



## MINUTES OF GOVERNING BOARD MEETING Crookston, MN – January 9, 2026

**Board Members Present:** In Person: Aaron Cook, Sarah Kjono, Chris Mills, Shauna Reitmeier. Via Teams: Drew Kjono, Catherine Johnson, Jordan Spaeth, Frances Tougas, Shawn Yates.

**Board Members Absent:** Brittney Bimler, Kayla Jore, Karla Langaas, Tom Loberg, Kristi Nelson.

**Others Present:** Faye Auchenpaugh, Colleen MacRae.

**Called to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 9:35 am by Aaron Cook, chairman.

**Agenda:** **M/S/C** (Reitmeier/Mills) to approve the agenda.

**Minutes:** **M/S/C** (S. Kjono/Yates) to approve minutes of the December 5, 2025 meeting.

**Financials and Bills:** **M/S/C** (Cook/Johnson) to approve payment of the December 2025 facilitator

### Grant Opportunities and Reports:

- **Rural Health Policy:** Reitmeier said this is being administered through MDH with two parts of funding. One part is formula funding allocated to states, the other half is a competitive application. MN submitted a competitive application and was awarded \$193 million. Some of what they included in the application is directed payments to different health organizations, with a certain amount going to rural mental health providers in 3 areas. Year 1 will be most critical year in this five-year grant because it involves a lot of planning and evaluation, but states have to demonstrate data-driven outcomes in Year 1. Mental health 3 areas are 1) postvention around death by suicide, 2) evaluating for development of crisis response in urgent care settings, and 3) series of technology-related things around implementing AI strategies, interoperability with other systems to get data to help improve mental health outcomes, cybersecurity, information and analytics. We have to submit an application in up to two of those areas. Sarah Kjono said these grants are not really directed to public health.

**Governing Board Membership/Parent or At-Large Representative:** MacRae has checked with a person who is willing to serve as a parent representative, but we need final approval from her employer, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council. Jason Carlson would be willing to serve as an at-large representative, but needs Northwest Service Cooperative (NWSC) board approval before he does so.

Discussion on expanding membership to all 12 counties served by the NWSC: Aaron Cook will present information at the January NWSC administrative meeting on the benefits of becoming members. MacRae will reach out to the collaboratives in each of the four remaining counties to plant the seed. Johnson suggested we also look at the Northwest Minnesota Foundation and Pine to Prairie for membership. MacRae wondered if Mentor MN help would help with community organization aspects, convening, etc.

**Paper Archives:** Auchenpaugh has boxes of paper documents that were given to her by Dawn Ganje. She and MacRae will go through them to determine what to keep and where to store them.

**Stress among Staff:** Johnson feels like her staff have lot of stress and heaviness and was wondering if other organizations are experiencing same thing. Reitmeier said it appears to be mainly in the housing area, and she encourages her staff to just “keep doing and not worry about what’s coming or going to change.” She suggests they quit reading news and get off of all social media. Staff stress because of they know the majority of people we serve have incomes of \$25,000 or less. Johnson is also concerned about how childcare funding cuts will affect our populations.

S. Kjono will check to see if their data findings can be presented at our February meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 10:22 am.

**Next Meeting:** Friday, February 6, 2026.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Facilitator