

Employee Advisory Council (EAC) – Full Meeting Minutes (Detailed)

Date: April 30, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Location: Admin Conference Large / Virtual

Attendance

In-Person:

- Lindsay Cale
- Molly Williams
- Jody Baker
- Morgan Miller

- Lori Palmer
- Wesley Norman

Virtual:

- Sonya Myers
- Shayla (Centerville)

Opening & Welcome

Lindsay Cale welcomed attendees and thanked the group for continued participation and engagement in the Employee Advisory Council (EAC). The meeting began with acknowledgment of the progress made since the inaugural meeting and appreciation for the group's willingness to openly discuss organizational themes, communication challenges, and workplace culture.

Lindsay reminded the group that the purpose of the EAC is to:

- Identify organizational themes and opportunities
- Bring forward actionable ideas
- Improve communication, culture, and employee experience
- Maintain focus on system-wide improvement rather than individual grievances

The group was reminded that the EAC functions as an advisory and action-oriented council focused on organizational improvement.

Psychological Safety Discussion & Leadership Topic

Lori Palmer presented a leadership topic centered on **psychological safety in the workplace**.

Lori shared that after the previous meeting, she researched the concept further and reflected on how psychological safety impacts employee engagement, communication, and workplace culture.

Definition & Discussion

Psychological safety was described as:

- Feeling comfortable speaking up at work
- Asking questions without fear
- Admitting mistakes openly
- Sharing ideas honestly without fear of embarrassment, punishment, or retaliation

The group discussed that when employees do not feel psychologically safe:

- They may stop speaking up
- Avoid asking questions
- Fail to report mistakes or concerns
- Become disengaged
- Experience increased stress and burnout

A key point emphasized was:

“Silence is not the absence of problems, but a sign that people believe speaking up won’t help.”

Lori clarified that psychological safety:

- Is not about comfort at all times
- Is not about everyone agreeing
- Does not avoid difficult conversations

Rather, it is about:

- Respectful communication
- Honest dialogue
- Permission to contribute openly

Workplace Behaviors Discussed

The group discussed how small daily behaviors influence workplace safety and culture, including:

- Public criticism
- Sarcasm
- Eye rolling
- Dismissive behavior
- Gossip
- Exclusion
- Differences in tone toward individuals

The group acknowledged that even unintentional behaviors can create environments where employees feel unwelcome or unsafe.

Participants reflected on the importance of:

- Acknowledging coworkers
- Maintaining respectful communication
- Being intentional about inclusive interactions

Several participants expressed appreciation for the vulnerability and honesty involved in presenting the topic.

Reflection Questions Shared

Lori referenced a resource titled:

“Safe Haven: Fostering Psychological Safety at Work”

Reflection questions discussed included:

- Are employees encouraged to ask questions without fear?
- How do leaders respond to mistakes?
- Can employees share concerns without fear of consequences?
- Are employees comfortable challenging assumptions or seeking clarification?

The discussion reinforced the idea that psychological safety develops through consistent daily behaviors over time.

Review of Previous Action Items

Lindsay reviewed action items identified during the April 9 meeting.

1. Communication Tool Awareness & Standardization

The group revisited ongoing concerns regarding organizational communication tools and communication overload.

Topics Discussed:

- Intermedia Unite
- Microsoft Teams
- Artera
- Email communication
- IT help desk systems
- Work order systems

Key Concerns Identified:

- Employees are overwhelmed by multiple communication platforms
- Lack of standardization across departments
- Unclear expectations regarding which tools should be used for specific purposes
- Concerns regarding HIPAA compliance and secure communication
- Difficulty managing multiple communication streams simultaneously, especially in front desk/reception roles

The group identified the need to:

- Clearly define the purpose of each communication tool
- Improve education around approved uses
- Partner with IT to clarify compliance expectations
- Reduce communication confusion and redundancy where possible

HIPAA & Communication Security Concerns

Discussion occurred regarding:

- Whether Microsoft Teams should be used for patient-related communication
- Historical confusion around HIPAA compliance
- Concerns regarding cloud-based systems and secure messaging

The group agreed that clearer organizational guidance is needed regarding:

- What tools are approved for PHI/patient communication
- Appropriate staff communication methods
- Expectations for secure communication practices

Communication Framework Discussion

The group discussed the importance of separating:

1. Patient communication
2. Internal staff communication
3. Emergency communication

There was agreement that the organization may benefit from:

- A communication framework
- Tool-specific guidance
- Staff education materials
- Standardized expectations

Communication Subcommittee

A communication-focused subcommittee was discussed.

Morgan Miller and Molly Williams agreed to assist with:

- Communication materials
- Staff-facing educational resources
- Potential visual guides/flyers in partnership with IT and Marketing

The group acknowledged that:

- Defining communication expectations must occur before creating educational materials

EAC Teams Chat Discussion

The group discussed expectations for the EAC Teams chat.

Discussion included:

- Whether members should freely post ideas as they arise
- Creating dedicated channels for ideas and discussion topics
- Encouraging ongoing collaboration between meetings

Consensus supported:

- Using the Teams chat actively
- Sharing ideas in real time
- Creating subcategories/channels if needed

Organizational Communication / “All Staff” Communication Concept

Lindsay shared examples from previous organizational experiences involving:

- Organization-wide communication channels
- Internal culture announcements
- Event reminders
- Community-building updates

Examples included:

- Weather announcements
- Organizational celebrations
- Retirements
- Employee recognition
- Event reminders

The group discussed:

- Potential overlap with “Clinic Connection”
- Whether another communication channel would create redundancy
- Concern that not all employees read the current newsletter consistently

No decisions were made, but the concept was left open for future consideration.

Anti-Bullying / Workplace Behavior Training

Lindsay provided an update regarding the anti-bullying and workplace behavior initiative.

Plans discussed:

- Development of HealthStream-based training
- Incorporation of culture-focused educational content
- Ongoing organizational learning modules tied to identified trends/themes

Potential training formats discussed included:

- Voice-over PowerPoints
- Recorded live training
- Interactive materials
- Breakroom educational postings

The group agreed that:

- Repetition and reinforcement are important for cultural change
- Culture messaging should remain visible and ongoing
- Targeted trainings can address recurring organizational themes

Lindsay shared plans to distribute draft training materials to the group for review in the coming weeks.

Employee Handbook Discussion

The group briefly revisited the idea of exploring:

- A simplified employee handbook
- Easier-to-access employee guidance materials

The item remains under consideration for future discussion.

Emergency Text Messaging System

The group discussed the possibility of implementing an employee emergency text messaging system.

Discussion Points:

- Employees in many roles are not consistently at desks or computers
- Current systems do not reliably reach all employees during emergencies
- Emergency communication needs differ from general communication

Examples discussed included:

- Weather closures
- Shelter-in-place situations
- Safety emergencies across locations

The group discussed an opt-in text alert system where employees could:

- Subscribe/unsubscribe via text
- Receive emergency-only notifications

There was strong agreement that:

- Emergency communication should remain separate from routine communication
- Minimal use is important to maintain effectiveness and trust in the system

Morgan agreed to bring feedback from the discussion to an upcoming marketing/vendor meeting.

Department Meeting Coverage

Lindsay updated the group regarding efforts to:

- Compile a list of department meetings across the organization
- Determine opportunities for EAC representation and updates

Discussion included:

- Assigning EAC members to department meetings

- Providing EAC updates to teams
- Gathering employee feedback directly from departments

The group discussed beginning broader outreach and updates in May.

Additional Topics Brought Forward

Operational Planning & Logistics (Wesley Norman)

Wesley raised concerns regarding:

- Large purchases
- Grants
- Equipment logistics
- Organizational planning after items are ordered

Discussion included:

- Delivery coordination
- Storage planning
- Deployment and setup processes
- Communication gaps related to organizational purchases

The group agreed this is an organizational process opportunity worthy of further exploration.

Conference Room Etiquette (Molly Williams & Jody Baker)

Discussion occurred regarding:

- Proper conference room booking
- Avoiding interruptions during meetings
- Respecting private or confidential meetings
- Leaving rooms clean and prepared for the next group

Additional concerns included:

- Employees entering rooms without checking schedules
- Calendar confusion
- Scheduling overlap misunderstandings

The group emphasized:

- Booking rooms appropriately
- Ending meetings on time
- Maintaining shared spaces respectfully

Resource Utilization / Waste Reduction

Molly discussed the large amount of usable office supplies and furniture stored in the basement.

Examples included:

- Binders
- Office chairs
- Desks
- Lamps
- Office equipment

The group discussed encouraging staff to:

- Check existing inventory before ordering new supplies
- Reduce unnecessary spending
- Better utilize available organizational resources

This aligned with nonprofit stewardship values.

Cross-Location Communication Concerns

Shayla shared that staff at other locations sometimes feel disconnected from activity occurring in Ottumwa.

Discussion acknowledged:

- Challenges with multi-site communication
- Feelings of exclusion or lack of visibility
- The need for more inclusive communication strategies across all locations

Employee Morale & Appreciation (Morgan Miller)

Morgan discussed:

- Small morale-building activities such as popcorn days
- Opportunities to expand appreciation efforts across all locations

The group discussed:

- Consistency in employee appreciation
- Small gestures having meaningful impact
- Ensuring all sites feel included in morale-building efforts

Membership Process Discussion

The group briefly discussed:

- Future development of a formal EAC membership process
- Expectations for adding/removing members
- Ensuring representation across departments

Further discussion will occur at a future meeting.

Closing Remarks

Lindsay thanked all participants for:

- Open discussion
- Thoughtful contributions
- Willingness to engage in meaningful organizational conversations

The group acknowledged that:

- Communication remains the largest current focus area
- Psychological safety and workplace culture are foundational themes
- The EAC continues building momentum and structure

Participants were encouraged to:

- Continue bringing forward themes and ideas
- Volunteer for future leadership/learning topics
- Share EAC updates with teams

The meeting concluded with appreciation for the group's honesty, collaboration, and commitment to improving employee experience across River Hills.