Meeting Title:	Board of Trustees Meeting	Chairperson:	James Moreau
Date/Time:	September 17, 2025/ 6:30 p.m.	Location:	Norton County Hospital

Norton County Hospital
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Attended	Position
James Moreau	Board President
Lee Jueneman	Board Secretary
Jerry Hawks	Board Member
Randa Vollertsen	Board Treasurer
Robert Wyatt	Board Member
Andrew Black	Board Member
Kevin Faughnder	NCH Chief Executive Officer
Klare Bliss	NCH Chief Information Officer
Mel DeWitt	Norton Medical Clinic Manager
Amanda Kuxhausen	NCH Quality Control and Risk Management
Sarah Mohr	NCH Chief Nursing Officer
Tabetha Harris	NCH HR Assistant/ Public Relations/ Marketing

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	Agenda Item	Action and/or Time
1.	**August 20th, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**	Motion by **Robert Wyatt** to approve the minutes of the August 20th, 2025 meeting. Second by **Jerry Hawks.** Motion carries unanimously.
2.	**Consent Agenda Items:** a) Personnel Information b) Payroll Briefing c) Accounts Payable – Bills	Motion by **Randa Vollertsen** to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Second by **Andrew Black.** Motion carries unanimously.
3.	**Risk Management/ Quality Assurance** Amanda Kuxhausen, the Risk Management and Quality Assurance Coordinator, presented the following updates: **Risk Management** • RM Plan updated for personnel changes: Kristin Vogel, PA-C, added to the Risk Management Committee, replacing Jonna Inman, APRN. **Patient Surveys & HCAHPS** • 19 surveys received through Sept 12 (ER, Outpatient Surgery, Radiology, PSG, Outpatient Services, PT). One Specialty Clinic survey was submitted on an outpatient form. • NRC platform has updated HCAHPS access; old reports will no longer be available. The most recent Stoplight Report is included. Future reports may look different. **Survey Readiness** • Three videos on BCMA process completed. • Internal CAH risk assessments completed for 7 departments; 2 more planned before month-end (Quality & Radiology next). • Mock survey held 9/9/25: positive experience and valuable feedback; thanks to Sarah for representing NCH. **QAPI Program** • Documentation of Quality Initiatives increased significantly, from 28.6% to 51.4% of projects up to date in one month. • Upcoming changes:	Motion by **Andrew Black** to approve the updated Risk Management plan as presented. Second by **James Moreau.** Motion carries unanimously.

	○ Internal changes to ordering of radiology diagnostics (focusing on STAT definitions and escalation processes with outside radiologists). ○ External policy review scheduled Sept 23–24. ○ All departments asked to create training checklists in SQSS to track competencies. **Other Quality Highlights** • Viking Pure Solutions Quality Project (customer satisfaction): cleanliness scored 4.56/5 (18 responses). • KARQM & KHELSA meetings scheduled for Oct 22–23. • Mock survey team included Quality Directors from Graham County and Scott City hospitals.	
4.	**CIO Report** Klare Bliss, the Chief Information Officer (CIO), provided the following comprehensive updates for the last month: **Cerner EES** • Clinical Data Exchange – Seamless Exchange: Implementation complete; department training underway. • Clinical AI Agent Trial: 90-day trial began Sept 3. The app captures key medical information from provider-patient conversations to improve notetaking, charge capture, and efficiency. 86 recordings completed in September. Patients are informed of usage (text-based, not voice). Technology is improving with strong potential for growth. Providers have given positive feedback on it. • Patient Accounting: NCH opted for AI-driven updates to the current platform instead of full migration. **Cerner Change Governance** • Ongoing department meetings to evaluate workflow needs and create service requests (SRs). • 17 SRs currently open, mostly for workflow optimization (billing, new services, lab changes, new providers). Very few tickets relate to broken processes. **Other IT/Operational Updates** • Upcoming projects: phone system upgrade with Nex Tech, transition to Microsoft 365 email, and continued risk management work with Artic Wolf. • Presented at Brenda's Dietary Leader Conference on Sept 12. **Cybersecurity & Safety** • Artic Wolf cybersecurity risk score decreased from 7.4 to 6.9; progress is steady while minimizing workflow disruption.	

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	• Safety culture score remains strong at 75%.	
5.	**Medical Clinic Update** Mel DeWitt, the Norton Medical Clinic Manager, and shared the following Medical Clinic updates: **Volumes** • Total visits: 910 (↓ from 1,046 in July) • Acute/Same-Day: 276 (↓ from 298) • Saturday Clinics: 23 (↑ from 19) – strong momentum expected to continue • Medicare AWVs: 17 (↓ from 18) • Follow-Up Visits: 102 (↓ from 176) • Established Care Visits: 28 (↓ from 35) • Physicals: 86 (↑ from 57) • Nurse Visits: 84 (↓ from 91) • DOT Physicals: 2 (↓ from 6) • No Shows: 33 (↓ from 35) • Wellness: 21 (↓ from 34) • Well Child Checks: 22 (↑ from 14) • Procedures: 13 (↓ from 18) **Highlights** • August visits were lower than July, but Saturday clinics are gaining traction. • Nursing staff commended for strong follow-up calls on ER patients. • Will temporarily utilize agency coverage for ER in Oct–Nov while provider is on vacation; first time in over a year we have had to utilize agency provider coverage. Patients may see new faces briefly. **Staffing** • Hired 2 receptionists, 1 full-time CNA, and 1 PRN CNA. **Quality** • KanSurvive 2.0 data collection underway. • Ongoing survey readiness work in the clinic.	
6.	**Ni2 Update** ReChelle Horinek, the Chief Financial Officer, provided the following comprehensive updates for Ni2 from last month: Gross revenue was down slightly for the month. A large factor is a patient in outpatient wound care receiving infusion treatments on a cycle of four weeks on, four weeks off. This creates fluctuations in monthly reports, which explains some of the ups and downs you'll see when reviewing the financial statements.	

	Had lower cash receipts this month for whatever reason. A couple hundred thousand under this month.	
7.	**CFO Report of Statistical/Financial Information** ReChelle Horinek, the Chief Financial Officer , presented comprehensive financial and statistical updates from August 2025: **Income Statement** Gross patient revenue for August was $2,914,474. Outpatient revenue was above budget, while inpatient, swing bed, and clinic volumes were all down. Contractual allowances were higher in August due to large outpatient Medicare claims. A $300,000 payable to Medicare for FY2026 was budgeted; however, this will be updated after the final 2024 audit and will likely be increased. A monthly payable to Medicare continues to be booked in contractual allowances. The net loss for August was ($201,751), which includes a $25,000 bookable payback to Medicare. Operating expenses for August were $1,776,837. Other operating revenue included 340B payments, sales of service revenue, and dietary revenue. Other non-operating revenue included tax distribution accruals, sales tax distributions, contributions, interest, and donations. Final August net loss was ($116,308). Year-to-date profit remains at $51,813. **Balance Sheet** Month-end cash balance totaled $1,526,382, with 29.51 days cash on hand as of August 31, 2025. Cash receipts were low in August from both insurance and private pay sources. Payroll timing also impacted reporting; the final payroll of the month did not post until after September 1, which caused balances to appear slightly higher. As of September 16, 2025, cash on hand is approximately $250,000 lower. All other totals on the Balance Sheet remain within normal range. Adjustments will be reflected once year-end audit entries are posted by Forvis. **Statistics** August 2025 statistics directly correlate with revenue trends. Patient days were up, with shorter stays and lower acuity, which lowered revenue despite higher overall volumes. Inpatient and swing bed statistics are trending higher than 2024, and most ancillary departmental statistics were also above prior year. **Additional Financial Notes** • Outpatient services booked over $1.5 million, which significantly affects Medicare payables. Previously	

	adjusted down to 30%, this rate may now be increased given consistent performance throughout the year. • The largest factor in the monthly loss was outpatient Medicare payables, now occurring every other month. • Sales tax receipts totaled $62,000, higher than usual due to the late July check. Monthly distributions are typically $55,000–$65,000. These funds remain in a dedicated account, accruing interest. • Questions remain about the impact of proposed Kansas rural hospital support bills. Too early to determine if NCH will qualify, and even if so, the benefit would be limited. • NCH's low Medicaid population minimizes impact compared to other Kansas hospitals. Medicaid non-expansion continues to primarily affect single mothers across the state. **Other Updates** • The upcoming Forvis financial audit for FY2025 is scheduled for the week of September 29. • The Eide Bailly Operational Assessment is underway with chart reviews. Final report expected within 60 days. • Partnership with Cerner for revenue cycle management will focus on AI-driven updates rather than migration, with anticipated improvements in coding and patient accounting. • Leadership remains interested to see how the busy HPM Clinic will influence future income statements.	
8.	**Financial Affairs of Non-Elected Personnel** Financial Assistance YTD: $20,197.87 Bankruptcy YTD: --	Motion by **Randa Vollertsen** to send an amount not to exceed $44,158.58 for attempted collections. Second by **James Moreau**. Motion carries unanimously.
9.	**CNO Report** Sarah Mohr, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), presented comprehensive updates for the reporting period of August 1st to August 31st: **Avel E-Emergency Activations** • 7 encounters in August **Key Statistics (Reporting Period: August 1–31, 2025)** • Daily Census: 2.4 patients, ↓ from 2.5 (July) • Inpatient Admissions: 15 patients, ↑ from 13 (July)	

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- Inpatient Days: 77 days, ↑ from 46 (July)
- ER Visits: 172 visits, ↑ from 150 (July)
- Outpatient Visits: 208 visits, ↓ from 252 (July)

People Updates

- Acute Care Manager: Ashley Wonderly hired, begins 10/13. Previously worked at NCH (2002–2018), served as DON at Whispering Pines, most recently with Decatur Health in Oberlin.
- Nursing: One RN on medical leave; 12-week agency nurse will cover. Two PRN nurse interviews held this week.
- Education/Training: Sierra attended trauma conference in Hutchinson.

Department Operations

- Laboratory (Julie):
  - Completed validation of iron panel studies; awaiting Cerner build to continue test patients.
  - Fentanyl test kits remain on backorder; McKesson and Ortho working on resolution.
  - Valerie began MLT program.
  - New PRN employee, Emma Dille, begins onboarding with Tabby next week; formal training in October.
  - COLA survey scheduled for November.
- Outpatient Therapy (Travis & Jay): Numbers slightly decreased due to wound healing cases.
- Specialty Clinic (JuliAnna):
  - Dr. Hinze (podiatry, McCook) wrapping up; Dr. Joshua Wray (podiatry, North Platte) to begin October, 2nd Tuesday each month.
  - Emily Zillinger (Holistic Pain Management) expanded to 3 clinic days this month due to demand; no referral required for patients.
  - Dr. Sheba Asghar (endocrinology) began clinics this month, 1st Monday monthly, 1–5 pm via telemedicine.
  - Urology now provided only via telemedicine, no in-person provider at this time.
- Respiratory (Kayla):
  - CareLearning Oxygen module distributed; positive feedback.
  - All 3 RTs attended KRCS Conference, earning 6 CEUs for licensure renewal.
  - Early preparation for upcoming Sleep Lab accreditation survey.

	• Radiology (Mitch):
	  ○ Completed 509 exams in August.
	  ○ Pain management exam numbers increasing with HPM affiliation.
	• Surgery (Judy):
	  ○ 12 surgical procedures and 23 pain clinic procedures completed.
	  ○ Awaiting feedback from mock survey to guide improvements.
	Education & Survey Readiness
	• Mock Survey: Conducted 9/9/2025 across ER, surgery, dietary, radiology, respiratory/cardiac rehab, infection prevention, and facility condition. Report expected in coming weeks with findings and recommendations.
	Customer Service & Culture
	• Reminder: "Being kind takes no extra time!"
	• Shout Out: To the Nursing Department for stepping up during the absence of the acute care manager. Staff have adjusted schedules, taken on extra projects, and maintained positive attitudes, demonstrating adaptability and teamwork.
	• Census Note: Still a slower month (2.4 vs. 2.6 last month), but volumes remain higher than the same period last year.
	Randa asked about the NCH continuing education policy:
	• Varies by department. For Nursing, NCH provides BLS, ACLS, PALS, and TNCC. Staff are paid for course fees and hourly wage.
	• All employees are granted 8 education hours annually (for time and travel). Requests beyond 8 hours require supervisor and CEO approval.	

10.	**CEO Report** Kevin Faughnder, the Chief Executive Officer, provided a comprehensive report on various initiatives and updates: **Physician Recruiting** We officially hired Nurse Practitioner Andrea D'Archiardi to replace Jonna. Andrea began her pre-employment activities on September 15th and will shadow Dr. McKinley for three months before gradually integrating into clinic and hospital operations. Andrea was recognized as "Nurse Practitioner of the Year" (2025) for the Veterans Administration in Kansas and Missouri. She is a fantastic addition to the NCH team.	

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	Specialty Clinic Expansion We are pleased to announce that Dr. Joshua Wray, podiatrist, will launch his clinic at NCH on October 14th. **Mock Survey** NCH participated in a mock survey on September 9th, which provided an excellent opportunity to receive outside perspective. Inspectors praised staff for being exceptionally kind and friendly, and they noted the facility and kitchen were very clean. Department managers will receive a full report to address noted areas for improvement. **EVS Support to Graham County Hospital** At the request of Graham County Hospital's CEO, Eva Harrington, EVS Department Manager, provided training support to their new EVS manager. Graham County expressed appreciation for our willingness to share expertise and assist their team. **Health Fair** In partnership with the County Health Department, NCH will host a health fair on September 24th. This will be the first time we utilize our new lab analyzer in a community event. **Human Resources Training** Olson Group, our HR Advisory Firm, has finalized an itinerary for advanced HR training. This will include a session for all employees and a separate workshop for managers. Training is anticipated for early to mid-October. **Communications Campaign** Our fourth "Destination Health" event was held on July 30th, highlighting heart and vascular services at NCH. Presentations continue to receive positive feedback. The next event is scheduled for September 24th, focusing on "Healthy Aging." **Modernization** Two contractors have completed initial assessments of the second-floor asbestos abatement project. Cost estimates are still pending. **Kansas Hospital Association (KHA) Annual Conference** Sarah and I attended the KHA Conference in Wichita on September 4–5th. Conversations with other Kansas CEOs highlighted the unique strengths and challenges at NCH, and I remain grateful for our position in Norton. The board asked if we have given up on physician recruiting? We have not… it remains challenging to find providers who want a rural atmosphere, but Andrea has already provided valuable suggestions and positive reviews to her recruiting company. We remain focused on finding the right fit.	

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11.	**Commissioner Report** N/A	
12.	**Board Member Reports** Randa is the representative for the regional health foundation; they and the Kansas Department of Commerce Community Impact Tour will be visiting NCH to help us celebrate the CT scanner that they procured funding for. Are we planning a retirement party for Jonna? Jonna has asked for a small celebration… we plan on honoring that for her. Who have we asked for quotes for the asbestos abatement? We have engaged a local abatement team to provide a quote on the second-floor asbestos project and have also reached out to a Kearny company for an estimate.	
13.	**Other Business** Board members questioned the voluntary resignation of Tabetha Harris.	
14.	**Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel**	**Andrew Black** moved to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) for the discussion of personnel matters of non-elected personnel; with the Board and Tabetha Harris in attendance, not to exceed 10 minutes. Seconded by **Robert Wyatt**. Motion passed. The executive session begins at **7:59 p.m**. Exit at **8:09 p.m**.
15.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	n/a
16.	**Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel**	**Andrew Black** moved to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) for the discussion of personnel matters of non-elected personnel; with the Board and Tabetha Harris in attendance,

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		not to exceed 10 minutes. Seconded by **Robert Wyatt**. Motion passed. The executive session begins at **8:11 p.m**. Exit at **8:21 p.m**.
17.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	n/a
18.	**Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel**	**Andrew Black** moved to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) for the discussion of personnel matters of non-elected personnel; with the Board in attendance, not to exceed 10 minutes. Seconded by **Robert Wyatt**. Motion passed. The executive session begins at **8:22 p.m**. Exit at **8:32 p.m**.
19.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	n/a
20.	**Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel**	**Andrew Black** moved to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) for the discussion of personnel matters of non-elected personnel; with the Board and CEO in attendance, not to exceed 20 minutes. Seconded by **Robert Wyatt**. Motion passed. The executive session begins at **8:36 p.m**. Exit at **8:56 p.m**.
21.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	n/a
	Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel	**Andrew Black** moved to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-

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		4319(b)(1) for the discussion of personnel matters of non-elected personnel; with the Board and CEO in attendance, not to exceed 20 minutes. Seconded by **Robert Wyatt**. Motion passed. The executive session begins at **8:57 p.m.** Exit at **9:17 p.m.**
	Board Action from Executive Session	n/a
	Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel	**Andrew Black** moved to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1) for the discussion of personnel matters of non-elected personnel; with the Board and CEO in attendance, not to exceed 20 minutes. Seconded by **Robert Wyatt**. Motion passed. The executive session begins at **9:18 p.m.** Exit at **9:30 p.m.**
	Board Action from Executive Session	n/a
20.	**Adjourn**	Meeting adjourned at **9:51 p.m.**

Lee Jueneman, Secretary