



~Approved 6/30/2026~

**Regular Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Chapel & Microsoft Teams**

**Board Members Present:**

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

**Board Members Remote:**

Heidi Watson – Koochiching County At-Large

**Board Members Absent:**

Greg Anselmo – Itasca County Unorganized  
Clinton Cook – Bigfork Township

**Staff Members Present:**

Nathan Hough, Renee Tower

**Staff Members Remote:**

Nelly Becker, Samantha Beckner, Kyle Buckingham, Alex Cleath, Sara Elioff, Sandra LeBlanc-Boland, Mark Lyons, Heidi Powell

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**Others:**

Ellen Bomstad, Senator Grant Hauschild, Jennifer Hollinday, Bernie Hough, Sherry Jaryszak, Christopher Virta

**Remote Participation Statement**

Board Member Heidi Watson participated in the meeting remotely pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §13D.02 due to caregiving responsibilities for her vulnerable adult son.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 13D.02, all votes taken during the meeting were conducted by roll call due to remote participation by a board member

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)**

No community comments were received.

**B. Approval of Consent Agenda**

1. Agenda
2. Regular Board Meeting Minutes (April 28, 2026)
3. Medical Staff Meeting Minutes (February 25, 2026)
4. Credentialing

A **motion** to approve the consent agenda was made by Dan Heinecke and seconded by Tom LaMont.

A roll call vote was conducted:

- Greg Anselmo – Absent
- Clinton Cook – Absent
- 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

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- Dan Sursely – Yea
- Heidi Watson – Yea

Motion carried.

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

**1. Legislative Update – Grant Hauschild**

Senator Grant Hauschild provided a legislative session update, including information on rural hospital stabilization funding, EMS funding initiatives, and other healthcare-related actions approved by the Legislature during the 2026 session.

**2. Finance Committee Report**

Treasurer Kurt Fredrickson summarized the Finance Committee meeting held on May 21, 2026.

Due to the implementation of the new electronic medical record (EMR) system, May financial statements are not expected to be available in time for the June Board meeting. As a result, the Finance Committee does not plan to meet in June. The Board will revisit the Finance Committee meeting schedule once financial reporting resumes.

Nathan Hough reported that the organization received approximately \$1.5 million in Employee Retention Credit (ERC) funds and that an additional ERC payment is anticipated.

**a. Financials**

A **motion** to approve the March and April 2026 financial reports was made by the Finance Committee and seconded by Greg Cook.

A roll call vote was conducted:

- Greg Anselmo – Absent
- Clinton Cook – Absent
- Greg Cook – Yea
- Kurt Fredrickson – Yea
- Carol Gilbertson – Yea
- Dan Heinecke – Yea
- Teresa Kittridge – Yea

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- Tom LaMont – Yea
- Gordon Rahier – Yea
- Larry Salmela – Yea
- Sally Sedgwick – Yea
- Dan Sursely – Yea
- Heidi Watson – Yea

Motion carried.

**b. Accounts Payable**

The Finance Committee made a **motion** to approve the April 2026 accounts payable. The motion was seconded by Dan Heinecke.

A roll call vote was conducted:

- Greg Anselmo – Absent
- Clinton Cook – Absent
- 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.

**3. Line of Credit Update**

Nathan Hough reported that \$450,000 had been drawn from the line of credit to assist with outstanding bills. He stated that funds are expected in the near future and that the organization anticipates repaying the line of credit prior to the June board meeting.

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#### 4. **Quarterly Strategic Action Plan Update**

Nathan Hough presented the quarterly Strategic Action Plan update and reviewed progress. Updated action items were highlighted for the Board's review.

##### a. **U of M – Community Health Needs Assessment**

The community health needs assessment prepared by interns at the Center for Interprofessional Health at the University of Minnesota was distributed and reviewed.

During discussion, a board member expressed concerns regarding the assessment, noting the limited response rate of 42 survey participants and the restrictive nature of the online survey questions.

Nathan Hough reported that the assessment was completed at no cost to Bigfork Valley.

#### 5. **Strategic Planning**

There was discussion regarding the timing of the organization's next strategic planning process, the current strategic plan covers 2024–2025.

Board members discussed the benefits of delaying a new strategic planning session until after implementation of the new electronic medical record (EMR) system. It was noted that the organization is currently experiencing significant change and that a future planning process may benefit from the perspective gained following the EMR transition.

By consensus, the Board agreed to revisit strategic planning in 2027. Sandra LeBlanc-Boland will explore potential funding opportunities to support a future strategic planning process.

The following documents from the 2024 strategic planning session were provided in the Board meeting packets:

- 2024-2025 strategic plan (approved by the board on August 27, 2024)
- Original Action Plans

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- PowerPoint slides from the July 30, 2024, strategy session
- Power Point slides regarding what makes a high performing board

## 6. CEO Report

Nathan Hough provided the following updates:

### **EMS Services**

- Bigfork Valley completed 19 ambulance runs in April.
- Bigfork Valley is now a First Responder and EMT Training Center and is awaiting a state site visit to become fully credentialed to provide Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) and EMT initial and refresher courses. Previously, these services were obtained through educational institutions such as Minnesota North College in Hibbing.
- Once credentialed, Bigfork Valley will be able to offer training locally.
- The Bigfork Valley Community Foundation awarded a grant of \$911.10 for the purchase of EMS training equipment.

### **Specialty Services**

- Dr. Merritt will hold his final ENT clinic at Bigfork Valley in June. His agreement expired in October, and we were unable to reach mutually agreeable terms for renewal.
- Dr. Robert Fischer, ENT, is scheduled to begin providing services in July. There is potential for surgical services to be offered locally as the practice develops.
- Dr. Gustafson has retired, and we have not found another weight management provider to provide outreach services in Bigfork.
- An on-site visit is being arranged for a psychiatric nurse practitioner interested in providing services at Bigfork Valley.

### **EMR Update**

- Bigfork Valley successfully transitioned to the OCHIN Epic electronic medical record system during the weekend of May 16.

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- The implementation proceeded largely as expected. Staff worked closely with on-site OCHIN support personnel to identify and resolve issues during the initial launch period.
- OCHIN staff will remain on-site for three weeks following implementation before transitioning to remote support.
- Nathan Hough commended staff and department leaders for their commitment and collaboration throughout the go-live process.

### **340B Program**

- In late April, Scenic Rivers Health Services (SRHS) received notice from Pillr Health that it intended to discontinue its 340B management services. Meetings were held with SRHS and Pillr Health representatives to address concerns and maintain program continuity.
- Bigfork Valley also addressed concerns regarding the remote pharmacy space located within the Floodwood clinic. Despite discussions on May 11 we were informed that the pharmacy space was converted into an exam room.
- Hough reported that discussions with SRHS regarding the matter are ongoing.

### **Rural Health Transformation Funds**

- Bigfork Valley submitted an application for Rural Health Transformation Program funding.
- Proposed projects include:
  1. Electronic medical record enhancements
  2. An orthopedic surgical robot.

### **Propane System Upgrade**

- Rainy Lake Oil provided a signed guarantee on May 15 confirming that the propane tank and system upgrade project will not exceed \$200,000.
- The project is expected to begin in August.

### **Additional Updates**

- The Tamarack exterior window project is nearing completion.
- The Bigfork Valley Spring Craft and Wellness Fair was held May 8 and featured nearly 30 vendors.

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- During National Nurses Week, May 6-12, staff gathered for a recognition event where Theresa Lovdahl was announced as the recipient of the Daisy Award.
- National Skilled Nursing Care Week was observed May 10-16. Activities included a special visit from an Elvis impersonator, who performed for residents and staff on May 15.

**7. Legislative Education Committee Report**

Kurt Fredrickson and Sally Sedgwick summarized the Legislative Education Committee meeting held May 21, 2026.

The committee’s primary focus was developing questions for Senator Hauschild.

**8. Annual Meeting Committee Report**

Dan Sursely reported on the Annual Meeting Committee meeting held May 4, 2026.

Planning for the annual meeting is underway. The annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 8, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will feature emergency services.

**9. QAPI Committee Report**

Dan Sursely and Larry Salmela summarized the QAPI Committee meeting held May 6, 2026.

**10. Employee Appreciation**

The Board recognized the following employees for exceptional performance: Brandon Francisco, Xavier Griffith, Londa Storlie, Mike Anselmo, Justin Root, James Parks, Marton Novak, Dan Heinecke, Greta Drewlow and the Dietary Department. Each employee will receive a \$25 appreciation gift certificate.

A **motion** to approve the employee appreciation nominations was made by Greg Cook. Gordon Rahier seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was conducted:

- Greg Anselmo – Absent
- Clinton Cook – Absent

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

Motion carried.

#### **11. MHA Summer Trustee Conference**

The Minnesota Hospital Association Summer Trustee meeting will be held July 29, 2026 – July 31, 2026 at Breezy Point Resort. The estimated cost per attendee for 2 nights lodging, meals, conference registration, mileage and stipend is \$1,500.

A **motion** to approve associated costs, including travel and lodging, for any board members who choose to attend the MHA Summer Trustee Conference was made by Teresa Kittridge and seconded by Dan Heinecke.

A roll call vote was conducted:

- Greg Anselmo – Absent
- Clinton Cook – Absent
- 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

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Motion carried.

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

The Board did not identify any additional topics for inclusion on the June Board meeting agenda.

**13. Open Discussion**

Board members reported receiving positive community feedback regarding the presence of a deputy in the area. Additional discussion included the need to tune the piano in the Chapel, consideration of additional Chapel signage, and support for the recent change allowing board members to attend board and committee meetings virtually.

With no further business, a **motion** to adjourn was made by Larry Salmela and seconded by Dan Sursely. The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

A roll call vote was conducted:

- Greg Anselmo – Absent
- Clinton Cook – Absent
- 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 – No response

Motion carried.

**Minutes respectfully submitted by:**

Renee Tower

Executive Administrative Assistant

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