

**Region 7E Governing Board Meeting  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 23, 2026; 9:00am – 12:00 Noon**

Attendees:

Affiliation		Governing Board Members		Directors
Chisago County	x	Kelly Ihrke, 2026 Governing Board Chair		Open
Chisago County		Jolene Thorsen		
DHS Liaison		Christian Ederer		DHS
Isanti County	x	Emily Hawkins, Fiscal Host & 2026 Vice Chair		Jodi Donnay
Isanti County	x	Alex Godeen		
Kanabec County	x	Katie Heacock	x	Chuck Hurd
Mille Lacs County	x	Jessica Andrich	z	Char Kohlgraf
Pine County	x	Barb Schmidt		Becky Foss
Consumer Rep	x	Stacy J.		
Consumer Rep	x	Michelle O.		

Guests: Cindy Berlovitz, Growing Connections. Christine Butler, Plum Behavioral Health.

**CALL to Order: 9:04am**

- **Approval of the agenda**

- Additions to the agenda: Use the proposed Agenda format for the March meeting.

MOTION: Katie Heacock made a motion to approve the GB agenda revised on 2/19/26. Emily Hawkins seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

- **Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes: January**

MOTION: Barb Schmidt made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes, seconded by Michelle O. All ayes, motion carried.

- **Consumer Rep Updates:**

- Stacy J.
    - Stacy’s case load has doubled this year. Found new support groups in the counties her clients live in and is looking forward to recommending them.
  - Michelle O.
    - No report.

- **Contract updates:**

- Fully executed: All.
  - The RISE Vocational Services contract is fully executed, but RISE has requested an amendment to the eligibility language.
    - Current contract language states that a diagnostic assessment (DA) must be completed within one year of the program acceptance date and if continuing to receive services, every three years thereafter.
    - RISE would like the amendment to reflect:
      - CONTRACTOR will ensure that each service recipient is SPMI and has a diagnostic assessment within three years (36 months) of the program acceptance date and, if continuing to receive services, every three years thereafter, to ensure ongoing eligibility.
        - Discussion: A high percentage of their clients are referrals from counties or from within their agency. The Board agreed to amend the contract to read that

the DA needs to be within the last three years from referral date. The Planner will ask Rise if they are interested in adopting the three year DA on the housing contract to maintain consistency. Further, the contract should ensure that a time lapse of six years doesn't occur. The question was raised if DHS has a policy that any funding has to have a DA within the last three years to receive funding.

○ Deferred until we get more information.

- While at the Kanabec County's January LAC meeting, the Planner learned about a case where RISE was unable to provide AMHI funded vocational services to an individual that was also receiving waived services. Mike Harper and the Planner agreed to reach out to DHS to seek clarification on payor of last resort, as it applies to BRASS 437, vocational services. DHS replied:
  - "AMHI-funded vocational services may be used in specific circumstances. If an individual is already receiving waiver-funded employment services—such as Employment Development Services, Employment Exploration Services, or Employment Support Services—then the waiver must be used to pay for those services."
  - "However, if the individual is receiving IPS services and has been referred to IPS by a case manager or clinician, AMHI funds may be used. This is because waivers do not cover IPS services. In these cases, AMHI can fund the services as long as the individual meets all AMHI/CSP eligibility criteria, including being an adult with a Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI)."
  - Thus, individuals receiving waived services can receive RISE services, as long as vocational services are not a part of the CSSP/waived services plan.
  - Chuck Hurd suggested asking DHS if this is an exception to their rule that AMHI funding is only the payer of last resort and can't have a duplication of services.

- **Budget Review and Budget Actions**

- 2025 Final Numbers

- Mobile Crisis: \$995,986 out of \$1,050,859 = \$54,873 unspent. They spent 85% of the grant before refunds. No AMHI dollars were spent toward mobile crisis in 2025.
- AMHI: \$1,807,980.00 out of \$1,845,755 = \$37,775 unspent, the AMHI spent 98% of the grant before refunds.

- Returns/Refunds from Estimated Invoices:

- Crisis Grant/ECCS/Canvas Health: \$105,977.40- Total underspending: \$160,850.40; 85% spent; 15% underspent

- **2026 Budget**

- \$175,890 is unallocated and it's likely Kanabec will not bill for their full grant amount.
- The board agreed that providers are welcome to apply for program funding throughout the year, and the Board will consider the application and advise if funds are available.
- The Planner will notify providers about potential 2026 funding opportunities. Funding criteria, such as SPMI eligibility, will be included.

- The Planner reminded the Board there is \$9,000 that R7E has retained since the Riverwood Settlement in 2012. Mark Jensen, Isanti County, recommends exhausting 2026 funds before using the Riverwood Settlement Funds. The Riverwood Settlement Funds do not have parameters on use, like timeline or BRASS codes.
- Regional Flex Fund requests exceeding \$1,000:
  - Chisago County- Bed/s and bases request for household
    - Beds x4 Furniture Mart \$599.96 and \$519.92 for platform bed bases (x4) Total: \$1,119.88
    - *Question: Can AMHI purchase beds for household, including minor children? Yes*

MOTION: Isanti made a motion to approve the Chisago request of \$1,119.88, Kanabec seconded. The board agreed that AMHI funds could pay for beds for the family's children. All ayes, motion carried. Chisago abstained.

- Chisago County- Housing Subsidy, \$400/mo March- December; total up to \$4,000
  - The Board agreed to change the policy to remove the original set amount of \$200 per month and to establish the client's responsibility to pay 35% of their income toward rent/mortgage with the Region funding the difference if funding is available. Individuals would need to reapply each year, if needed.
  - The Board reviewed the current Region 7E policy to discuss changes.

MOTION: Emily Hawkins made a motion to revise the Housing Subsidy policy to state that clients will be responsible for up to 35% of their income for their rent/mortgage. Second, by Mille Lacs.

MOTION AMENDED: Emily Hawkins amended the motion to revise the Housing Subsidy policy to state that clients will be responsible for up to 35% of their income for their rent/mortgage, and to remove the barrier of the client receiving General Assistance as that is not housing related. Mille Lacs seconded. All ayes, motion carried. The Planner will include the amended policy for the March meeting.

MOTION: Chuck Hurd made a motion to approve the Chisago County housing subsidy funding request for \$400/mo from March – December, up to \$4,000. Emily Hawkins seconded. All ayes, motion carried. Chisago abstained.

- Isanti County- Housing Subsidy request, (CH) \$1,200
  - 200/MO MARCH THROUGH DECEMBER

MOTION: Chuck Hurd made a motion to approve the Isanti County housing subsidy request for \$1,200 Second, Michelle O.

Discussion: Based on the earlier discussion and amendment of the housing subsidy policy, the Board agreed that the funding request should be amended to \$374/month for 10 months, up to \$3,740.

MOTION AMENDED: Chuck Hurd amended his motion to approve the revised amount of \$374/month, up to \$3,740. Michelle O. seconded. All ayes, motion carried. Isanti abstained.

- The Planner advised there is roughly \$20,000 remaining in the housing flex fund because the line item is overspent year to date.

MOTION: Barb Schmidt made a motion to move \$25,000 from unallocated to the housing flex fund, Kelly Ihrke seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

- Regional Flex Fund/Bed Program Process



The cost there is \$400 rent per summer plus \$400 for an outhouse. This winter, the Princeton Farm is building a Program Center which will be ready for use this summer.

- A possibility might be to do a garden program at the Drop in Centers in Pine and Chisago counties.
- The proposed funding request includes:
  - Three 5-week session cycles; 2 sessions/week (30 sessions)- 9 spots in each session, one session is planned to be female only.
  - One end of year celebration for all (1 large session)
  - 31 total sessions
  - Princeton farm (Prairie Care Farm) only
- This proposal has been approved and contracted. The Board reiterated their desire to serve as many individuals as possible, (not the same individuals repeatedly), and to continue seeking other locations within Region 7E.

- **Funding Requests:**

- Chisago County- Credible Mind 2026

- BRASS 402
    - Updated amount: \$8,295
    - Kelly reviewed current usage stats and stated they are reaching out to providers. Anyone in the Region can use the website/resource.
    - Past Scoring: 2025/2026 Credible Mind 10-27-25  
1 = Poor · 2 = Fair · 3 = Satisfactory · 4 = Good · 5 = Excellent
    - 1. Where does the proposal rank with the Region's priorities. Rating: 3
    - 2. Rank how closely the proposal fills a GAP if it were funded. Rating: 3
    - 3. Rank how well the request describes the proposed program. Rating: 5
    - 4. In comparison to other funding requests, where does this proposal rank in priority? Rating: 3
    - 5. If the program was funded in previous years, was it successful? Rating: NA
    - 6. When you consider the cost per person, is there adequate justification to fund this request? Rating: 5
    - 7. Is the program sustainable without the ongoing use of AMHI funds? Rating: 3
    - 8. Total Score: 19 out of 30 possible points.

- Plum Behavioral Health Services

- BRASS 402, 403, or 446
    - Christine Butler joined the meeting to outline the differences from the previous request. This program focuses on parenting skills with the objective to make life easier with struggles other than parenting and to reduce child maltreatment.
      - 15 week program, 3 modules, DBT, RDBT skills, and EMDR, and mindfulness. Two cohort cycles with 10-15 attendees each; possibly one virtual. Plus three booster sessions which have been added since the program was previously presented. Attendees can call outside of class times to be coached through a situation. Referrals will come from counties, doctors, probation, and other providers.
        - Christine was advised that for the Region to fund the program, clients must have a SPMI diagnosis.
        - The board agreed it would be beneficial to keep the program for SPMI parents. Have SPMI be the priority and if space is available, open it up to others.
        - Christine is unsure if the program would be insurance billable because it would require different codes.

- Past Scoring: 11-24-25  
1 = Poor · 2 = Fair · 3 = Satisfactory · 4 = Good · 5 = Excellent
- 1. Where does the proposal rank with the Region's priorities. Rating: 3
- 2. Rank how closely the proposal fills a GAP if it were funded. Rating: 4
- 3. Rank how well the request describes the proposed program. Rating: 4
- 4. In comparison to other funding requests, where does this proposal rank in priority? Rating: 4
- 5. If the program was funded in previous years, was it successful? Rating: NA
- 6. When you consider the cost per person, is there adequate justification to fund this request?  
Rating: 5
- 7. Is the program sustainable without the ongoing use of AMHI funds? No
- 8. 20 out of 30 possible points.
- Updated proposal reflects a 15-session structure, updated timeline, and itemized budget.

○ Love the Journey Inc.

- BRASS 454
- Request for medication management funding.
- The board discussed the options of funding a specific agency or approving med management requests through the uncompensated care request form and process. It was determined the best course of action would be to proceed with the Uncompensated Care Request Form and Process, to allow all providers access to funding and to serve those that are uninsured or underinsured.

SCORING 1 = Poor · 2 = Fair · 3 = Satisfactory · 4 = Good · 5 = Excellent

1. Where does the proposal rank with the Region's priorities. Rating: 4/5
  2. Rank how closely the proposal fills a GAP if it were funded. Rating: 3/5
  3. Rank how well the request describes the proposed program. Rating: 4/5
  4. In comparison to other funding requests, where does this proposal rank in priority?  
Rating: 3/5
  5. If the program was funded in previous years, was it successful? Rating: 0/5
  6. When you consider the cost per person, is there adequate justification to fund this request?  
Yes (5) No (0) Maybe (3) Rating: 5/5
  7. Is the program sustainable without the ongoing use of AMHI funds? Yes
- Total Score: 19 out of 30 possible points.

○ Linwood Group Meetings

- BRASS 401, request for \$1,031.92.
- The request is for the additional expense for higher levels of business insurance as required by the 2026 contract. The expense is 112% higher than the base amount and the funding request is only the increased amount and does not include the base amount.

SCORING 1 = Poor · 2 = Fair · 3 = Satisfactory · 4 = Good · 5 = Excellent

1. Where does the proposal rank with the Region's priorities. Rating: 4/5
2. Rank how closely the proposal fills a GAP if it were funded. Rating: 3/5
3. Rank how well the request describes the proposed program. Rating: 5/5
4. In comparison to other funding requests, where does this proposal rank in priority?  
Rating: 4/5
5. If the program was funded in previous years, was it successful? Rating: 5/5

6. When you consider the cost per person, is there adequate justification to fund this request?

Yes (5) No (0) Maybe (3) Rating: 5/5

7. Is the program sustainable without the ongoing use of AMHI funds? No

Total Score: 26 out of 30 possible points.

MOTION: Isanti made a motion to fund Plum for up to \$25,000 for their parenting program, Chisago second. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: Kanabec made a motion to fund Linwood Group Meetings, Mille Lacs second. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: Kanabec made a motion to fund Chisago County's request for Credible Mind, Pine seconded. All ayes, motion carried. Chisago abstained.

- **Unfinished Business:**

- **Item 1:** Subcommittees and assignments: The Planner will send out a Doodle poll to finalize this topic.
  - Determine subcommittees
    - Outcomes/Process
    - Housing- Lakes and Pines
    - Crisis
    - Transportation?
    - Willow Grove?
- **Item 2:** Complaint Policy and Process; Isanti County's Data Request Policy and Form  
MOTION: Chisago made a motion to approve the Complaint Policy and Process as well as the Isanti County Data Request Policy and Form. Isanti second. All ayes, motion carried.
- **Item 3 :** Certified Peer Specialist Training Opportunity in 2026
  - Region 5+ will be hosting this opportunity at Sourcewell in Staples, MN 5/11/26-5/22/26.
  - Training provided by RI International (same company DHS has used/worked with).
  - Opportunity to partner; Region 5+ requests that we provide support for lodging and travel reimbursement for anyone from our Region.
  - **DHS follow up/response:**
    - **"402x, community education, can be used for the certified peer specialist training to pay for training, mileage, and lodging, for individuals with SPMI who meet criteria. Any other staff training could be paid out of the fiscal host fee or Brass 401. The fiscal host fee can be up to 10% of budget."**
    - **Through this discussion the Planner learned that DHS determines the administrative fee/fiscal host fee to be 10% of the total grant amount (\$184,575). BRASS 401 must not exceed \$184,575. This is \$16,779 greater than what Mark and the Planner determined through the formula he has used for several years (\$167,796).**
- **Item 4:** R7E Housing Subsidy Policy follow up/review
  - R7E Housing Subsidy Policy/form was distributed prior to the meeting.
    - *Please note, the following motion and amended motion is copied from these minutes on page three under the Chisago County Housing Subsidy funding request; it is duplicated here to maintain information consistency with this specific discussion item.*
  - MOTION: Emily Hawkins made a motion to revise the Housing Subsidy policy to state that clients will be responsible for up to 35% of their income for their rent/mortgage. Second, by Mille Lacs.

- MOTION AMENDED: Emily Hawkins amended the motion to revise the Housing Subsidy policy to state that clients will be responsible for up to 35% of their income for their rent/mortgage, and to remove the barrier of the client receiving General Assistance as that is not housing related. Mille Lacs seconded. All ayes, motion carried. The Planner will include the amended policy for the March meeting.
- **DHS follow up/response:**
  - **“Region 7E can change the documented list of eligibility criteria for BRASS code 443x, Housing Subsidy, as long as the AMHI/CSP funds are used only as payor of last resort to pay for services provided to individuals who meet AMHI/CSP criteria.”**
  - **“Sec. 245.4661 MN Statutes states that you must "utilize adult mental health initiative funding only after all other eligible funding sources have been applied." Meaning if the individual is eligible for any other source of funding for the specific service (443), AMHI funds cannot be used.”**
  - **“Also, any use of AMHI funds for an individual could potentially impact their benefits. This would be something to talk to financial workers about on a case-by-case basis.”**
- **Item 5:** Green Sheet follow up from Rori:
  - All of the calls within the green section are calls received by FCFH from our 800 number between the hours of 5:00 pm to 8:00 am on weeknights and then on weekends and holidays. They code their calls in the same way that we code them during the day hours, from call types 1 through 5. The 988 calls are only those in the box at the bottom right. They do not code 988 calls, but they will send us their call logs when, and if, they refer a caller to us.
- **New Business:**
  - **Item 1:** Mobile Crisis Services RFP
    - The RFP will be posted on the website, shared on social media, shared with other AMHI Planners, pushed out to Public Health sites and social media, and distributed to the Regional LAC distribution list. The Planner has researched providers that are adjacent to our region. The Board agreed it is not worth the expense to publish in the Region newspapers.
    - Target date to distribute by March 13, 2026. Responses will be required within 45 days.
    - DHS will provide the grant in May and the goal is to have a provider selected by that time.
    - The RFP will include a blank contract and budget documents for respondents’ awareness.
  - **Item 2:** Wishlist update and process moving forward
    - Planner’s goal for 2026, was to receive proposals for funding, distribute as they come in, discuss and score at the next regular meeting and, if the Board supports, add to the wish list or “queue” for funding if/when available funding is identified. The thought process behind this was to be able to act timely with underspending and have projects that the Board has already discussed, scored, and identified as priorities.
      - Ultimately, the decision was to have both a wish list and a proposal track which could be implemented quickly.
- **Announcements/Updates:** (Upcoming events, deadlines, policy changes, etc.)
  - Isanti Drop-In Center- St. Patrick’s Day Bingo 3/19/26
  - Kanabec County- March 12<sup>th</sup> Mental Health and Social Media presentation at Mora Elementary School.

- Pine County Mental Health Event- 5/22- Pine Technical College
- **Action Items for March's Agenda:**
  - Uncompensated Care Policy/Form
  - Rise housing and referral process
  - Grant monitoring process and form
  - What Policies and Forms should be available on the website?
  - Wishlist review/update
- **Open Forum/Public Comment**
  - None
- **Adjournment**

MOTION: Katie Heacock made a motion to adjourn, Emily Hawkins second. All ayes, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:02pm

**2026 Governing Board and Regional LAC Meeting Schedule**

Governing Board Meetings: 9:00am – 12:00pm: 4<sup>th</sup> Monday each month except May and December

Regional LAC Meeting: 1:00-2:00pm – every other month as scheduled below.

In Person at Isanti County Family Services, Conference Room A and virtual via Zoom

January 26 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting	July 27 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting
February 23	August 24
March 23 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting	September 28 - 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting
April 27	October 26
May 18 – 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting ONE WEEK EARLY	November 23 - 1:00pm Regional LAC Meeting
June 22	December 21 GB ONE WEEK EARLY