Nest is offering Mother's Day gift boxes for purchase.
- The Bigfork Valley Spring Craft and Wellness Fair will be held in the Wanigan on May 8, with strong vendor participation anticipated.

## **4. CEO Goals Clarification**

Nathan Hough requested clarification on the CEO goals established by the board.

Nathan Hough requested that the "measurable" language for the assisted living and retail pharmacy goals be amended as follows:

- Assisted Living: 20% positive change in Service Sector Summary from year-end 2025 to year-end 2026

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

- Retail Pharmacy: 30% positive change in Service Sector Summary from year-end 2025 to year-end 2026

Carol will revise the CEO goals as requested.

Nathan Hough stated that CEO goal progress updates will be provided quarterly in July, October, January, and April.

It was noted that the nursing home census goal is the Board's highest priority. The EMR implementation goal was identified as a baseline expectation, while the assisted living and retail pharmacy financial goals are aspirational targets.

#### 5. **Propane System Upgrade**

Nathan Hough reviewed two quotes for upgrading the facility's propane system, one from Westmor Industries and one from Rainy Lake Oil.

The quote from Rainy Lake Oil totaled \$197,750.99. The quote from Westmor Industries totaled \$172,999.00; however, it was noted that this amount does not include additional costs such as electrical work (estimated at \$15,000), methanol for startup (approximately \$600), tank evacuation (estimated at a 3% burn-off), or temporary tanks. After consideration of these items, the total project costs between the two proposals are comparable.

The Board expressed flexibility and agreed to defer the final vendor selection to Nathan Hough and Josh Kinn.

Discussion also included the potential repositioning or reorientation of the propane tanks. It was noted that relocation or adjustment had been considered previously in relation to the Twin Homes and potential future expansion.

A **motion** was made by Greg Anselmo and seconded by Heidi Watson to approve the propane system upgrade project in an amount not to exceed \$200,000, and to authorize Nathan Hough and Josh Kinn to select the vendor at their discretion. The motion carried unanimously.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

**6. Strategic Planning**

Nathan Hough reported that the current strategic plan was approved by the Board in August 2024 and that he provides quarterly updates on its progress. He invited input from the Board regarding future strategic planning efforts.

Discussion was limited, with general agreement that the Board would benefit from reviewing the original strategic plan along with the quarterly updates.

It was agreed that the strategic plan and related updates will be included in the next Board packet for review, and the topic will be on the agenda for further discussion.

**7. Legislative Education Committee Report**

Sally Sedgwick summarized the April 21, 2026, Legislative Education Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed concerns regarding the rural health transformation initiative, including eligibility criteria and implementation. It was noted that Minnesota is one of the only states where the federal funding associated with this initiative is entirely restricted.

With the legislative session nearing adjournment, the Committee has explored the possibility of coordinating an informational session in partnership with the North Itasca Electric Cooperative. Larry Salmela presented the idea to the Cooperative's Board; however, there was no interest.

**8. Annual Meeting Committee Report**

Dan Sursely summarized the April 21, 2026, Annual Meeting Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed strategies to increase attendance, with a focus on engaging both seasonal and local residents, and highlighting emergency services.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

It was agreed that the Annual Meeting will be held on August 8. The format will be similar to an open house and will include educational information on emergency services from the hospital and other agencies. The tentative timeframe is 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**9. Employee Appreciation**

The Board recognized the following employees for exceptional performance: Leah Brouse and Sandra LeBlanc-Boland. Each employee will receive a \$25 appreciation gift certificate.

A **motion** to approve the nominations was made by Sally Sedgwick and seconded by Greg Cook. The motion passed unanimously.

**10. Board Member Remote Attendance Update**

Nathan reported that there have been changes to Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. §13D.02) regarding remote participation in meetings.

The law has been updated to provide greater flexibility for board members attending meetings by interactive technology (such as video or phone). Key changes include:

- Board members participating remotely are no longer required to disclose their physical location, and remote locations are no longer required to be open or accessible to the public.
- Meeting notices are no longer required to list remote locations or the reason a member is attending remotely.
- Remote attendance is now allowed for any reason, not just specific circumstances such as illness or military service.

There are still a few important requirements that remain in place:

- At least one board member must be physically present at the regular meeting location.
- All participants must be able to hear (and ideally see) each other, and the public must be able to monitor the meeting from the designated location.
- Roll call votes are still required for all actions taken.
- The meeting minutes must document which members attended remotely and include the reason for their remote participation.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

### **11. Dept. Introduction: HR/Employee Orientation Process**

Heidi Powell, Human Resources Manager, reported that approximately two years ago, Human Resources implemented a follow-up survey for new employees to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation process and determine whether employees are receiving the information and support needed for a successful transition.

The survey consists of approximately 20 questions and is distributed 30 days after employment begins as a touchpoint with new staff. Heidi noted that the survey has an average response rate of approximately 60%.

Heidi reviewed survey questions, response rankings, and summarized feedback received from approximately 30 respondents.

### **12. Board Meeting Agenda Topics for Next Month**

Board members requested the following items be included on the next meeting agenda:

- Strategic Planning

### **13. Open Discussion**

A board member shared feedback from a community member regarding past billing concerns, noting that addressing billing accuracy and clearly communicating improvements in billing processes may help encourage patients to return to Bigfork Valley. Nathan Hough reported that the new EMR system includes a billing component designed to improve efficiency, consistency, and overall accuracy. He added that the organization's goal is to bring billing services in-house, rather than relying on third parties, and that progress is being made toward that objective.

A board member also relayed a recent situation in which an individual inquired about their total balance in order to pay in full and receive the prompt pay discount. At the time, staff were unable to provide a final amount. It was clarified that balances are finalized once a statement is issued, and that admissions staff may not yet have access to complete billing information on the day of service.

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*

Additional feedback was shared regarding the new admissions area. Comments included concerns related to privacy, comfort, accessibility for individuals using wheelchairs, and the availability of seating. Nathan explained that updates to the admissions area were made in conjunction with flooring replacement and to enhance privacy through the use of nearby office space for more detailed discussions, such as billing questions.

There was also discussion regarding the process for obtaining printed lab orders, with clarification that patients do not need to print their own lab orders.

Due to EMR training in the Board Room, all Board and committee meetings in May will be held in the Chapel.

With no further business, a **motion** to adjourn was made by Kurt Fredrickson and seconded by Dan Heinecke. The motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes respectfully submitted by:**  
Renee Tower  
Executive Administrative Assistant

*The mission of Bigfork Valley is to provide a continuum of quality health care and community services rooted in excellence and delivered with skill and compassion.*