Region 7E Governing Board Meeting
MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2026; 9:00am – 12:00 Noon

Attendees:

Affiliation		Governing Board Members		Directors
Chisago County		Kelly Ihrke		
Isanti County	X X	Emily Hawkins Alex Godeen		Jodi Donnay
Kanabec County	X	Katie Heacock	x	Chuck Hurd
Mille Lacs County	X	Jessica Andrich		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		

1. **9:03AM CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Emily Hawkins.

2. **ROLL CALL/QUOROM CONFIRMATION**

A quorum was confirmed. The screen and virtual technology in the meeting room were not operational despite efforts by Isanti County IT. Zoom participation was unavailable for the August 24 meeting.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Agenda

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Jessica Andrich moved to approve the prior meeting minutes and agenda.	Barb Schmidt second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES**

- Stacy reported that the Chisago County strike continued to affect services for the individuals she works with, with smaller service needs and follow-up items not being completed.
- Michelle reported attending the Mille Lacs County LAC and noted discussion of transportation efforts involving an AI driving project.

5. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. Budget Review & Financial Actions
Budget Review

- AMHI unallocated funds totaled $26,212.12.
- Significant underspending was identified:
    - BRASS 402 Linwood Group Meetings and Plum Behavioral Services
    - BRASS 408 Uncompensated Care for Diagnostic Assessments or Psychological Testing
    - BRASS 416 Attaboys, Stark/Northern Transportation, and Regional Transportation Flex
    - BRASS 418 Client Flex Funds
    - BRASS 454 Kanabec County
- Kanabec County provided notice ending its Medication Management Program effective August 24, 2026, resulting in a projected unallocated balance of $134,781.96.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Barb Schmidt to approve Kanabec County ending the Medication Management Program effective August 24, 2026, and recognize the resulting projected unallocated balance.	Stacy Johnstone second.	All ayes; Kanabec County abstained. Motion passed.

- Significant overspending was identified:
  - BRASS 452 Adult Outpatient Therapy (40%)
  - BRASS 443 RISE Housing (20%)
- Empower Recovery reported that three individuals previously approved for uncompensated care are no longer receiving services; the budget was updated accordingly.

AMHI Budget Actions

- The Board discussed unallocating $6,000 from BRASS 408 Uncompensated Care vs BRASS 408 APFY.
  - Members noted that the budget workbook does not clearly distinguish BRASS 408 uncompensated care from BRASS 408 APFY and requested that the lines be separated.
- The Board also discussed movement of funds among uncompensated care lines BRASS 408, 452, and 454. The Board directed that flexibility or transfers between BRASS codes be formally voted on and documented in the minutes. The Planner will review formulas and prior Board-approved allocations and revise the budget before the September meeting.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Emily Hawkins to unallocate $6,000 from BRASS 408.	Michelle Ochsendorf second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Consumer Representative Compensation for Additional Meetings

- The Board approved a $50 stipend for workgroup meetings and other meetings as approved by the Governing Board.
- An additional $500 was allocated to each Consumer or Family Member Representative serving on the Governing Board, for a total additional allocation of $1,000 to BRASS 402.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Chuck Hurd to approve a $50 stipend for approved workgroup/other meetings and allocate an additional $500 to each Consumer or Family Member Representative ($1,000 total) in BRASS 402.	Emily Hawkins second.	All ayes; Michelle Ochsendorf and Stacy Johnstone abstained. Motion passed.

Lakes and Pines – BRASS 443

- Lakes and Pines proposed replacing a Bridges-like AMHI Housing Subsidy model with a one-time/short-term housing assistance policy and process because they are not comfortable initiating subsidies without assurance that the Board would continue to awarded subsidies in 2027.
- Board members reported that information sessions hosted by Lakes and Pines were helpful and expressed interest in continuing them annually or twice per year.
- The Housing Workgroup supported the proposed policy and process change.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Emily Hawkins to approve the Lakes and Pines change to a one-time/short-term housing assistance policy and process.	Jessica Andrich second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Mobile Crisis

- Mobile Crisis spending was reported as on target, approximately 2% underspent.

Regional Flex Fund Request

- Isanti County requested $999 in BRASS 443 mortgage-payment assistance to help an individual avoid foreclosure. Because this was the individual's third request and the annual total would exceed $1,000, Board approval was required under the flex fund policy.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Chuck Hurd to approve $999 in mortgage-payment assistance for the Isanti County request.	Barb Schmidt second.	All ayes; Emily Hawkins and Alex Godeen abstained. Motion passed.

Uncompensated Care Funding Requests

- Before reviewing the requests, the Planner noted that several did not meet the current Region 7E definition of underinsured because the individual's commercial/private insurance had covered and reimbursed the service. The Planner identified this as a potential fiscal host/audit concern and recommended revising the policy and form before processing payment requests.
- The Planner also noted wide variation in rates used by providers for BRASS 408, 452, and 454. DHS advised that counties/local mental health authorities may determine acceptable rates and recommend consistent rates across services and providers as part of subcontracting.
- The Board directed that the phrase "the service is covered by their existing plan" be removed from Region 7E's underinsured definition, effective immediately.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Katie Heacock to remove "the service is covered by their existing plan" from the Region 7E underinsured definition, effective immediately.	Emily Hawkins second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

- The Board discussed the dollar threshold that would require Isanti County to contract with providers. The Planner will follow up with her Isanti County supervisor.

Love the Journey – Chisago County; $3,650; BRASS 452 and 454.

o Private insurance deductible support. A diagnosis is needed to confirm eligibility.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Katie Heacock moved to approve up to $3,650 if a qualifying diagnosis is provided and the individual is eligible.	Emily Hawkins second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Empower Recovery – Chisago County; $10,671.97; BRASS 408, 416, 418, and 443.

o Past-due rent, prescriptions, transportation, and a diagnostic assessment not covered by insurance. Additional information, including requested releases of information, was still needed.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Emily Hawkins moved to hold the request until the next Governing Board meeting while the Planner gathers additional information.	Chuck Hurd second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Love the Journey – Kanabec County; $1,178.72; BRASS 452 and 454.

o Insurance deductible support.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Michelle Ochsendorf moved to approve the request for $1,178.72.	Emily Hawkins second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Love the Journey – Kanabec County; $3,112.29; BRASS 452 and 454.

- o Uninsured request. Confirmation of uninsured status and ineligibility for Medical Assistance was requested; Kanabec County confirmed eligibility.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Michelle Ochsendorf moved to approve the request for $3,112.29.	Jessica Andrich second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Love the Journey – Pine County; $4,708.48; BRASS 452 and 454.

- o The individual was uninsured in January and later underinsured with a high deductible of $7,000.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Emily Hawkins moved to approve the request.	Jessica Andrich second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Love the Journey – Kanabec County; $1,500; BRASS 452 and 454.

- o Uninsured request. Kanabec County confirmed uninsured status and ineligibility for Medical Assistance.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Jessica Andrich moved to approve the request for $1,500.	Emily Hawkins second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

Empower Recovery – Pine County; $1,588.06; BRASS 418.

- o Car repair assistance.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Chuck Hurd moved to approve the request for $1,588.06	Michelle Ochsendorf second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

B. 10:00 AM New Funding Requests / Guests / Scoring

Regional Laundry Funding

- Request: $5,000; BRASS 418.
- DHS indicated that laundry assistance is an allowable flex-fund use when individuals meet eligibility criteria and the cards are used as short-term solutions to identified need. DHS recommended a policy ensuring equal access and signed documentation that recipients received the card and agreed to use it as intended.
- Score: 21/30.

Northern Pines Mental Health Center 2026 Request

- Request: $120,000 across BRASS 402, 403, and 431, with several project options for consideration.
- Some proposed projects were identified as not allowable uses of funds. Pine County expressed interest in seeing the new provider at the PICK'M Suicide Prevention event in September.
- The Board scored and considered Projects 1, 3, and 4 in the amounts of $70,540; $4,212; and $26,000, respectively.
- Score: 23/30.

Allina Health Transportation Request 2026

- Request: $7,500; BRASS 416.
- The Board requested that the contract specify, and the Planner confirm with Allina Health, that recipients of this assistance will not have Medical Assistance. Individuals with Medical Assistance are expected to use medical transportation available through their health plan.
- Score: 23/30.

Certified Peer Specialist Training Request 2026

- Request: $28,925; BRASS 402.
- The Planner and Becky Foss met with Recovery Innovations to gather information. A survey showed interest from LSS, New Pathways, Empower Recovery, APFY, and Growing Connections.
- Virtual delivery was the preferred format. The Board discussed the benefits of in-person training and information shared by Region 5+, including a possible Lunch and Learn with DHS and Recovery Innovations, coordination with Shelley White at DHS, the application process, and overbooking to account for last-minute cancellations.
- The Board also reviewed Housing Support Agreement minimum staff qualifications. The Planner expressed concern about the provider's capacity to deliver the training before year-end and noted that the available virtual format still needed clarification.
- Score: 20/30. The Board discussed bringing the request back next year or at a future meeting if necessary.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Michelle Ochsendorf to approve Certified Peer Specialist training online for up to $15,000.	Alex Godeen second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.
Topic/Motion	**Second / Abstention**	**Outcome**
Motion by Barb Schmidt to approve the Allina Health transportation request in the amount of $7,500.	Katie Heacock second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.
Topic/Motion	**Second / Abstention**	**Outcome**
Motion by Barb Schmidt to approve the Regional Laundry Access request in the amount of $5,000.	Katie Heacock second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.
Topic/Motion	**Second / Abstention**	**Outcome**
Motion by Emily Hawkins to approve the NPMHC Funding Request for Projects 1, 3, and 4 in the amount of $100,752 for 2026 projects.	Barb Schmidt second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.
Topic/Motion	**Second / Abstention**	**Outcome**
Motion by Chuck Hurd to allocate $15,000 to BRASS 452 – Adult Outpatient Psychotherapy Uncompensated Care.	Stacy Johnstone second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.
Topic/Motion	**Second / Abstention**	**Outcome**
Motion by Chuck Hurd to allocate $10,000 to BRASS 454 – Adult Outpatient Medication Management Uncompensated Care.	Emily Hawkins second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

C. 11:30 AM Policy / Program / Operational / Governance Actions

Updated Scoring Form

- Kanabec County had advocated within the workgroup for removing sustainability as a scoring criterion. The workgroup approved the draft updated scoring form.

Topic/Motion	Second / Abstention	Outcome
Motion by Chuck Hurd to approve the updated scoring form.	Jessica Andrich second.	All ayes. Motion passed unanimously.

2027 Budget Meeting

- The Board discussed the structure for the October 2, 2026 budget meeting. Provider presentations will occur during the first part of the day, followed by discussion, scoring, and allocation decisions during the second half of the day.
- Provider presentations will be scheduled for 15 minutes each, with five minutes between presentations and separate time for scoring/discussion/voting.
- The Board requested attendance by new providers and providers with substantial increases in funding requests, specifically Plum Behavioral Health Services, Lakes and Pines, Allina Health, Attaboys, Northern Pines Mental Health Center, and Timeout Behavior Coaching. RISE and Growing Connections do not need to attend.
- Board members may contact the Planner if they would like additional providers invited.

6. **NON-ACTION ITEMS** (Information / Discussion)

- DHS AMHI Financial Reconciliation and Monitoring for 2026 is scheduled/in process. A visit was scheduled for September 1, 2026.

Workgroup Updates

- o Outcomes/Data/Process: The scoring form is complete. Next priorities are the uncompensated care policy/process and form, followed by Presumptive Eligibility and the Laundry Access policy/process.
- o Mobile Crisis: NPMHC interviewed a candidate for the Director position and toured potential sites. Six Region 7E youth attended NPMHC summer respite camp. Positions have not yet been posted because HR requested a formal agreement such as an MOU or contract before recruiting. The Planner began drafting the contract, and NPMHC provided data-tracking elements to support the contract and reporting structure.
- o Housing: RISE stated that it does not assist individuals in seeking housing outside the Region and would instead refer to other housing providers if available, citing travel costs, capacity to support individuals who relocate, lack of landlord relationships and housing knowledge outside the service area, as well as the inability to use fiscal supports outside the Region. Board members expressed concern that this approach was not person-centered and noted that case managers will have to perform this work.
- o Transportation: Attaboys was unable to fulfill an evening transportation request for Empower Recovery (4:00–8:30 p.m. group for an individual in Lindstrom). Stark Transportation indicated it could provide the transportation if approved.

7. **MISCELLANEOUS**

- PICK'M Suicide Prevention Walk/Run – September 19, 2026, Kanabec County.
- September agenda items: Region 7E AMHI and Mobile Crisis Grant Monitoring and Review updates; Uncompensated Care requests.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was recorded in the meeting notes.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment motion and time were not recorded in the meeting notes provided.

Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timing
Review budget formulas and prior Board-approved allocations; separate confusing BRASS 408 budget lines and revise the budget workbook.	Amanda Stevenson	Before September meeting
Follow up with Isanti County regarding the dollar threshold requiring provider contracts.	Amanda Stevenson	Before processing applicable requests
Gather additional information for the Empower Recovery/Chisago County uncompensated care/flex request and return it to the Board.	Amanda Stevenson	Next Governing Board meeting
Continue revision of the uncompensated care policy/process and request form, including the updated underinsured definition and consistent rate methodology.	Outcomes/Data/Process Workgroup	Future meeting
Develop a Laundry Access distribution policy/process that addresses eligibility, equal access, and recipient documentation.	Outcomes/Data/Process Workgroup / Planner	Before implementation
Confirm with Allina Health that transportation assistance is limited to individuals without Medical Assistance and include this requirement in the contract.	Amanda Stevenson	Before contracting
Clarify virtual delivery options and feasibility/timing for Certified Peer Specialist training up to $15,000.	Amanda Stevenson / Recovery Innovations	Before implementation
Invite the providers identified by the Board to the October 2, 2026, budget meeting and structure provider presentations as directed.	Amanda Stevenson	Before October 2 budget meeting
Continue drafting the NPMHC Mobile Crisis agreement/contract and incorporate required data-tracking elements.	Amanda Stevenson	In progress
Coordinate transportation with Stark Transportation for the identified Empower Recovery evening request, if approved and eligible.	Planner / Transportation partners	As needed