

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES
107 FISHER POND ROAD
ST. ALBANS VT 05478

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Present: Jim McMillian, Angela Poirier, Elaine Carpenter, Meg Marshall, Jason Minor, Ken Gagne, Casey Toof, Dan Thompson, David Hutchinson, David McCallum

Excused: Andrea Patrick-Baudet, Anjanette Watson

Staff: Todd Bauman, Derek Hoy, Belinda Bessette, Samantha Thomas, Kim McClellan, Stacey Remillard, April Glover, Danielle Roberts, Emily Richards, Matt Habendank

Minutes received and meeting called to order by Angela Poirier at 5:46pm.

Motion was made to approve the June minutes as presented by Dan Thompson. Second by Jason Minor. All in Favor

Executive Director

Motion made to move to executive session made by Dan Thompson. Jim McMillian Second. All in Favor.

Motion made to exit executive sessions made by Elaine Carpenter. Dan Thompson Second. All in Favor.

Financial Report

- The pre audit financials through June 30, 2025, were reviewed. They are subject to change depending on the audit, but Derek feels we are in a good position. All the work that has gone into the new software and the mapping has been very helpful. It has made the process work as it should.
- There is a lot of work being put toward the budgeting process and this has made our budget very functional. We have a 99.8% success rate; we could not do this with the team and the commitment they show to this being successful.
- We are looking at a 2.7% gain on the year which is right where we would like to see it.
- We are going to have to start paying attention to the payer mix, which is how our clients are paying for services. This process will come with payment reform.
- The balance sheet was reviewed. The rep payee account is not accounted for in our days' cash because it is the client's money not the agency. We have about 60 days' cash without the board reserved funds, so we are in a good place.

Dan Thompson wanted to thank Todd, the leadership team and staff for putting us in a position where we can approach all topics with a strategic and forward-thinking lens. Elaine Carpenter agrees the positions we are in gives us options for decisions we need to make.

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Executive Committee Report

- We have discussed everything with the full board that we talked about in the executive committee meeting.

Community Mental Health Report

- There were large program changes to our Community Rehab Treatment (CRT) program as of July 1, 2025. The state has decided that it will no longer be called that but rather Intensive Adult Care. It is intended to show that the care needed changes with time. It is a large change to how clients receive and are eligible for care. Belinda was very proud of Jess Parker and the work and thought that went into making sure that we provide the best care we can for our clients. The state has thanked us for being a strong partner with them in the process. The state has taken over the process of deciding who meets the needs of care. So far 17 of our current clients have been found to not meet the need. Clients do not have Medicare and that means they do not get the wrap around and case management services. Employment services is no longer included and Belinda and the team have given feedback on how this will be a very hard transition for many clients. The state says that our services are rehabilitative and something people should have access to forever. We do have a cohort of people that use to receive our services that we are tracking for ER visits, hospitalizations, and emergency services calls which will hopefully give us some data we can share about the impact of these changes.
- The enhanced mobile crisis team has to track ER visits and since we implemented these services we have seen a 10% decrease in visits. We have 7 staff that cover 24 hours of a rolling scheduled. We will be adding another position to help cover the scheduling needs.
- Our IFS bundle is being dismantled so we are looking at where we need to invest and find new funding to make sure children and families get the services they need. Morgan Lloyd has been hired as the stabilization team leader. We do a success story for this team event through all the changes, DCF had a kiddo who was coming back into the community after 7 years away, we quickly worked with DCF and found a placement for this kiddo, and now we are working on them back into school.

Early Educations & School Based Services

- Chittenden EI (Early Intervention) is celebrating their 5-year anniversary. They started during COVID and a brand new electronic medical record (EMR), we took the services over from another designated agency (DA) who could not meet the needs. We would like to invite you all to the open house, which is September 9, 2025, 11:00am – 2:00pm.
- The Alburgh Family Club House is having their ribbon cutting ceremony on the September 9th at 11:00am. You are welcome to go to this as well. We will have staff working out of the building, which is very exciting.
- A few weeks ago, the whole divisions came together at the American Legion for a retreat. It was nice to get together, they assigned seats so that way staff had to sit with people they

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may not have known, we played games about getting to know each other. It was a great day and will really help the team work across the division.

- This year for all our school-based staff in-services days we tried something different. We worked on combining the training. Amy Irish, Christie Moffett and Micheal Bombard worked together on this process, and it seemed to go very well.
- Our School Based Adaptive Program (SBAP) which is a program that was developed as a way to continue to serve kids during COVID is expanding and is now running two sessions.
- We have brought Occupational Therapy (OT) and Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) services to the agency. It stemmed from the Autism clinic we were doing with Northwestern Medical Center (NMC). The staff loved our agency so much and really wanted to be out of the grant funded program with NMC but wanted to stay working for us. Katie Cyr worked really hard on getting us set up to bill for these services. The question was asked – Will this take the role that Home Health is supplying us? No this will not.

Nursing Report

- We are in full swing with our Genoa RX project. April shared a few slides to talk about the process of the construction and message that will be shared with staff through the process. The question was asked – What will security be like, and is it something that has been thought through? We have talked and planned a lot around this. There will be a private space for conversations, there will be no signage outside to advertise the pharmacy and part of the construction that is the wall go all the way to the ceiling as one extra measure.

Developmental Services

- Able house now has 6 residences, they are 2 brothers, we got a variance from the state to have them both be there. It is fun to be there, it is great to watch the residents learn to live together. The staff are doing a great job. Heather Hubbard is doing a great job navigating the difference between our 2 bed homes vs 6 bed home.
- The homes on Ryan Road are going well; staff and clients are very happy.
- The annual DS Picnic happened in August instead of June this summer. Samantha was with a gentleman who has been very isolated with his mom and dad, and they had a great conversation about how important our services and his ability to be with others. He even got a little bored of the conversation and wanted to go and hang out with his friends instead.
- Direct Services Professional (DSP) Week is coming. This is a national celebration, and we have fun things planned like daily raffles for staff.
- There are massive changes happening in the DS system of care right now. Conflict of Interest (COI) is 28 days from going live. We have been working closely with the Case Management Organization (COM) to make sure that we are working together to make sure that clients are getting what they need. The case management services that are provided through the waiver will be provided through the COM's. The question was asked – How well do the COM's know our system? They are working on it, and we are working with them to help them get the knowledge they need.

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- We have been working with Kim, Derek and their teams to make sure we are in the best position possible as payment reform around the corner.

Community Relations Report

- Danielle focuses this month as Partnership, Collection and Prevention.
- September is suicide awareness and recovery month.
- We are working with Northeast Kingdom Health Services (NKHS) as we are both 988 call centers and we are working together to create videos and articles to increase awareness and knowledge of 988.
- Meaghan Malboeuf spoke at the community partnership meeting about the access center and how this can help with prevention.
- Danielle took part in the CAPITA meeting with Becca Balint at City Hall. They talked a lot about loneliness among youth and families.
- Afterglow is right around the corner on September 20, 2025, and we are partnering with them to help spread the word. There will be a large NCSS presence there on the day of the event.
- Our Parent Child Center (PCC) is partnering with Building Bridges and Washington County Mental Health Services to offer an opportunity to become a trained Dula.
- There was a news story recently that show cased Michelle Trayah who has been doing car seat checks in our community for 20 years.
- NKHS did a great article to celebrate our employment collaboration and Elaine's son Ian was the focus the article.

Human Resources Report

- The compensation project we have been working on is finally complete, thank you for your support. We have come along the way and staff have been appreciative. Another change we are facing around wages is the new law around wage transparency which went live on July 1st. Now all job postings need to have the wage listed.
- We had the audit on our 403B and it was successful. There were no findings, our current assets are 40 million. Our works compensation also passed the audit with flying colors.
- Our wellness fair went very well this year we think we had about 300 attendees. We spread out and added more space and venders.
- We just sent the turnover rates to the state as they compare all the DA, we are at about an 18% turnover rate.

Quality and Risk Management Report

- Summer is usually slower for us, however this summer it was not. The tech and facilities team worked on office moves, soar set up for the current school year, Genoa RX and conference room renovations.

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Other Business

- Jason Minor thinks the September meeting should be extended, really amazing all the transformative topics and it is amazing work that is being done and we want to hear all about it.

Motion made to adjourn by Jim McMillian. Seconded by Meg Marhsall. All in Favor.

Meeting adjourn at 8.04 pm

Minutes recorded by: Emily Richards