

Garfield County Public Hospital District No. 1

Board of Commissioners

Minutes of Special Meeting: Thursday, September 26, 2019

Board Attending: Cindy Wolf, Chris Herres, Steven Cannon, and Gary Houser. Jen Dixon had an excused medical absence.

Staff Attending: Jayd Keener, Mat Slaybaugh, Jim Heilsberg, Caroline Moore, Kayleen Bye, Ken Moyer, Ian Quarles, Candice Quarles, Annette Davis, Chuck Pitcher, Jodi Peasley, Andrew Park, Marcia Baden, Carolyn Taylor, and Lacey Gingerich.

Public Attending: Connie Boyer, Dave Boyer, Steve Kazda, Ray Caldwell, Christopher Munoz, Connie Harris, James Harris, Tammi Bragg, Kent Gingerich, JoAnn Cassetto, Diana Schmidt, Patti Weaver, Dotty Van Vogt, Douglas Roe, Molly Roe, Cindy Klaveano, Butch Burgess, Diane Burgess, Dean Johnson, Muriel Bott, Phil Crawford, Martha Lanman, Mike Field, Tom Mllspaugh, Jonathon Harker and Larry Kimble.

Meeting Called to Order: 7:00 p.m.

Conflict of Interest Statement: None.

New Business:

1. Town Hall Presentation

The Board of Commissioners, Co-CEOs, and CFO introduced themselves to the community members. Mat Slaybaugh prepared a presentation to share with the public about general hospital and levy information.

Jody Carona, strategic planner, and Jim Heilsberg, CFO, have been contracted to assist GCHD. The Association of Washington Hospital District (AWPHD) will cover the cost of their services. Jody has been exploring different options to increase revenue. A primary focus is to update the electrical system. A meeting with the AWPHD and Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA) is scheduled for next month for a strategic planning update and to review guidelines of the certificate needs stipulations. Jim will present an interim cost report to give an accurate picture of the financials.

Cindy expressed her appreciation to the staff and the Board for their involvement in the community this year. This staff has been attending several different local events/meetings and Mat and Jayd have been working together with various entities to offer help and support. Martha Lanman, Administrator of Garfield County Health District, has been extremely helpful informing the hospital of grant opportunities as has Jac Davies, Executive Director of Northwest Rural Health Network, who has generously offered to help with grant writing. Grants are highly competitive and limited and many are very narrow in their focus, and money received has to be spent according to the grant criteria. Cindy will be attending a USDA grant forum next Tuesday to learn about money available through their program.

The hospital auxiliary, HUGS, is an organization that donates money to the hospital for the well-being of the patients, Jenness Evanson, President, reported at the last HUGS Meeting that over the last 7 years, their organization has contributed more than \$200,000 for improvements throughout the facility and updated equipment and various items. Volunteers are needed and members are welcome, and for anyone that is interested in helping, the members meet every third Wednesday of the month at the Pataha Flour Mill at 11:30 a.m.

Steve clarified that the on-call providers for the ER at the hospital are providing medical coverage for all local sporting events. There is no additional cost but the benefit is utilizing the provider's time more efficiently as they are being paid whether they are working in the ER or not. The ER will be the provider's first priority. Steve applauded Mat and Jayd for initiating this plan and stated it is good use of our resources.

Public Comment:

Patti Weaver asked if the hospital has a comparison of visits and how we compare with other hospitals for services provided. Mat responded that he did not have that information available at this time. Patti asked if the public would have more strategic planning information prior to the levy. Cindy stated the Board will not have anything definitive as Jody and Jim are working on financial portions of the different options configurations will look like. Patti asked are patients being denied admission in order to keep those specific beds open for beds that are being reserved for transfers and hospital stays. Mat stated that this particular scenario has not been come up since he has been there. It depends if the patient is admitting for short-term, for example, rehab, or if it will be an indefinite long-term stay, and also what level of care the patient requires and if our staff is able to provide the skills need. Patti's final question asked if the hospital turns down patients based on their insurance. Mat stated no but the hospital does have to consider the payer mix based on the cost report reimbursement and the financial constraints this puts on the facility. Jayd clarified that when a patient is denied admission it is not for acute or observation stays but purely swing bed admissions. A referral is sent and reviewed first to see if our facility and staff can meet the patient's medical needs.

Tammi Bragg asked how many locums and staff members that GCHD has. Jayd replied that currently there are 73 employees. There are 5 agency staff contracted for 13 weeks; 3 RNs and 2 CNAs. Rhonda is a fulltime provider and does not cover the ED unless needed, Dr. Park is on a 24-hour rotation, and 7 agency locums rotate six days a week. Jayd stated the goal is to reduce the amount of locums used due to the expense.

Chris Munoz 1) Pomeroy faces challenges is even though it is small, other rural hospitals in Washington state have similarities to the surrounding communities but we are uniquely different and no other models are translatable to ours. 2) The Board needs to accept that it may not be feasible to protect the employment level, or the revenue generated to the constituencies or businesses in town to continue status quo. Cindy stated when the discussions of strategic planning take place, tough questions arise, especially when considering change from a CAH, services and employee levels could be affected. Chris asked about the proportion of employees that live in Pomeroy verses those that live outside of Garfield County based on salary and on head count. Mat replied this would be addressed in the next edition of the EW Hospital Corner. Mat stated the type of jobs needed at the hospital are not necessarily going to be filled by local community members, especially if they don't have the qualifications required or want to move to Pomeroy. It would be ideal if all the employees of GCHD were living in this community but it is not feasible. Chris asked if a Doctor of Osteopath (D.O.) is being considered in the recruitment process in addition to the MDs. Jayd replied they would interview a D.O.

Jonathon Harker asked 4 questions; 1) Is GCHD is actively searching for a fulltime in-house medical doctor (MD) for a long-term contract who could also mentor the mid-level provides? 2) How many MDs have been interview in the last 3 months? 3) How many MDs does GCHD have scheduled to interview in the next 3 months? Jayd replied that no MDs have been interviewed in the last 3 months but last week the ad for providers was changed to focus on a doctor rather than mid-level providers and research was done to offer a reasonable salary. 4) Do all the Board members utilize the current medical staff as their primary care physician? The Board will research this question and respond back in the Hospital Corner article in the EW.

Dave Boyer commended the Board and the Interim Co-CEOs for providing the medical coverage at the local sport events. As a football coach, it is nice to know the providers are on-site and will be assisting when needed. Dave asked for more information regarding Dr. Glenn Houser approaching the CEOs about considering a 6-year contract, working 3 days a week for GCHD. Mat replied both he and Jayd met with Dr. Houser shortly after they were both appointed the Interim Co-CEO positions and they both felt that the meeting went well but received an email 24 hours later that his perception was not the same. Cindy and the Co-CEOs reached out to him twice but did not receive a reply back and they were hopeful when Dr. Houser reached out to them.

Patti Weaver asked what is contributing to the ancillary visits being down and are the numbers increasing. Physical Therapy visits are down due to there being a competitor in town. Cindy stated in 2018 year-to-date the total x-ray visits were 400 and in 2019 the total was 405; lab visits in 2018 were up by 15% from 1,059 to 1,218 for this year. Another increase was noted in acute days that have risen from 2019 year-to-date that shows 19 acute stays compared to 2019 year-to-date at 33. Jayd emphasized that those statistics were for days and not patients. Patti asked if GCHD is considering Occupational Therapy (OT) as well as speech therapy. Mat stated that a contract with Dayton is in place to provide speech therapy for inpatients and for acute patients as needed and could contract with Dayton for OT if the need arises.

Connie Boyer asked if there was still an active search for a permanent CEO. Cindy replied yes and that the Board is going to be interviewing 2 candidates tomorrow. Connie asked where the hospital is advertising for this position. Steve replied the site is called Applicant Pro that sends out to multiple searches which has been ongoing for 3 months. Steve stated that there has been several applicants apply but a very small amount fit our need. Steve has been up front while prescreening the candidates concerning our aged facility, the Board's expectations, the financial burdens and what our goals are.

Gary Houser commented that Jayd and Mat have done a brilliant job as Interim Co-CEOs. Gary further commented that he is very pleased with both the Interim Co-CEOs as well as the CFO and said we have as good of management. Gary stated that if the community wants the District's services to continue, the public has to be willing to pay a certain extra tax levy. Gary mentioned looking at certain aspects of cutting cost and specified the need to provide a swing bed program and the clinic.

Ray Caldwell agreed with Gary Houser' previous statement about the current administration. Ray asked if GCHD has to have a certified CEO. Cindy replied that GCHD is required to have a Superintendent/CEO for this facility. Ray stated that Mat and Jayd are very capable and competent and compared them to CEOs in larger organizations as well as complimented Jim Heilsberg as the CFO. Cindy agreed and stated she appreciates that Jayd and Mat are willing to learn and do their own research and stated that Jim is an excellent CFO. Ray further stated that the Board is doing a great job and are all very competent.

Steven Cannon commented when he first joined the Board he didn't realize the all challenges that would be presented. Though he comes from an extensive financial background, Steve commended Jim for educating him about the hospital finances which are very different from business financials. Steve extended his appreciation for community involvement by Mat and Jayd representing the District.

Jim Heilsberg stated when facilities are struggling the answer to any organization is the support of the Board, the Administration, and the Community. Jim recognized the extent of involvement from the GCHD staff directly relates to their investment in the hospital and clinic. He reiterated the commonalities and the benefits that the community has with the Board and Interim Co-CEOs, and stated it's important for the public to ask pertinent questions and what direction to take next.

Jim Harris asked if our District can have two CEOs rather than just one. Cindy replied that we can have Co-CEOs fill the position. Jim asked if there was any reason why we couldn't ask the current Interim Co-CEOs to become the permanent Co-CEOs. Steve and Cindy replied that the Board is considering that option.

Lacey Gingerich commented that our hospital is a big benefit to our community and the amount of staff the District employees has a significant impact. She hopes that the public will be willing to commit to higher taxes to support the levy.

Tammi Bragg asked if GCHD is doing 100% of the billing. Mat replied that the hospital has ended their contract with HRG last month. A suggested that Mat and Jayd attend lunch at the Senior Center to reach those that cannot get out regularly and answer any questions. Mat replied they plan on attending soon.

Jayd Keener replied to Chris Munoz's comment regarding other CAHs and small communities and stated the uniqueness of the Interim Co-CEO positions and has been successful. She stated that they both bring individual strengths that balance each other and share the same goals for the hospital. Jayd stated her family does not live in Pomeroy but they do utilize many of the local businesses. She is uncertain whether they will move here in the future but ensured the public that she loves this community, patients and staff and that she is invested here.

Cindy Wolf thanked all the community members that came and was very appreciative for their participation at the Special Board/Town Hall Meeting. She reminded everyone there will be another Town Hall meeting on Wednesday, October 9, at 7 p.m. at the Senior Center. She also invited everyone to attend the Regular Board Meetings held on the first Monday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Special Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.


Cindy Wolf, President

Chris Herres, Secretary


Jen Dixon, Commissioner

Steve Cannon, Commissioner


Gary Houser, Commissioner