Region 7E Governing Board Meeting
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
October 2, 2026; 9:00am – 4:00pm

Attendees:

Affiliation		Governing Board Members		Directors
Chisago County	x	Kelly Ihrke, 2026 Chair Jolene Thorsen		
Isanti County	x	Emily Hawkins, Fiscal Host & 2026 Vice Chair Alexandria Godeen		Jodi Donnay
Kanabec County	x	Katie Heacock	x	Chuck Hurd
Mille Lacs County	x	Jessica Andrich	x	Char Kohlgraf
Pine County	x x	Barb Schmidt Amy Tvedt		Becky Foss
Consumer Rep	x x	Stacy Johnstone Michelle Ochsendorf		
Region 7E Planner	x	Amanda Stevenson		

Presenters:

- Plum Behavioral Health, Christine Butler
- Alaina Hein, Allina Health
- Northern Pine Mental Health Center, Ashley Klous and Kayla Johnson
- Lakes and Pines, Jenny Erdmann and Laura Warner
- Time Out Behavior Coaching, Angie Ellsworth and Ryan Ihrke

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting called to order at 9:15am

2. ROLL CALL / QUORUM CONFIRMATION

- Roll call completed; quorum status confirmed.

3. 2027 FUNDING PROPOSALS - PROVIDER PRESENTATIONS

A. Plum Behavioral Health Services; Parenting Education / Support Program; Christine Butler, $50,000 request

- The program described a 15-session parenting education model with follow-up/booster sessions. Twenty-seven people were referred, 26 were eligible, and four had graduated at the time of the presentation.
- The provider reported changing from an in-person cohort model to three modules so participants can begin more readily rather than waiting for a full cohort. Program content has also been adjusted based on participant response, including redistribution of material and the addition of co-parenting content.
- The provider discussed efforts to keep the curriculum research-based while making the material easier to understand and more engaging. Sessions using examples and metaphors were reported to generate stronger participation.
- The program was under budget. The provider stated that some underspending was related to not identifying participant barriers early enough; staff are working to improve assessment during orientation and use participant-support funds more effectively.
- Board members discussed whether the program is sufficiently targeted to adults with SPMI, noting that the reported SPMI percentage in the current participant group was approximately 42%. The provider

explained that intake relies in part on self-reporting and that some participants may have relevant mental-health symptoms not fully captured at intake.

- The Board emphasized DHS guidance that AMHI funds must be directed to the SPMI population. The provider discussed strengthening the intake process and eligibility screening.
- Referral sources included child protection/human services, other community referrals, Facebook and flyers. The provider noted that marketing and referral conversion have been challenging.
- The provider was recommended to seek additional funding from MAACSA and the counties.
- The Planner noted strong monthly billing detail and comparatively low program wage costs.
- Scoring: 17 out of 20
- 2027 funding approved: $25,000.

B. Allina Health, Transportation Support for Partial Hospitalization / Day Treatment; Alaina Hein, $20,000 request

- The presenter described partial hospitalization and adult day-treatment services intended to stabilize adults with significant mental-health needs and reduce avoidable inpatient hospitalization.
- The proposal requested $20,000 to reduce transportation barriers for eligible SPMI participants attending treatment. Partial hospitalization requires attendance Monday through Friday; adult day treatment generally requires attendance three days per week for approximately three months.
- The provider reported serving 240 adults in the prior year: 162 in partial hospitalization and 78 in adult day treatment.
- The proposed assistance would use mileage-based calculations, with support scaled to travel distance. The provider estimated serving roughly three people per month and discussed examples showing that round-trip travel can be costly for participants traveling from more distant communities.
- Funds would be used only after other transportation resources, including insurance-covered medical transportation, had been reviewed. Assistance would be tied to treatment attendance and intended specifically to support access to care.
- Board members discussed whether AMHI funds could be used when an insurance transportation benefit technically exists but is unavailable in practice because a transportation provider will not serve the participant's location. The discussion focused on documentation that other sources had been exhausted.
- Scoring: 18 out of 20
- 2027 funding approved: $0; transportation needs will continue to be addressed through county or region flex resources.

C. Time Out Behavior Coaching, Caregiver Coaching Expansion; Angie Ellsworth and Ryan Ihrke, $50,000 request

- Time Out Behavior Coaching presented its in-home parent-coaching model and described the impact of practical, skills-based support for families with complex needs.
- The provider described a case example in which coordinated services, including parent coaching, contributed to a family reunification outcome. The example was used to illustrate the program's focus on long-term skill development, emotional regulation, communication, home management, and relationship repair.
- The proposal requested expansion of services in Region 7E. The provider reported that $50,000 would generally support approximately 15 families, depending on family size, intensity of need, and how quickly families move from skill development into maintenance.
- Coaches are generally master's-level professionals with backgrounds that may include education, social work, case management, and other helping professions. The provider emphasized the need for staff who can translate clinical recommendations into practical strategies in the home.
- The program uses a structured curriculum covering 10 topics over about 20 weeks, while adapting content to the age, developmental stage, diagnosis, and needs of each child and family.

- Referral sources include child protection, youth behavioral health, corrections, waiver programs, private families, and community organizations. The provider stated that the program attempts to accept referrals unless the requested service is outside its legal or professional scope.
- Board discussion focused on the connection between the service and adult mental health/SPMI, the $150 hourly rate, indirect service billing, and whether similar services may be available through insurance, waivers, or other funding sources.
- The provider clarified that it is not providing therapy; the service is skills training for the parent. Indirect time may include case planning, progress reporting, tool/resource development, communication with case managers, and participation in relevant team meetings.
- The provider is exploring enrollment that may make some services billable to other funding sources in the future.
- Isanti County noted they have worked very well with complex families; allocating the expenses to CSP Brass 434.
- Scoring: 11 out of 20
- 2027 funding approved: $25,000.

D. Lakes and Pines, Regional Housing / Bridges / Flex Assistance; Jenny Erdmann and Laura Warner, $391,528 funding request

- Lakes and Pines described proposed additions to its existing housing work, including an additional staff position, transitional housing, and expansion of flex assistance.
- The transitional housing concept is intended for people with significant barriers who need a safe temporary setting while permanent housing is identified, rather than remaining in shelter, on the street, or leaving the region solely to access shelter.
- The provider reported that implementation is more complex than initially anticipated because of insurance and property-owner restrictions and the need to define eligibility and risk factors carefully.
- The provider discussed adding flex funds to simplify access to one-time or short-term assistance. Procedures were being developed to ensure SPMI eligibility is documented, required records are retained, and reasonable maximum amounts are applied.
- The Board discussed how the proposed assistance relates to existing Bridges, Family Homeless Prevention, rapid rehousing, scattered-site transitional housing, coordinated-entry requirements, and other housing resources.
- The provider identified a gap for SPMI individuals who need housing assistance but cannot readily access another program because of eligibility or coordinated-entry limitations.
- Approximately 40 individuals received housing-triage services as of 2026 YTD. The Bridges program has 24 vouchers in place, with additional vouchers planned for a future RFP.
- The provider stated that staff can help participants explore housing outside Region 7E when appropriate, although ongoing support outside the region can increase travel and staff time and requires connection to services in the receiving community.
- The Board discussed that if clients have a county case manager, then housing flex funds would be approved through the county/region. If the client does not have a county case manager, then the request would go through Lakes and Pines.
- They will apply for Bridges again in 2027.
- During later budget discussion, the Board questioned administrative/indirect budget line items such as supplies, staff training, and software which are indirect expenses; they discussed the need for clearer guidance in future applications regarding allowable administrative expenses.
- Scoring: 13 out of 20

- $8,000 was deducted from the original grant request as it was determined as duplicate admin expenses.
- 2027 funding approved: $383,528.

E. Northern Pines Mental Health Center, Mobile Crisis Services; Ashley Klous and Kayla Johnson, request $295,000

- Northern Pines presented a proposal to expand crisis services into Region 7E. The organization has 60 years' experience providing community mental-health services in Region 5.
- The proposed regional funding request includes a 24/7/365 crisis line, mobile crisis assessment/intervention/stabilization, and potential development of a mental-health urgent-care option.
- The provider reported 158 crisis-line calls per month in its current service area and stated that the Region 7E crisis line could be integrated into its existing infrastructure.
- Reported average mobile-crisis response time was approximately 54 minutes in 2025 and 50 minutes in 2026, compared with DHS two-hour standard.
- The provider also reported approximately 3,600 interventions and 1,100 crisis assessments in 2025, along with follow-up stabilization services intended to help people remain safely in the community.
- The proposal emphasized timely access, expanded mobile-response capacity, workforce development, stronger connections to follow-up treatment, and partnerships with counties, law enforcement, emergency departments, schools, mental-health/substance-use providers, and community partners.
- The presenter advised the board of the Rural Health Transportation Program grant which they received and discussed the usefulness of a response vehicle for reducing transportation barriers.
- They were invited to apply for the Otto Bremer Initiative Foundation for $75,000 to help mentors.
- They have a meeting with DHS scheduled to learn next steps to be able to provide therapy and/or ARMHS.
- Board members discussed the importance of persistent outreach to counties, local law enforcement, and emergency departments, given prior challenges with crisis-service availability and local confidence in existing systems.
- Northern Pines has interviews scheduled for the Director's position and a clinical role.
- Northern Pines also discussed existing relationships with the Mille Lacs Band and school-based services in its current area.
- Scoring: 20 out of 20
- 2027 funding approved: $295,000.

4. PROPOSAL SCORING AND BOARD DELIBERATION

- The Board used a five-category scoring process:
  1. regional-priority alignment/gap addressed
  2. proposal completeness and capacity
  3. budget detail
  4. prior performance/track record or feasibility for new providers
  5. cost effectiveness
- The Board discussed scoring proposals based on the merits of the written application and presentation, while also considering SPMI eligibility, duplication with billable services, current-year underspending, equitable service across counties, and regional priority areas.
- Regional priorities repeatedly emphasized during deliberation were housing, employment, transportation, and access to needed mental-health services.
- The Board discussed avoiding new awards that could worsen year-end underspending and considered reducing requests where current providers were significantly under budget.

- The Board also discussed whether some lower-priority requests could be met through existing county or regional flex funds rather than separate grants.

A. Transportation Proposals: Attaboys $40,160 request and Stark $50,000 request.

- Attaboys and Stark / Northern Transportation were discussed. Attaboys was invited but unable to attend the meeting.
- The Board noted significant current-year underspending and limited availability and or utilization in some counties.
- Members noted that transportation use is increasing later in the (2026) year and confirmed transportation is an ongoing regional need.
- Scoring Attaboys: 13 out of 20
- Scoring Stark: 15 out of 20
- The Board ultimately approved $0 for Attaboys and $40,000 for Stark.
- Regional Transportation Flex Fund approved at $5,000.

B. Growing Connections, $64,070 request

- Board members described positive feedback about the program and its value to participants.
- The program was reported to be approximately $19,000 underspent YTD 2026. The Board discussed reducing the 2027 award by a similar amount rather than funding the full request.
- Scoring: 13 out of 20
- 2027 funding ultimately approved: $42,425.

C. RISE Programs

- RISE IPS, $39,805 request. IPS is a “match” employment program in which the Region's $39,805 contributes to a substantially larger overall program budget. The Board viewed the match as very cost effective.
- Scoring: 15 out of 20
- 2027 RISE IPS funding approved: $39,805.

- RISE New Millennium, $200,000 request. New Millennium was discussed as an ongoing program with some current-year underspending. Members discussed participant counts, the proportion of new versus returning participants, geographic distribution, and the need for clear performance expectations.
- Scoring: 13 out of 20
- 2027 RISE New Millennium funding approved: $200,000.

- RISE Housing, $65,000 request. Members raised concerns about program utilization, the cost of a transitional-housing unit, the proportion of direct assistance versus staff/administrative expense, and duplication of administrative charges.
- Scoring: 8 out of 20
- 2027 RISE Housing funding approved: $0.

- Regional Housing Flex funding approved: $37,109.

D. Administrative / Regional Support Requests

- The Board reviewed the Planner request and discussed the growth in administrative workload. 2027 Planner funding approved at $115,500. This amount is capped because it falls under the 10% admin fee. Isanti County pays the remainder of employee benefits and mandatory taxes. Scored: 15 out of 20.

- The Fiscal Host request was reviewed separate from the Planner. Board members discussed how the fiscal-host role and planner role have evolved and the need to understand what administrative functions are included in each. Scored: 15 out of 20. 2027 Fiscal Host funding approved at $57,044 for the AMHI portion of the Admin fee. The Crisis Admin of $67,281 is separate and not part of this budget.
- Linwood Group Meetings' administrative support request is $14,157, which is $1,874 less than the 2026 grant. The request was discussed in the context of the Planner's increased workload and some overlap with the Planner. Linwood Group Meetings is providing increased support with special projects this year (2026). Historical knowledge and support are noted as benefits. Scored: 17 out of 20. 2027 funding approved at $14,157.
- Juettner Marketing website support was discussed. The request included a modest increase and a higher rate for programming, troubleshooting, directory work, and customization than for routine support. The Board discussed the difference between service types. Scored: 15 out of 20. 2027 funding approved at $18,000.
- Consumer Representative and Regional LAC funding approved at $5,856. The Consumer Rep role is required in the bylaws, thus not scored.
- Regional Client Flex funding approved at $5,000, which is currently earmarked for Laundry cards.
- Uncompensated Care funding approved at $25,000.
- County Moose Lake funds approved at $512,331.

5. 2027 BUDGET - FINAL APPROVED ALLOCATIONS

The final proposed budget was read aloud line by line before the vote. The amounts below reflect that read-back.

Budget Line	**2027 Approved Amount**
Planner	$115,500
Fiscal Host	$57,044
Linwood Group Meetings	$14,157
Consumer Representatives / Regional LAC	$5,856
Juettner Marketing	$18,000
Plum Behavioral Health Services	$25,000
Allina Health	$0
Stark (Northern Transportation, Inc.)	$40,000
Attaboys	$0
Regional Transportation Flex Fund	$5,000
Regional Client Flex (earmarked for Laundry cards)	$5,000
Northern Pines Mental Health Center	$295,000
Lakes and Pines	$383,528
Growing Connections	$42,425
Time Out Behavior Coaching	$25,000
RISE New Millennium	$200,000
RISE IPS	$39,805
RISE Housing	$0
Regional Housing Flex	$37,109
Uncompensated Care Flex Funds	$25,000
County Moose Lake Funds	$512,331

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Chuck Hurd to approve the 2027 budget as read aloud.	Second by Kelly Ihrke	All ayes, motion passed unanimously.

6. 2028 FUTURE BUDGET PROCESS DISCUSSION

- After approval of the 2027 budget, the Board discussed whether county allocations should be supported by a short, written application or budget narrative similar to the documentation required from the Planner and Fiscal Host.
- The intent discussed was not to make county allocations competitive or change the amounts earmarked to counties, but to create a consistent written record showing how each county plans to use its funds.
- Members discussed the history of county funds and the understanding that certain funds were added by DHS and earmarked to the counties. Some members expressed concern that requiring a formal application could unintentionally change the nature of that arrangement.
- Others emphasized transparency, audit readiness, and the benefit of having documentation available if the Region is later asked to explain how an allocation was determined and how the funds were intended to be used.
- The group discussed possible middle-ground approaches, such as a brief form, budget narrative, or completing a CST form rather than a competitive proposal.
- The issue was tabled until the historical documentation is reviewed and the item scheduled for the October 26 agenda.
- The Planner noted the need to have county allocation information before the October 30 application deadline.

7. ACTION ITEMS / FOLLOW-UP

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timing
Communicate final 2027 funding amounts and any required budget revisions to funded providers.	Planner	Following budget approval
Work with Lakes and Pines on a revised/allowable budget structure and administrative-cost questions.	Planner / Fiscal Host / Provider	Before contract execution
Update future funding application instructions to clarify allowable administrative/indirect expenses.	Planner / Governing Board	Before next funding cycle
Review historical documentation regarding county allocations and bring the issue of county budget narratives/applications to the October agenda.	Planner / Fiscal Host / Governing Board	Future meeting
Collect county allocations for the Moose Lake dollars before the October 30 application deadline.	Planner / Counties	Before October 30

8. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 3:16pm.