

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba
Morongo Basin Healthcare District
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 5, 2026 at 6:15 p.m.

Convened on the La Contenta campus; the public was invited to attend the meeting on campus or via Microsoft Teams, an electronic, remote platform.

- **Mission Statement:** *To improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.*
- **Vision:** *A healthy Morongo Basin.*
- **Core Values:** *Commitment, Collaboration, Accountability, Dignity, Integrity, Equity.*

Board of Directors:

- Director Cooper
- Director Evans
- Director Markle-Greenhouse
- Director Stiemsma
- Jacqueline Todd

Administrative Staff:

- CEO Cindy Schmall (*remote*)
- Debbie Anderson, CFO
- Tricia Gehrlein, CPE&CO (*remote*)
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Beverly Krushat, Administrative Services Manager
- Janeen Duff, Director of Strategic Initiatives (*remote*)
- Tela Thornett, HR Manager
- Dianna Anderson, Community Programs Manager

Guests

- Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Care Network (*remote*)
- Elleasse Taylor, Associate, BBK (*remote*)
- Marc Greenhouse, CHC board member
- Eric Menendez, community member (*remote*)

CALL TO ORDER

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. The meeting was convened on the La Contenta campus and by electronic platform using Microsoft Teams.

ROLL CALL

Karen Graley, Board Clerk, conducted a roll call and declared a quorum.

OBSERVANCE

Director Stiemsma read the mission and vision statements. Director Evans led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Community member Eric Menendez addressed the Board. His topic was about how two patients of Hi-Desert Medical Center were discharged without a discharge plan and experienced difficulty accessing transportation. His intent is to make the District aware of the associated problem as the district's mission statement is to improve the health and wellness of the community. Tricia Gehrlein engaged with Mr. Menendez and clarified misconceptions he had of medical services being located on the La Centa property.

ACTION ITEM

OATH OF OFFICE

Board President, Dianne Markle-Greenhouse administered the oath of office to Jacqueline Todd to install her onto the Board of Directors, filling the year-long vacant seat for voting zone three.



APPROVAL OF THE MEETING AGENDA

- **Motion 26-13:** Director Evans motioned to approve the meeting agenda; second by Director Stiemsma, motion passed by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- **Motion 26-14:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve the minutes of January 8, 2026, second by Director Evans. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

PRESENTATION – *Elleasse Taylor, Associate, Best Best & Krieger, Attorneys at Law*

Ms. Taylor gave a presentation on the recent legislative changes to the California Ralph Brown Act which became effective January 1, 2026. While most of the changes do not apply to this healthcare district, she highlighted those that were applicable to MBHD. The updates to the Brown Act are meant to expand public access to these meetings.

Teleconferencing methods. The classic teleconferencing rules for board members have not changed (list remote location on agenda, post agenda at remote location and make the remote site accessible to the public, provide for public comment during the meeting). Remote attendance qualifies as part of the meeting quorum. Audio and visual capability are required to provide two-way communication.

- Just Cause: the limit for individual board member remote attendance remains limited to two times in a calendar year based on qualifying circumstances.
- The meeting minutes must now state the name of the public who attended via teleconference.
- If the board member uses “reasonable accommodations” under ADA law, listing the home address is not required (for security purposes), but the site must still be accessible to public attendance.
- If technical disruption prevents broadcasting, i.e. the Wi-Fi goes down and the meeting goes dark for those on the remote platform, the board is required to stop the meeting, fix the disruption, and then continue with the meeting.
- When there is a declaration of a local (county) or state emergency, restrictions for board member teleconferencing are relaxed.
- Military deployment of a board member was added to teleconferencing qualifying access.

Social Media.

Prior to SB707 passing, there was language that restricted members of legislative bodies from using social media. The purpose was to avoid the risk of serial meetings outside of the Brown Act provisions. Discussion of District business outside of a formal, posted meeting is considered a serial meeting (no agenda was posted, the public was not invited to the discussion and were not invited to give comments). Serial meetings are more likely to occur on social media, the risk being that board members may participate in the same group or post. Such a compromise could be considered a serial meeting.

Legal staff advises board members to not use social media. At minimum, try to not talk to each other on social media and especially not in groups or comments. The Brown Act restriction was set to expire in January 2026, but the date has been removed from the Act leaving an infinite restriction in place regarding the use of social media.



Salary and Benefits: Prior to SB 707, the requirement to publicly summarize benefit changes only applied to certain high-level directors. Ms. Taylor stated that now, before final action is enacted on salary benefits for department heads, a summary of those changes must be published to the public.

Board clerk Karen Graley asked for clarification on when the salary and benefit changes were to be published. Ms. Taylor said that the public must be made aware of the changes before they are enacted. Tricia Gehrlein asked if this requirement is only for the salaries that the board votes on or is that for all department heads? “As an example, our board votes on our CEOs salary and benefits, but not the rest of the staff.” As for how this applies to management levels, she would have to research and advise.

Special Meetings:

Prior to this enactment, elected boards were allowed to have special meetings to discuss the body's salary or benefits. The update no longer allows special meetings for that purpose. Board Clerk Karen Graley asked how this applied to an ad hoc committee appointed by the board to discuss CEO performance and related personnel issues. She also noted that the board members receive a set meeting stipend, not a salary. Ms. Taylor said she would research and advise.

Disruptive Virtual Attendees:

When using teleconferencing for public access to board meetings a disruptive attendee may be removed. Legal advises that prior to removing them attempts should be made to neutralize the disruptive behavior, such as muting them, cutting off their camera, not allowing them access to speak. If that does not work the board is allowed to remove them and continue with the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER TO CHC GOVERNING

In the January regular meeting of the Board of Directors, Director Cooper was appointed to represent the District board. Appointment of the second representative was deferred to the February meeting with the consensus to appoint Jackie Todd.

- **Motion 26-15** Motion by Director Evans, second by Director Stiemsma, to appoint Director Todd as the second representative to the CHC Governing Board in compliance with the co-application agreement. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

APPROVE ORDINANCE 2026-001

Ms. Schmall introduced the action item explaining that this was a necessary document as part of the CUPCCA Act.

- **Motion 26-16:** Director Evans motioned to approve Ordinance 2025-001 to establish informal bidding procedures in accordance with the Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act (Public Contract Code Section 22000 et seq.), second by Director Stiemsma. Motion passed by roll call vote.

APPROVE CAPITAL EXPENSE INCREASE

Ms. Schmall introduced the action item, providing background for the capital request for \$9,207. The older Split Rock buildings were severely compromised and leaked water into the interior. The original capital budget was \$25,000 but the bid came in at \$28,000 followed by change orders to repair compromised timbers and an original roofing layer that had to be removed. Director Evans noted that there will be unexpected maintenance and repair costs for older structures, but the outlay is still less than a new structure.



- **Motion 26-17:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve an additional \$9,207 capital expense for the Split Rock roofing project, second by Director Evans. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

STAFF REPORTS

HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY REPORT

Tela Thornett, HR Manager, presented HR data for the fourth quarter of 2025.

- 8 Terminations: 7 were voluntary, one involuntary
- 8 Newly hired: one part-time physician assistant and one full-time Director
- 97 employees: 14 part-time and 83 full-time
- 8% turnover rate, target is less than 10% national recommendation
- 31% accumulative 2025 annual turnover rate; 38% for 2024

Ms. Thornett gave an overview of HR projects currently in process, such as an audit of employee benefits data and the restructuring of employee annual reviews. Ms. Schmall noted that all the performance evaluation forms are being restructured to incorporate CEO goals.

Director Evans asked about progress on the restructuring of the performance improvement process. Ms. Schmall responded that the new evaluation template is part of the performance improvement process, ensuring that employees understand their role within the organization. The corrective action policy and performance improvement process were implemented last year. Our goal is to help employees be successful. She noted that Tricia Gehrlein has had a huge role in developing protocols so employees can be held accountable for their performance.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. Anderson reported that the consolidated financials for the month of December 2025 show income of \$792,931 and year to date income of \$2,191,255. Non-clinic financials for December show income of \$735,171 and a year-to-date income of \$1,976,695. The health center financials for the month of December show income of \$57,759 and year to date income of \$214,560.

A recap of the 1st half of the year of the clinics by service line is in Table 1. Per review, dental and BH are the service lines struggling the most. Also, if we look at the net surplus, \$155,273 of that surplus is from grants. Normally the grants column should be zero (since we are reimbursed for all expenses); however, we bought some equipment that qualified for capitalization on the Statement of Net Position, which is why the grants column is showing “income”. If you back out the grant’s “income”, then you are left with a net surplus of \$59,287, which is essentially a break-even of the clinics.

The Directors were delighted to hear that the Behavioral Health department shows a profit in December. This service line has a long history of being in the red, so this financial achievement is cause for celebration.

- **Motion 26-18:** Director Stiemsma motioned to accept the financial report as presented, second by Director Evans; motion passed by unanimous vote.

CEO STAFF REPORT

Ms. Schmall referred the Directors to tab 5. She reported that she will be attending the ACHD annual board meeting in Sacramento on February 26-27 and will bring back any pertinent information. Additionally, AB1113, known as the FQHC Mission Spend Ratio bill was resurrected but did not pass. We will continue to monitor this.



- We participated in the Point in Time Count on January 22, 2026. Our Community Health Worker (CHW) team had some success connecting unhoused individuals with resources and have heard back that at least one person followed through and is receiving assistance. Actual data typically takes about 3-6 months before we get any feedback.
- San Bernardino County Public Health presented a Community Forum on January 14 here at the district. 30 community members signed up and 15 people showed up to participate. Two District board members and one CHC board member attended. Thanks to Dianne Markle Greenhouse, Heidi Steimsma and Marc Greenhouse for their participation.
- The district has scheduled the next Employee Forum on February 12 at 8:00 a.m. We will provide breakfast as well as training to staff in attendance.

HEALTH CENTER

- The IEHP mobile mammography program scheduled to return on January 30 has been cancelled by IEHP. The IEHP team is actively looking for a different vendor with the hopes of restarting mammogram scheduling soon.
- We have been recruiting for a doctor in our Yucca Valley location with little success. Our efforts have been assisted by another provider of ours who has referred a friend. We have interviews scheduled with the applicant and hope to have more info for you soon. Other key provider searches include one full-time physician, Nurse Practitioner and one LCSW. Interviews for all three positions are scheduled.
- Staff are working on the Universal Data Set (UDS) for 2025, an annual program update with HRSA. Reports and information will be submitted to HRSA by February 15. The number of patients seen has increased from 8,800 in 2024 to 9,221 in 2025.
- Some phone issues resulted in complaints from our patients. We identified the issue and have worked with the system and third-party vendor to correct this.

CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION

Calendars for February, March and April were reviewed.

- Karen will poll the ad hoc committee for available dates to convene for the CEO performance evaluation process pending feedback from legal counsel on Brown Act updates.
- March 7 and 8 Flying Doctors event at YVHS. Free care will be given to the first 50 people for vision and the first 150 for dental care. We have invited District staff to volunteer. Outreach staff will have a table at the event.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

- DIRECTOR COOPER: "Always grateful for the information presented in these meetings."
- DIRECTOR EVANS: She thanked Jackie Todd for returning to the board. She thanked Beverly Krushat and Karen Graley for their ongoing support to the board. She noted we can all sleep easily knowing the team works so well on behalf of the community. She also thanked Eric Menendez for his public comment.
- DIRECTOR STIEMSMA: "Congrats to the district on our reduced employee turnover rate!"



- DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: “Thank you staff, great job! FYI for the San Bernardino County Community Forum, the county sent 10 employees to host the event. We were the pilot program for their program which will be expanded to other areas of the county. They were pleased with our turnout. It would have been nice to have more community engagement. It was a productive event.”
- DIRECTOR TODD: “Glad to be back and support the district.”

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m. to closed session pursuant to Section 32106 of the Health and Safety Code for report involving trade secrets. Estimated date of public disclosure is May 2026. The Directors reconvened to open session at 8:20 p.m. Director Greenhouse announced there was no reportable action. Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Stiemsma".

Heidi Stiemsma, Secretary of the Board

Board meeting minutes recorded by K. Graley, Board Clerk.