Meeting Title:	Board of Trustees Meeting	Chairperson:	James Moreau
Date/Time:	October 15, 2025	Location:	Norton County Hospital

Norton County Hospital
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Attended	Position
James Moreau	Board President
Jimmy Todd	Board Vice-President (via Zoom)
Randa Vollertsen	Board Treasurer
Lee Juenemann	Board Secretary
Jerry Hawks	Board Member
Andrew Black	Board Member
Robert Wyatt	Board Member
Garrett Beydler	Norton County Commissioner
Kevin Faughnder	NCH Chief Executive Officer
ReChelle Horinek	NCH Chief Financial Officer
Shannan Hempler	NCH Director of Human Resources
Sarah Mohr	NCH Chief Nursing Officer
Klare Bliss	NCH Chief Information Officer
Melody Dewitt	NCH Clinic Manager & Interim Risk Manager
Amanda Kuxhausen	NCH Quality Assurance Coordinator
Larry Logback	NCH Attorney (via Zoom)
Eva Harrington	NCH EVS Manager

	Agenda Item	Action and/or Time

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1.	**September 17, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**	Motion by **Randa Vollertsen** to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2025 meeting. Second by **Andrew Black.** Motion carries unanimously.
2.	**Consent Agenda Items:** a) Personnel Information b) Payroll Briefing Summary c) Accounts Payable – Bills	Motion by **Robert Wyatt** to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Second by **Andrew Black.** Motion carries unanimously.
3.	**Executive Session: Attorney-Client Consultation**	Motion by **James Moreau** to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(2) for consultation with legal counsel; with the Board, CEO, County Commissioner and Larry Logback in attendance, not to exceed 30 minutes. Seconded by **Jerry Hawks**. Motion carries unanimously. The executive session begins at 6:32 p.m. Exit at 7:02 p.m.
4.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	No action
5.	**Risk Management/Quality Assurance** Melody DeWitt, Interim the Risk Manager, and Amanda Kuxhausen, Quality Assurance Coordinator, presented the following updates: **Risk Management** • Melody DeWitt will step in as interim Risk Manager. She presented the Risk Management plan with this update for approval. **Patient Surveys & HCAHPS** • 9 patient surveys through October 9th were received, departments include ER, OP Surgery, PSG, PT, Radiology.	Motion by **Andrew Black** to approve the updated Risk Management Plan as presented. Second by **Randa Vollertsen** Motion carries unanimously.

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	• The updated HCAPS platform and reports were reviewed. Also got access to MBQIP today with new quality measures and gives HCAPS comparison information with peer facilities from 2024. • Eva Harrington shared information on the new disinfecting and cleaning solution from Viking Pure. She explained how the ATP Testing measures residue left on surfaces. She also demonstrated the Biotorch. This tool allows you to see residue and debris that you cannot see with normal vision. This is used as a teaching tool for her staff to help identify areas that need further cleaning. NCH has a great relationship with CINTAS for more environmentally friend cleaning solutions. This is a great step toward a cleaner and safer facility for our patients and staff.	
6.	**Executive Session: Risk Management Quarterly Report**	Motion by **Andrew Black** to enter into executive session: K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(5) for the Quarterly Risk Management review with Board, CEO, Previous Risk Manager, and Interim Risk Manager present, not to exceed 5 minutes. Second by **Randa Vollertsen .** Motion carries unanimously. The executive session begins at 7:28 p.m. Exit at 7:29 p.m.
7.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	No action
8.	**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: Klare reviewed how information can be brought into our chart from other facilities. This process is starting in the clinic.	Motion by **Andrew Black** to approve the purchase of Clinical AI Agent for $17,500 per year. Second by **Jerry Hawks**. Motion carries unanimously.

	• A phone system upgrade by Nex-Tech is being reviewed. • Password Keeper has been implemented in the facility. • Clinical AI Agent Trial: still in the trial period but will end soon. This has improved the capture of patient visit information in the documentation. Charges assigned to the visit will be more appropriate. • Klare presented the quote to continue using Clinical AI Agent at a cost of $17,500 per year. This includes 10,000 notes/year and unlimited number of providers can use it. • ReChelle will bring some reports in the future that show some comparisons of before Clinical AI and after for the Board. **Cerner Change Governance** • Ongoing department meetings to evaluate workflow needs and create service requests (SRs). • 11 SRs currently open, tickets are for new or optimizing workflows (billing changes, new services, new lab changes, safety, new providers) **Cybersecurity & Safety** • Arctic Wolf cybersecurity risk score decreased from 6.9 to 6.7.	
9.	**Medical Clinic Update** Melody DeWitt, the Norton Medical Clinic Manager, shared the following Medical Clinic updates: **Volumes** • Total visits: 999 (↑ from 910 in August) • Acute/Same-Day: 290 (↑ from 276) • Saturday Clinics: 17 (↓ from 23) • Medicare Annual Wellness Visits: 23 (↑ from 17) • Follow-Up Visits: 152 (↑ from 102) • Established Care Visits: 48 (↑ from 28) • Physicals: 38 (↓ from 86) • Nurse Visits: 102 (↑ from 84) • DOT Physicals: 4 (↑ from 2) • No Shows: 37 (↑ from 33) • Wellness: 23 (↑ from 21) • Well Child Checks: 8 (↓ from 22) • Procedures: 11 (↓ from 13) **Highlights** • Will have agency in ER in October and November. • Andrea is going to get certified to do DOT physicals. **Staffing** • 2 Reception positions openings **Quality**	

	• KanSurvive 2.0 data collection underway. • Ongoing survey readiness work in the clinic. • Behavioral Health	
10.	**Ni2 Update** ReChelle Horinek, CFO, reviewed the reports from the last month. She noted that BCBS changed their payments to us from every 7 days to every 21 days.	
11.	**CFO Report of Statistical/Financial Information** ReChelle Horinek, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), presented comprehensive statistical and financial information for September 2025: **Income Statement Corrections** Presenting corrected July and August Income Statement for approval. The close process in July was not completed after running the income statement, so additional invoices and revenue changes posted to the general ledger. Actual income/expense changed for the month of July. This prompted change to the YTD totals in August. Forvis agreed with approval of corrected income statements for both months. **Income statement** Gross patient revenue for September was $3,089,684. Outpatient revenue was above budget in September while inpatient, swing bed and clinic were all under budget again this month. Contractual allowances continue to be higher due to some large outpatient claims as well as our lower reimbursement rates with Medicare. We budgeted for a $300,000 payable to Medicare for FY 2026, but this will be evaluated and updated once final 2024 audit is complete and will likely be increased. Monthly payable to Medicare is booked in contractual allowances at $25,000 per month. Other operating revenue includes payments for 340B, sales of service revenue, dietary revenue, etc. Operating expenses for September were $1,621,012. Other non-operating revenue in September includes tax distribution accrual, sales tax distribution, contributions, interest and donations. Net operating loss for September is ($90,017), which includes the $25,000 bookable payback to Medicare. September net loss was ($3,291). Year to date loss is ($36,920). **Balance sheet** Cash balance totals at the month end is $1,580,227. Days of cash on hand is 30.54 ending September 30, 2025. All other totals on Balance Sheet are within norm. Changes will show on the Balance Sheet once year end audit entries are posted by Forvis.	

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	Statistics September 2025 statistics show a direct correlation with the revenue. Inpatient and swing bed statistics are trending higher than the previous year, which is good. Most ancillary departmental statistics were above 2024 as well. **Other Information** Eide Bailly Operational Assessment: The staff at Eide Bailly is performing chart review at this time. We should have a final report within the next 60 days. 2025 FYE Financial Audit: Forvis staff was on site the week of September 29th to perform the financial audit for FYE 2025. I'm now working on cost report prep. We will have final numbers once the cost report is finished for submission on November 30.	
12.	**Financial Affairs of Non-Elected Personnel** Financial Assistance YTD: $41,846.56 Bad Debt to Collections YTD: $162,869.40 Bankruptcy YTD: --	Motion by **Randa Vollertsen** to send an amount not to exceed $52,006.11 for attempted collections. Second by **Robert Wyatt.** Motion carries unanimously.
13.	**CNO Report** Sarah Mohr, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), presented comprehensive updates for the month of September: **Avel E-Emergency Activations** • 9 encounters in September **Key Statistics (Reporting Period: September 1-30, 2025)** • Daily Census: 1.5 patients, ↓ from 2.4 (August) • Inpatient Admissions: 8 patients, ↓ from 15 (August) • Inpatient Days: 31 days, ↓ from 77 (August) • ER Visits: 172 visits, = 172 visits (August) • Outpatient Visits: 200 visits, ↓ from 208 (August) **People Updates:** • 2 PRN nurses hired • Acute Care Manager starts Monday • Marissa Davis has been hired for the Risk Manager/Quality position **Operations:** • From Julie in Lab: o The Iron panel is fully up and running. We have completed necessary procedures, including the method correlation, and started patient testing on September 17. Ranges have also been updated in the system.	

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- For fentanyl testing, kits have finally arrived. Validation has been performed, and our policies and procedures are approved.
- Angela and Maria have completed their DOT training and have been doing collections for urine drug tests.
- Still waiting for a confirmed date for our COLA inspection.

- From Travis & Jay in Outpatient Therapy:
  - Numbers decreased a bit from the previous month due to healing more wounds.
  - Obtained several new orders for specialty injections, so optimistic about number improving this month.
- From JuliAnna in Specialty Clinic:
  - Dr. Wray held his first podiatry clinic on 10/14, which was a fairly full clinic for his first time here. He referred several follow ups from Hoxie and Hill City here for follow up.
  - HPM continues to be a booming success. Typically having 18-20 patients per clinic. Will add a 3rd day if necessary.
- From Kayla in Respiratory:
  - Continuing with credentialing process, which will be completed in February.
  - The therapists have been looking at different ventilators to find the best fit for our facility, as our current ones are nearly outdated.
  - The department has seen an uptick in sleep studies performed, and is now averaging 15-20 sleep studies per month, whereas in the past were averaging 8 or so.
- From Mitch in Radiology:
  - The department completed 456 exams for the month of August. Hoping to keep numbers consistent despite Jonna's retirement but expecting a decrease until Andrea is up and going.
- From Judy in surgery:
  - For the month of September, we had 12 surgeries and 51 pain clinic procedures.
  - Dr. Gabel also added an additional day of colonoscopies in October.

Education:

- Lacey Ninemeier has worked with High Plains to bring us "Compassion Fatigue" on 10/28, and then is doing our yearly emergency prep tabletop on Nov 3 and 4.

Shout out:

	• Mitch and the radiology department for arranging their schedules to allow Dr. Wray to perform procedures. • Nursing staff- Have gotten two myocardial infarction patients in and out to higher levels of care in less than 1 hour! This dramatically improves outcomes for these patients. Time is muscle! • Julie and lab staff- Julie received huge compliments on her organization and the improvements she has brought to lab. Jeri Grove was very impressed with her knowledge and the improvements that have been made in the lab since her last visit in August 2024.	
14.	**CEO Report** Kevin Faughnder, the Chief Executive Officer, provided a comprehensive report on various initiatives and updates: **Physician Recruiting** We conducted a virtual interview with Dr. Dwight Encinas on October 3, 2025, and that went really well. He is coming to Norton for an onsite interview on October 16-18. I sent all Board members a copy of the itinerary. An updated copy of the itinerary is uploaded to the board portal as well. **Human Resources staff training** Olson Group will conduct advanced HR training with our staff on October 29-30. The training will cover many topics, including explaining how policies are created (majority are mandated from law) and we will have a separate session for supervisors/managers. We are offering two manager workshops and five employee workshops. **Mental Health/Resiliency training** We are conducting another mental health/resiliency workshop on October 28th for our staff. High Plains Mental Health conducted this training a few months ago and we are offering it again for employees that couldn't make the first training session or those that want to go through the training a second time. **Specialty Clinic Expansion** Dr. Joshua Wray, a podiatrist, conducted his first clinic on October 14th. We are really excited to have Dr. Wray with us. **Health Fair** We partnered with the County Health Department for a health fair on September 24th. We used our new analyzer, and it worked great. We tested 177 people. **Communications Campaign** We conducted our fifth "Destination Health" event on September 24th. The focus was, "Healthy Aging." This was our last event of the year. Our staff did amazing job with preparing these educational seminars for our community. **Annual Policy Review**	Motion by **Jerry Hawks** to approve the purchase of a side-by-side with a snowplow from Norton Sports Center for $11,520.60. Second by **James Moreau**. Motion carries unanimously.

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	We conducted our annual policy review with Jeri Grove, September 23-24. Each department leader reviewed their policies with Jeri, and she offered constructive feedback. Our staff made great strides from last year. **Annual Audit** Forvis had two auditors here September 29-October 3 to conduct their annual audit of our business office. ReChelle and her team worked tirelessly to meet the demands of the auditors and it's great to have it done! **Rural Health Transformation Program** We participated in several calls on the new federal government $50B Rural Health Transformation Program. The initial work relies heavily on the state government and KHA to take steps for Kansas to receive money from the federal government. We will continue to participate in meetings and calls with KHA so NCH can apply for those financial benefits too. **Modernization** We are moving forward with updating our phone system across the facility. The current phone system is outdated and is becoming more difficult to keep working. Our IT Department will work with Nex-Tech on an implementation plan. This project is long overdue. TK Elevator company was here last week assessing our elevator for the upgrades. We also received a quote this week to remove the suspended ceiling on the second floor. This is a project that will need done at some point to install the sprinkler system. The quote was $30,442.36 from Randy Bantam. Ty Bruton, Maintenance Director, has arranged for representatives from Jayhawk Sprinkler, Great Plains Asbestos, and Randy Bantam to all meet at the hospital on October 29th to assess what/how we would address the asbestos and install a sprinkler system. Getting all three vendors together to look at everything and talk out the scope of the project will be very helpful. **Safety Initiative** Last year we had 4 falls during the winter months with patients and staff. Our Safety Committee discussed ways to reduce falls this winter. A recommendation was made to purchase a side-by-side with a snowplow and salt spreader to get into tight areas that the F250 cannot access. We have a quote from the Norton Sports Center for a 2019 Yamaha machine with hard cab and heater, along with a winch and snowplow for $11,520.60. The salt spreader will be purchased separately and not require board approval because the amount is considerably less than $5,000. I will request a motion to purchase this machine and get it ready for winter. **Innovation**	

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	We are moving forward with the Artificial Intelligence (AI) program for our providers. Oracle/CERNER gave us a 90-day trial for the AI program, and our providers have been very happy with it. Provider documentation is more thorough, and the hospital has been able to bill for higher visit classifications because the AI program is capturing our providers are meeting the standard for an increased billing rate.	
15.	**Commissioner Report** Garrett Beydler expressed his appreciation for the Board and the Staff. He then shared that there is a distinct difference between the role of the Board and CEO, and that he is concerned the Board may be crossing over into the CEO role. The Board is for oversite and strategic planning. The CEO is responsible for day-to-day employment decisions. Board members should direct any concern they hear to the CEO or visit with Board President. The hospital is moving in a good direction under the leadership of the CEO. The Board needs to support the CEO and follow the guidelines in the Board bylaws.	
16.	**Board Member Reports** James requested the Board to consider changing the Board meetings to the 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Another time of 6:00 p.m. was recommended. ReChelle commented that the 4th Wednesday would be very helpful for putting together the financial reports.	Motion by **James Moreau** to change the monthly Board meetings to the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Second by **Jerry Hawks**. Motion carries unanimously.
17.	**Other Business** Nothing to report	
18.	**Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel** Not needed	
19.	**Adjourn**	Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Lee Jueneman, Secretary