Meeting Title:	Board of Trustees Meeting	Chairperson:	James Moreau
Date/Time:	December 18, 2024	Location:	Norton County Hospital

Norton County Hospital
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Attended	Position
James Moreau	Board President
Jimmy Todd	Board Vice President
Jerry Hawks	Board Member
Randa Vollertsen	Board Treasurer
Lee Juenemann	Board Secretary
Andrew Black	Board Member
Robert Wyatt	Board Member
Garrett Beydler	Norton County Commissioner
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
ReChelle Horinek	NCH Chief Financial Officer
Shannan Hempler	NCH HR Director
Tabetha Harris	NCH HR Assistant/ Public Relations/ Marketing

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	Agenda Item	Action and/or Time
1.	**November 20th, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes**	Motion by **Jimmy Todd** to approve the minutes of the November 20th, 2024 meeting. Second by **Randa Vollertsen.** 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.	**Executive Session: Non-Elected Personnel**	None needed
4.	**Board Action from Executive Session**	n/a
5.	**CNO Report** Mel DeWitt, the Norton Medical Clinic Manager, presented comprehensive updates on the Nursing Department for the reporting period of November 1st to November 31st: **Key Metrics:** • E-Emergency Activations: 3 encounters in November • Daily Census: 5 patients (↑ from 2.7 patients in October 2024) • Inpatient Admissions: 15 patients (↑ from 7 patients in October 2024) • Inpatient Days: 151 days (↑ from 84 days in October 2024) • ER Visits: 127 visits (↓ from 149 visits in October 2024) • Outpatient Visits: 174 visits (↓ from 195 visits in October 2024) **People Updates:** • Laboratory Manager: Hired, set to begin with NCH on January 6, 2025 • Lab Technician, Val: Enrolled in MLT program for career development • Held a successful fundraiser for Marla Persinger, long-time NCH nurse, showing strong community support **Operations:**	

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	• Surgical Services Expansion:
	  o Dr. Gabel has signed a contract to provide surgical services on the 4th Monday of every month starting in 2025
	• Lab Equipment Upgrade:
	  o Purchase agreement signed for Ortho Vitros 5600 lab analyzer, with installation expected in January 2025
	• Surgical Sterilization Room Improvements:
	  o Ongoing upgrades, on track for completion in January 2025
	Education:
	• Call/Arrival Time Documentation:
	  o Providers and ancillary staff now documenting call and arrival times in Cerner for improved tracking
	• Patient Surge Disaster Plan:
	  o Reviewed and updated for better preparedness in emergencies
	Customer Service Initiatives:
	• Proactive Patient Care:
	  o Focus on anticipating patient needs and providing thoughtful, proactive care
	• Building Trust:
	  o Nurses play a pivotal role in building trust with patients by explaining care and taking time to address concerns	

6.	**Risk Management/ Quality Assurance** Amanda Kuxhausen, the Risk Management and Quality Assurance Coordinator, presented the following updates: **Risk Management:** • Employee Education: Education has been provided to all employees via Care Learning as of December 5th, with compliance at 78.6%. An in-service session will be conducted at the next Med-Staff meeting to address any remaining gaps. • New Quality Improvement Initiative: A new QI initiative is in place to ensure documentation for all incidents requiring follow-up, typically involving proof of education. This aims to improve overall compliance and accountability in incident documentation. **Quality:** • Patient Surveys: As of December 12th, 2024, a total of 6 patient surveys	

	have been received concerning three departments: ER, Outpatient Surgery, and PSG. The feedback is being reviewed for potential improvements. • Efficiency in Nursing Department: A meeting with Oracle was held on December 9th to explore ways to improve the efficiency of the nursing department's use of Cerner. Several staff members in various roles are currently being assessed for their proficiency in using the electronic health record system. • Nursing Department Recognition: A huge congratulations to the Nursing Department and all key players for their dedication to improving documentation. Under the direction of Nursing leadership, we've received external compliments on how well our nurses "tell the story of our patients" through accurate and thorough documentation by ensuring that notes reflect the interventions and levels of care provided to our patients.	
7.	**CIO Report** Klare Bliss, the Chief Information Officer (CIO), provided the following comprehensive updates for the last month: **Cerner EES** • Training: Amanda and Sarah have completed training on dashboards to monitor nursing documentation time. • Experian Project: The project has kicked off, and work is ongoing to establish the necessary IT connections. • Lab Analyzer MDI Interface: The integration of the lab analyzer with Cerner has begun. • OCI Migration: The OCI migration has been postponed to September 2025, with a 90-day notice given prior to the migration. • RevCycle Optimization - Cerner/Oracle Health: ReChelle is gathering details to time the workload appropriately in line with the onboarding of Experian. • Patient Accounting System Rollout: Cerner will be launching a new OH Patient Accounting system. **Cerner Change Governance** We are continuing to meet with departments requesting changes or improvements to Cerner, discuss their needs, and create Service Requests (SRs) for those changes. Current Change Governance Projects include: • Lab ABN Process: Reviewed with clinic nurses, and a lab order was fixed with an accounting rule that operates in the background.	

	• RT/Nursing EKG: Creation of one universal order for EKGs. • Outpatient Charges: Auto-population of outpatient charges. • Outpatient Orders & Tasks: Enhancements to streamline processes. • Lab Order Set for Specialty Clinic: Developing more lab orders and nursing order sets to support specialty clinics. **Cybersecurity - Arctic Wolf** • The sensor has been installed and connections are being finalized to go live and start mitigating threats. The initial report was valuable, with 409 risks identified. Most will be addressed by the end of January. One risk was mitigated, two weeks ago, by migrating to a new server earlier this year. Some risks will remain, since monitoring them moving forward is the best course of action. **Updates** • Computer and Software Updates: Computers across the hospital are being updated in phases, along with the rollout of Microsoft Office software updates.	
8.	**Medical Clinic Update** Mel DeWitt, the Norton Medical Clinic Manager, shared the following Medical Clinic updates: In the first couple of weeks of November, the clinic saw an increase in acute patients. The providers worked diligently to ensure that all acute appointments were scheduled and appropriately managed. The Saturday clinic has continued to perform well, although the last weekend had lower attendance due to the provider being called to the ER. To further support patient care, we are in the process of hiring an additional aide for the clinic.	
9.	**Ni2 Update** Jason Adams, from Ni2, provided the following comprehensive updates for Ni2, via zoom, from the last month: It has been a solid collection month, with a cash trend of 1.4 million. Although accounts receivable (AR) based on volume and cash decreased slightly, the trend is moving in the right direction. Overall, things are definitely progressing well following the Cerner conversion.	
10.	**CFO Report of Statistical/Financial Information**	

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ReChelle Horinek, the Chief Financial Officer, presented comprehensive financial and statistical updates for November 2024:

Outstanding Month for NCH

It has been another outstanding month! November saw a record revenue of $2.9 million, with a solid increase in patient numbers. Year-to-date, we've gained $570k over last year, marking a significant upswing of over $900k. All departments, except one ancillary department, have shown increases this month.

Income Statement

- Gross Patient Revenue for November: $2,890,226
  All revenue categories were above budget for the month. Contractual adjustments remain consistent with gross revenue percentages (estimated at 45-48%).
- Operating Expenses: $1,615,136, with temporary staffing costs helping professional fees come in below budget for the first time this fiscal year.
- Other Operating Revenue includes payments for 340B, sale of services, and dietary revenue.
- Net Gain from Operations for the month: $136,517.
- Net Gain for November: $162,619
- YTD Gain for 2025: $570,408, showing a $905,235 improvement from a loss of ($334,827) in 2024 YTD.

NCH continues to make strides toward improving our financial stability.

Balance Sheet

- Cash Balance (including investments) at month-end: $402,245.
- Days of Cash on Hand: 8.05 days as of November 30, 2024. All other balances on the Balance Sheet are within normal limits.

Statistics

November's statistics directly correlate with the strong revenue performance:

- Inpatient days and swing bed days were up in November.
- Ancillary departments showed increases in both inpatient and outpatient services compared to 2023.
- Clinic visits for the year are up by 209 visits.

Other Information

- 2024 Medicare Cost Report: Filed on November 21st. The report shows a receivable of $344,736, typically received in mid-January. Due to our debt ratio being below 1.0, we will

		undergo a single audit for the USDA loan. The process has been initiated with FORVIS. • Experian Project: We've launched the Experian product for patient eligibility and cost estimates. Phases of information gathering and interface building are underway, with an estimated completion date of April 2025. • Bank Operating Account: The operating account was hacked in early December. We've filed loss claims with FDIC for over $7,000 in unauthorized transactions. The bank has replaced the funds pending the claims. The process of updating insurance company ACH deposits to a new account has begun. • 2025 Code Changes: Effective January 1, 2025, there will be updates to 420 CPT codes and 146 HCPCS codes. Since we no longer contract with Ni2 for these updates, I will be handling the necessary updates in the charge master to ensure correct claims filing. Staff education will be provided if these changes impact daily processes.	
11.		**Financial Affairs of Non-Elected Personnel** Financial Assistance YTD: $ 34,175.54 Bankruptcy YTD: --	Motion by **Randa Vollertsen** to send an amount not to exceed $37,962.00 for attempted collections, and to approve financials. Second by **Jerry Hawks** . Motion carries unanimously.
12.		**CEO Report** Kevin Faughnder, the Chief Executive Officer, provided a comprehensive report on various initiatives and updates: **Provider Interview** • Interviewed a provider last week and planning an onsite interview for the new year. **Board Bylaws Update** • Frankie is updating the board bylaws. **2024 Financial Overview** • Calendar Year (Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2024): Turned around $1,180,894 in revenue. • Comparison with 2023: From Jan-Nov 2023, we had a $906,332 loss; 2024 shows a $274,572 profit, resulting in nearly a $1.1M turnaround.	

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- Fiscal Year (Jun 30, 2023 – Jul 1, 2024): Reduced our annual operating loss by $1,050,000.
- Audit: FORVIS (audit firm) was encouraged by our progress.

Operational Improvements
- Accounts Receivable: Reduced from 60.03 days to 53.95 days (KHA target: 53 or less).
- Dietary: Increased outside sales, including concessions for Norton High School and Junior High, preparing over 1,600 items in 3 months.
- Purchasing: Changed supply contractor, reducing purchase markup by 17%.
- EVS: Implemented a new cost-effective curtain and microfiber program with CINTAS, ensuring compliance with infection control.
- Nursing: Eliminated agency staffing, saving $4,800-$7,300 per week.

Special Initiatives and Growth
- Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA): Added therapeutic counseling and psychiatry services to the Specialty Clinic, addressing critical community needs.
- Surgery Department Modernization: Updating cabinetry and installing a more efficient sink. Surgeons under contract: Dr. Wheeler (general surgery), Dr. Gabel (general surgery), and Dr. Hinze (podiatry). Completion is expected by late January 2025.
- Maintenance Department: Key in maintaining facility operations, fixing plumbing, improving safety with a door numbering system, and addressing work orders promptly.
- Radiology:
  - Installed a new CT scanner and contrast injector.
  - Expanded MRI capacity with the MRI truck on Mondays.
  - Passed the Mammography Quality Standards Act Inspection (FDA) on December 4, 2024.
- Laboratory:
  - Corrected deficiencies from the previous COLA inspection.
  - Negotiated a new analyzer contract with Cardinal Health.
  - Vitros 5600 analyzer expected to be installed early next year.

Departmental Achievements

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- Specialty Clinic Expansion: Added Rheumatology and Endocrinology services.
- HIM Department: Provided exceptional support with just two staff members.
- HR Department:
  - Successfully transitioned to a new HR Information System (UKG).
  - Additional modules will be rolled out in 2025.
- Physical Therapy:
  - Had the most financially productive year in the last decade with a smaller staff.
  - Added Caitlyn as a PT provider for Women's Health services.
- Cardiac Rehab: Expanded due to patient growth, moved to a larger room to provide more comprehensive services.
- Respiratory Therapy:
  - Achieved a 100% satisfaction rate for "would recommend to family and friends."
  - Took over management of the Nuclear Medicine Clinic.

Financial & Operational Updates
- Sales Tax: A 1% sales tax increase for healthcare passed with more than 70% of the vote, demonstrating strong community support for NCH and EMS.
- Employee Health Insurance:
  - Transitioned from United Healthcare to Blue Cross Blue Shield, receiving positive feedback from employees.
  - Reduced premiums and increased coverage.
- Cybersecurity:
  - Implementing a 24/7/365 cybersecurity program to enhance protection and monitoring.
  - IT department optimizing Cerner and standardizing systems.

Notable Provider & Clinic Updates
- Norton Medical Clinic:
  - Nearly tripled Medicare Annual Wellness visits using the Vytalize program.
  - Increased co-payment collection from 75% to 90%.
  - Increased same day/acute patient visits and began offering free hearing screenings for employees.
- Provider Team:
  - Consistently receives community compliments for their outstanding care and teamwork.

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13.	**Commissioner Report** Kudos to everybody who stepped up to the plate to make such a huge turn around.	
14.	**Board Member Reports** **Progress & Comradery**: • The sense of camaraderie and forward momentum within the team is evident and continues to drive us toward success. **New Lab Analyzer & Chemo Services**: • Question: Will the new lab analyzer allow us to keep more patients in town (e.g., for chemotherapy)? • Answer: No, the new lab analyzer will not directly impact chemotherapy services. Chemotherapy requires a specialized room with heavy-duty ventilation. This would be part of **a 5-year goal to** expand services. **Community Feedback**: • Lee shared a text from a community member: *"I keep hearing the same message of everyone being so thankful that we hired the right CEO a year ago. The public is happy with the success that the hospital has seen this year."* • This message reflects the community's appreciation of the hospital's progress and leadership. **Looking Ahead**: • The hospital is finally moving forward with momentum, and it's apparent that everyone's hard work is contributing to our shared success. • A big thank you to all!	
15.	**Other Business**	n/a
16.	**Adjourn**	Meeting adjourned at **7:36 p.m.**

Lee Jueneman, Secretary