Brookings Health System Board of Trustees

Minutes of Meeting
Monday, September 29, 2025

The Brookings Health System Board of Trustees held a meeting at the Brookings Hospital in the Board Room with the following members present: David Meyer, Mary Anne Krogh (ph.), Sheila Anderson, Jenn Barlund, Shelby Eischens, Tracy Greene (ph.), Don Greiner, and David Jones
Ex-officio: Lisa Hager
Absent: Lynn Darnall
Guest: Brookings City Clerk, Bonnie Foster

Management Present: Jason Merkley, CEO; Tammy Hillestad, CNO; Melissa Wagner, CFO and Sheri Wiig, recorder

Vice President Meyer called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

OPEN MEETING LAWS
City Clerk, Bonnie Foster, presented a review of South Dakota Open Meeting Laws. Senate Bill 74 went into effect July 1, 2025, which is a new law requiring all governing bodies and their local boards to conduct an annual review of Open Meeting Laws. Going forward, the Brookings Health System Board of Trustees plans to review the SD Open Meeting Laws annually in September. Foster was thanked for providing an informative overview and exited at 5:13 p.m.

AGENDA
A motion was made by Anderson, seconded by Barlund to approve the agenda. All present voted in favor; motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA
A motion was made by Greiner, seconded by Jones to approve the following consent agenda items. The motion carried unanimously.
A. August 25, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting minutes
B. August 2025 financials (total payables in August were $2,574,750.85)

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS
Articles of interest included: “Intelligent Care: How AI is Driving Healthcare Transformation”, *Healthcare Executive*; “Unsung and Under Siege”, *Managed Healthcare*; “SD Rural Transformation Plan”, *SD Department of Social Services.*

Merkley shared information on the SD Rural Transformation Plan created under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act which established a $50 billion fund to help transform healthcare in rural communities across the country. The state of South Dakota is hoping to receive between $100 and $200 million through this program. The SD Department of Social Services and Department of Health requested input from rural providers and communities across the state. Merkley submitted input on behalf of Brookings Health System which included all-encompassing transformational concepts based on the programs strategic goals. The final application will be submitted by the Office of the Governor early November and CMS will announce awardees by December 31, 2025. Merkley also offered to represent independents within SD and volunteer his time if State leadership creates a taskforce to administer/work on the plan.

REPORTS

Executive Reports

CEO Report

Merkley noted he attended a session at the SDAHO Annual Convention last week presented by Rebecca Vandekop, MD. Vandekop spoke about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it transforms and enhances healthcare today through diagnostics, workflows, and patient care. Merkley will inquire if Dr. Vandekop would present some of the AI information at a future Board meeting. Merkley also noted data from the updated Brookings Health System economic impact analysis and community benefit report is impressive in overall contributions to the region. Discussion was also held on potential implications for hospitals and healthcare in the event of the looming government shutdown on September 30, 2025.

CFO Report

Wagner highlighted improvements since 2023 in key metrics i.e., Net Days in AR, and reductions of prior authorization denials due to denial recovery outsourcing. Denial recovery processes will be brought in house once Brookings Health goes live with Epic. Wagner noted there have been no corporate compliance concerns thus far in 2025. Discussion was also held on Medicare Advantage plans and how other health systems are terminating MA plans due to ongoing challenges and concerns that negatively affect patients, operations, hospital resources and finances.

CNO Report

Hillestad shared OB Director, Michelle Sand, and State Rep. Mellissa Heermann, R-Brookings, have been asked to present information at the Iowa Chapter of the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) conference in October. Together they will share information regarding the success and advantages of Brookings Health's Doula Program and legislative efforts taken in obtaining South Dakota Medicaid coverage for doula services.

Board Committee Reports

Administrative Committee Meeting

Vice President Meyer provided a report; the Administrative Committee met on September 23rd. Topics of discussion included Yorkshire Medical Building Open House/Ribbon Cutting, Workday/Epic, City/County Board Member Application Timeline/Board Nominee, Community Development, OBBB/SD Rural Health Transformation Plan, Workforce Development Initiatives, Budgets/Market Analysis, Open Meeting Laws, and October Committee Meeting Dates.

Finance Committee

Committee Chair Greiner provided a report; the Finance Committee met on September 23rd. The committee reviewed and approved the August 2025 payables, financials, and adjustments. Total salaries and wages in August were $2,392,095. Other topics included Market/Wage Analysis and FY26 Budgets.

Quality Committee

Committee Chair Krogh provided a report; the Quality Committee met on September 23rd. Invited guest, Michelle Sand, Obstetrics Director, presented information on OB Patient Safety Bundles (PSB) which focus on improving the process of care and patient outcomes in unexpected complications from delivery. Sand also shared information regarding benefits of having a professionally trained doula for support before, during, and after childbirth. Other topics of discussion included Q1 and Q2 2025 falls and medication errors, Q1 and Q2 2025 Patient Satisfaction, and the Hospital Readmission Reduction Program.

Upon motion by Anderson, second by Eischens, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Anne Krogh, Secretary