

CALL TO ORDER

Northern Inyo Healthcare District (NIHD) Chair Turner called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

PRESENT

Jean Turner, Chair
Melissa Best-Baker, Vice Chair
David Lent, Secretary
Laura Smith, Member at Large
Maggie Egan, Director

Christian Wallis, Chief Executive Officer
Allison Partridge, Chief Operations Officer / Chief Nursing Officer
Adam Hawkins, DO, Chief Medical Officer
Alison Murray, Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Business Development Officer
Andrea Mossman, Chief Financial Officer

ABSENT

Samantha Jeppsen, MD, Chief of Staff

TELECONFERENCING

Notice has been posted, and a quorum participated from locations within the jurisdiction.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Turner reported that at this time, audience members may speak on any items not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of the Board.

Public Comment:

NIHD employees and community members spoke about wages, cost of living, and union negotiations, emphasizing difficulty affording housing and basic expenses, concerns about changes to holiday pay and PTO usage, and frustration with the pace and tone of bargaining. Several speakers referenced a planned unfair labor practice strike vote, urging Directors to approve a cost-of-living adjustment and noting the risk of losing experienced nurses and technical staff to better-paying employers.

Speakers also addressed recent and planned changes to orthopedic services and the status of Dr. Loy, sharing personal and professional stories about the importance of local orthopedic coverage, timely ER access for serious injuries, and the financial and clinical impact of transferring patients to other hospitals. Staff and community members described positive experiences with Dr. Loy and the orthopedic team, and expressed concern about the loss of local services and on-call coverage. One commenter thanked Directors for prioritizing staff and patient safety related to the Dr. Loy matter, while others urged reconsideration and alignment of separation timelines.

Additional comments included concerns about administrative and executive compensation, perceived inequities between leadership and frontline staff, and the financial direction of the District, including questions about CEO salary, work expectations, and future bond obligations. Commenters also noted online information suggesting NIHD was in financial crisis, and asked that the District to address misleading search results and public perceptions. After confirming

there were no further in-person or online speakers, the Chair closed public comment.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Turner called attention to the Consent Agenda.

The following item was pulled from the consent agenda.

- Patient Visit Registration Related to Accidents on Northern Inyo Healthcare District (NIHD) Property

Staff then provided clarification on several remaining policies:

1. October 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- i. Updated for minor corrections based on the supplemental memo, with no substantial changes.
- ii. The cost of the contract referenced in the CEO Report will be added to the October 15 minutes.

2. October 15, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes

- i. Updated for minor corrections based on the supplemental memo, with no substantial changes.

3. Medical Staff Department Policy – Surgery

- i. Clarification was provided regarding “re-entry,” confirming it applies to physicians who have been out of surgical practice for more than two years and must complete required steps before resuming practice.

4. Processing Returned Mail

- i. Formatting correction: Item 4 will be changed to letter A.

5. Processing United States Postal Service Mail

- i. Confidential mail is not opened and is routed appropriately; standard mail that includes a payment is directed to the correct department.

6. Prevention of Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTIs)

- i. “Indwelling” was confirmed as the correct medical term, and redundancy in the infection prevention section will be removed.

Motion by Best-Baker: approve the consent agenda with the modifications

2nd: Lent

Pass: 4-0

AD HOC COMMITTEE

Director Lent presented the Ad Hoc Committee’s report regarding the Zone 1 Board vacancy. He explained that the committee (Directors Turner and Lent) spent a full day reviewing six applications, interviewing candidates, and deliberating on their qualifications, including knowledge of NIHD, understanding of governance, alignment with the District’s mission, and ability to work collaboratively as part of a team. Following this process, the committee recommended Margaret “Maggie” Egan for appointment to the Zone 1 seat, noting her long-term experience at NIHD, familiarity with policy oversight and

strategic direction, calm and thoughtful demeanor, and commitment to serving the community.

Public Comment:

Speakers highlighted Egan's experience with NIHD, familiarity with District processes, and professionalism, and expressed confidence that she would serve the District well. Comments also encouraged Directors that, if it chooses to adjust the vacancy-filling process in the future, it should consider using a three-person interview panel consisting of two board members and one community member to avoid Brown Act limitations while enhancing fairness and transparency.

Board Discussion:

Director Smith expressed concern with the appointment process—specifically that only two board members conducted the interviews—and requested that the selection procedure be revisited by the Governance Committee for possible future changes. She emphasized that her concerns were with the process, not with Ms. Egan personally, and noted that several applicants brought strong skills and experience. Other Directors acknowledged the strength of the applicant pool, expressed support for Ms. Egan's qualifications, and noted that the current process follows existing policy, which can be reviewed going forward.

Motion by Best-Baker: appoint Margaret Egan to fill the Zone 1 vacancy on the Board of Directors

2nd: Lent

Pass: 4-0

Egan took the oath of office in accordance with state requirements, affirming her commitment to support and defend the Constitutions of the United States and the State of California and to faithfully discharge the duties of a Board Director, by CEO Wallis. Upon completing the oath, Ms. Egan joined the Directors and assumed her seat for the remainder of the meeting.

ACHD LETTER OF SUPPORT

Turner reported that she will be stepping down from her position on the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD) Board of Directors after nearly three years of service. She described the value of the role, noting that the ACHD Board consists of both trustees and CEOs and provides important legislative, policy, and rural-hospital advocacy updates. To ensure Northern Inyo Healthcare District maintains its representation at the state level, she recommended submitting a letter of support nominating CEO Wallis to fill the district's seat.

Public Comment: none

Board Discussion:

Directors discussed the time commitment required for ACHD board service. Turner explained that in-person obligations are limited to one trip during the annual conference and one strategic planning or evaluation session per year,

with all other meetings held via Zoom. Directors supported maintaining the district's presence and engagement with the association.

Motion by Best-Baker: nominate Christian Wallis to the ACHD Board.

2nd: Lent

Pass: 5-0

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Five Star Bank

CEO Wallis reported that, with District approval, the district transferred approximately \$10 million from Eastern Sierra Bank to Five Star Bank between October 23 and 27. The move increased the district's earnings from 0.5 percent to 4.2 percent interest. In the first seven days, the district earned \$8,312 in interest at the new rate. When projected over a month, this reflects an estimated \$30,000 to \$33,000 in additional interest income, and between \$350,000 and \$400,000 annually. CEO Wallis noted that this financial strategy will significantly benefit the district and thanked Directors for their support.

Public Comment: none

Board Discussion:

Directors thanked CEO Wallis for bringing forward the recommendation and noted that the increased interest revenue reflects strong financial stewardship and meaningful improvement in district resources.

IT Director Introduction

CEO Wallis introduced Chad Henderson as the district's new IT Director. Chad comes from Nebraska with more than 22 years of rural healthcare IT experience, including leadership in network stability, system evaluation, and long-term technology planning. He shared that his early focus at NIHD includes assessing all systems and software, stabilizing the network, and developing a three- to five-year IT strategy. CEO Wallis noted that Chad was pulled into an Incident Command meeting on his second day and helped resolve a major IT issue, showing strong leadership and quick adaptability. CEO Wallis also thanked IT Manager Kim Pham for stepping immediately into leadership after the prior director's departure, identifying critical issues, and maintaining operations during the transition.

Public comment:

A community member asked about the previous IT Director. CEO Wallis confirmed that he accepted a position at the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station to be closer to his family.

Board Discussion:

Directors welcomed Chad to NIHD and recognized the importance of experienced IT leadership, particularly given the district's recent IT challenges and cybersecurity needs.

CyberMaxx Update

CyberMaxx provided a brief update on NIHD's managed detection and response services, noting that the program is fully operational and actively monitoring threats 24/7. Representatives reviewed recent activity trends and emphasized their continued partnership with NIHD's IT team to quickly investigate and contain potential risks.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion:

Directors expressed appreciation for the strengthened cybersecurity posture and reiterated the importance of maintaining strong protections given ongoing risks to healthcare systems.

CSDA Presentation

CEO Wallis introduced CSDA as the statewide association supporting special districts with legislative updates, governance resources, policy templates, and training. CSDA Field Coordinator Erasmo Viveros highlighted available tools, including cost-saving programs, on-demand education, and the CSDA Communities forum, and noted plans to establish an Inyo–Mono chapter.

Public Comment: none

Board Discussion

Directors expressed appreciation for the resources and agreed to ensure Directors and staff are fully enrolled to access CSDA trainings and materials.

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

Auxiliary Update

Auxiliary President Karen Benson, accompanied by the Auxiliary treasurer, Laile Giansetto reported that the group's primary mission remains raising funds to purchase equipment for the hospital. So far this year, members have contributed approximately 4,438 volunteer hours and generated about \$8,490 from the Holiday Boutique and related activities, with additional income expected from the early December wholesale sale and year-end donations. The Auxiliary purchased three new pieces of equipment for the hospital this year and anticipates receiving around \$17,500 in grant funding. Benson noted ongoing challenges with aging and declining membership and difficulty recruiting younger volunteers, and shared that the group is exploring options such as at-home crafters and a greater focus on handmade items in the hospital gift shop, which currently operates three days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Directors and staff expressed strong appreciation for the Auxiliary's work, recognizing that the group has funded more than \$830,000 in equipment for the hospital over the years.

Public Comment: none

Board Discussion:

Directors thanked the Auxiliary for its volunteer hours, long-standing support, and consistent equipment contributions. Directors expressed appreciation for

the boutique and gift shop efforts, acknowledged the challenges of volunteer recruitment, and emphasized their willingness to help identify new volunteers and promote Auxiliary activities when possible.

Foundation Update

Foundation member Pete Watercott provided the update on behalf of the Northern Inyo Hospital Foundation, noting that the Board recently welcomed two new members, Joanne Parsons and John Marko, and continues active recruitment efforts. He emphasized the Foundation's commitment to partnering closely with the Hospital Board and Administration—not acting independently—when determining what items to fundraise for. Watercott highlighted the Foundation's ongoing support of the Care Shuttle program, its July two-day strategic planning session, and the fundraising goal of raising approximately \$250,000 in 2026 through events such as a spring golf tournament, a possible gala, and a community concert featuring a military band to honor veterans. He also underscored the Foundation's role in positive community engagement and in providing accurate information to the public, and invited Directors to attend Foundation meetings, held the second Tuesday of each month at noon, as well as upcoming events once dates are finalized.

Public Comment: none

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Governance Organization Alignment and CEO Performance: Jacob Green Contract

Staff introduced the item by explaining that the CEO selection process naturally leads into establishing a formal CEO performance evaluation structure. Turner and Lent shared that, after attending the ACHD Annual Conference, they identified Jacob Green & Associates as a potential resource to support improved governance practices, board alignment, and development of clear expectations for the CEO. Staff noted that Jacob Green emphasized the importance of foundational elements—mission, vision, values, strategic goals, and board cohesion—which underpin any meaningful evaluation process.

Public Comment: none

Board Discussion:

Directors discussed the importance of establishing clear expectations and board alignment before conducting the CEO's first evaluation. While supportive of using a third-party facilitator to strengthen governance and improve cohesion, several directors raised concerns about timing and cost given recent expenditures and ongoing labor negotiations. Directors agreed it was not the right moment to proceed and recommended revisiting the proposal in early 2026.

Motion by Best-Baker: postpone action to a later date

2nd: Smith

Pass: 4-1

Opposed: Turner

QUALITY COMMITTEE

Quality Dashboard

Quality Manager Feinberg presented the quarterly Quality Dashboard, summarizing performance across core quality and patient safety measures for the reporting period. She reviewed progress on key indicators, noted areas where targets were met, and identified measures requiring additional improvement work. Feinberg also outlined ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening clinical consistency and enhancing reporting accuracy.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion:

Directors asked brief clarifying questions and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive quarterly review, noting the value of tracking trends over longer time periods to support sustained quality improvement.

Community Health Needs Assessment

CEO Wallis reported that the Community Health Needs Assessment has launched in partnership with Ovation, with a major focus on broad community outreach to surpass the 670 responses received in the prior cycle. Ovation will compile survey and demographic data into a final report. Wallis also shared that NIHD is partnering with Southern Inyo Healthcare District, adding three additional survey locations to capture their community's needs at no cost. Both districts are jointly promoting the survey to ensure strong participation across Inyo County.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion:

Directors expressed support and appreciation for the expanded effort and the partnership with Southern Inyo.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Strategic Growth, Wipfli

CEO Wallis reported that NIHD has begun the Wipfli strategic growth project, starting with an extensive two-month data-gathering phase across all departments. Wipfli will merge NIHD data with state datasets to analyze service gaps, provider needs, and patient leakage, producing a data-driven picture of the market. The results will guide future recruitment and strategic planning to keep more patients receiving care within the community.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion:

Directors expressed support for the structured, data-driven approach.

Financial and Statistical Report

CFO Mossman presented first-quarter FY 2026 results, reporting a \$4.7 million loss driven by lower inpatient admissions, reduced ER volume, fewer inpatient surgeries, and a 36% drop in billable observation hours following a required regulatory correction. Surgical volumes overall met budget due to strong

general surgery performance, though orthopedic surgical volume is still ramping up slower than anticipated under the Mammoth Orthopedic Institute contract. Expenses were only slightly over budget, with department leaders actively managing staffing, overtime, and cost centers. Cash decreased by \$3.3 million—less than the income-statement loss—due to favorable timing and stronger patient collections, with AR days improving to 62. Mossman also reviewed bond requirements, days cash on hand, and noted that upcoming IGT payments and the pending Employee Retention Credit are expected to significantly improve the District's financial position later in the fiscal year. Directors asked questions and acknowledged both the challenges and recent improvements in revenue cycle and operational management.

Public Comment: none

Board Discussion:

Directors discussed the continuing financial challenges, noting operating losses but acknowledging improved revenue-cycle performance and stronger departmental budget ownership. Directors also raised concerns about orthopedic call coverage and recent transfers, prompting clarification from leadership about efforts to restore comprehensive orthopedic services.

Motion by Best-Baker: accept the Financial and Statistical Report

2nd: Egan

Pass: 5-0

**GENERAL INFORMATION
FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Directors expressed enthusiasm for the Community Health Needs Assessment, noting the value of conducting it jointly with Northern Inyo and Southern Inyo. Directors also highlighted the importance of the survey and offered to assist with outreach. Directors encouraged members to familiarize themselves with key metrics from the quality dashboard so they can confidently address community questions.

Egan introduced herself and shared her professional background, noting her long career in healthcare and eagerness to learn the Board's processes. Chair Turner welcomed her and explained the district's structured onboarding process, with sessions beginning the following morning. Turner also reminded Directors of upcoming ACHD training requirements and shared conference dates for the next annual meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment at 8:28 pm.

Jean Turner
Northern Inyo Healthcare District
Chair

Northern Inyo Healthcare District Board of Directors
Regular Meeting

November 19, 2025

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Attest:



David Lent
Northern Inyo Healthcare District
Secretary