



MINUTES OF GOVERNING BOARD MEETING Crookston, MN – December 5, 2025

Board Members Present: In Person: Aaron Cook, Catherine Johnson, Drew Kjono, Shauna Reitmeier. Via Teams: Brittney Bimler, Kayla Jore, Sarah Kjono, Karla Langaas, Tom Loberg, Jordan Spaeth, Frances Tougas, Shawn Yates.

Board Members Absent: Chris Mills, Kristi Nelson,

Others Present: Faye Auchenpaugh, Colleen MacRae, Emily Geray, Mentor Minnesota.

Called to Order: Meeting was called to order at 9:31 am by Aaron Cook, chairman.

Agenda: **M/S/C** (C. Johnson/D. Kjono) to approve the agenda with the addition of Emily Geray, Mentor Minnesota.

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

Financials and Bills: **M/S/C** (Tougas/Yates) to approve payment of the September, October and November 2025 facilitator invoices.

2026 Contracts for Auchenpaugh and Alluma, Inc.: **M/S/C** (C. Johnson/Langaas) to approve the contracts as presented with no changes in compensation. Reitmeier abstained.

Governing Board Representatives: Discussion regarding a parent representative to replace Maureen Hams. MacRae suggested perhaps the county collaboratives could come up with a couple of ideas. Reitmeier asked about one of the Family Navigators as a possibility. MacRae will reach out to them (there are two). Questions were raised regarding an at-large position that would be non-dues paying; however, if they are not a dues-paying member they would not have a vote. Johnson pointed out that other organizations could provide good input. This should be further explored with the membership.

Grant Opportunities and Reports:

- **BJA's STOP School Violence** – Auchenpaugh reported that this grant has been completed and the final report is due on January 31, 2026. East Grand Forks is currently doing a session with the Minnesota School Safety Center. Their elementary schools did Responsive Classroom training.
- **Changes in grant language:** MacRae said: 1) There is a lot of buzz about what words can or cannot be used in federal grant applications (there are 300 different words on the list at the moment). Eighteen different granting agencies are taking charge of what languages need to be revised, e.g. you cannot use equity or trauma. 2) The state statute for school districts webinar is scheduled for December 11, 2025. MacRae will send the link out to our members. Reitmeier said there are changes under Housing and Urban Development as to how funds for housing are used. People are potentially losing housing vouchers due to a lack of permanent housing funding. We will be preparing again for impacts on people. Johnson said there are also a lot of changes for who qualifies as well. E.g., you need to have a physical disability.

Rural Health Policy: Reitmeier said the Federal Rural Health Transformation Fund application for the State of MN was submitted by the MN Dept of Health. If approved by the Center for Medicare/Medicaid Services, the State of MN has allocated directed funds to Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers in rural areas in one of three areas: Suicide Postvention, Crisis Urgent Centers, and Technology and Informatics. Organizations like Alluma will be eligible to submit intent in use finds in two of the areas. Updates will be provided periodically on the status of the funds.

Update: MN received \$193 million in funds based on their application. The next step is MDH has to get the funding out right away in January because the success of the grant and future funding for the remaining four years is dependent on their outcomes from year one.

AI Policy: Johnson said that Inter-County has just drafted a policy and asked if any other organizations in our group are doing something similar. Reitmeier said Alluma has a very generic policy around HIPAA compliance. Cook said it also depends on what AI you are using. There are so many AI tools that do different things that they don't even know what they want yet.

Mentor Minnesota: Auchenpaugh introduced Emily Geray, who had been referred to our group by Jason Carlson, former Governing Board member. Ms. Geray presented the following resources/ opportunities for our member organizations:

1. **Mental Health Ambassador Program (MHA)** - supporting youth mental health and resilience-
 - This program is *fully developed* and is designed to plug and play and *not* add more to the plates of staff or program leaders—MENTOR Minnesota provides materials, and full facilitation of the program.
 - MHA supports mental health strategic initiatives.
 - Is aimed at uplifting youth agency. Right now, cohorts meet in fall and spring (they are in the process of creating a summer program) of 8 sessions every other week. They meet Monday evenings for not over 2 hours. Mentor MN would come in person for 4 of those sessions.
 - Who would be a good fit?
 - **Youth ages 14-18** (and a handful of adults/school staff that are connected and participate in the program as a mentor)
 - **Students connected to Academic/CTE:** Business Professionals of America (BPA), Speech/Debate
 - **Students in the Arts:** Band, Choir, Drama/Theater
 - **Young people connected to clubs/organization:** 4-H, FFA, Youth in Action programs, Boys and Girls Clubs
 - **Students in Service or leadership (or looking for an opportunity to be a student leader):** Student Council, National Honor Society (NHS), maybe a Student Advisory team
 - **Links to support next steps for MHA:**
 - [Mental Health Ambassadors | MENTOR Minnesota](#)
 - [Mental Health Ambassadors Eligibility Form](#)
2. **Regional Program Services Council (RPSC):** Geray shared the RPSC previously with Jason Carlson, but will be sharing it with the broader Council of Collaboratives leaders as well and wanted us to have more context and the link should we want or need it.
 - RPSC has recently been re-energized with stronger regional representation and leadership from cross-sectors across Minnesota, making it an even more dynamic space to connect and shape priorities together. And it will continue to serve as an advisory group to MENTOR Minnesota's staff, helping guide initiatives, training resources, and supports that elevate mentoring.
 - RPSC would love to see more program leaders and educational leader representation from the Northwest Region!
 - **Application to join:** <https://forms.gle/5L1CQURPa45F58V57>
3. **Resources & Toolkits:** Here are a few practical guides to help strengthen mentoring and youth development efforts in our programs and out in communities more broadly.
 - [Foundational Research | MENTOR Minnesota](#)
 - Here are a couple of toolkits Geray created with additional tips and insight to support program leaders, coaches, and student support spaces:
 - [MENTOR Minnesota's Program Leader Toolkit](#)
 - [MENTOR Minnesota's Program Leader Toolkit 2025](#)

Geray is excited about what we're building together and can't wait to see how these opportunities and tools help us keep moving forward. She is happy to come back up to our region, so she simply needs to know how she can better uplift and support our work. Or to answer any questions we might have.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:51 am.

Next Meeting: Friday, January 9, 2026.

Faye Auchenpaugh, Facilitator