

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 1 OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY**

July 28, 2022

Due to CoVid-19 protocols, the meeting was offered via tele-conference.

In Attendance: Commissioners: Lois Robertson, Lynnette Elswick, Susan Johnson, Melanie Kiss, and Becky Walrath; Aaron Reinke, MD. Executive Officers: Kim Manus, Chris Wagar, Theresa Hollinger, and Laura Hamilton. Others: Jenny Smith, Casi Densley, Deanna Watson, Jane Tilley, John Stuiwenga, Becky Dana, Nicole Kingery, Walter Price, Tammy Roberts, Monica Wiese, Carrie Russell, Trina Gleese, Sara Rainey, Kim Rutland, Jen Allbee, Casey Scott, Chelsea Stumph, Jennifer Johnston, and Nancy Shaw.

Excused: Tom Wilbur, CEO.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Robertson called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

READING OF LEGAL NOTICE:

The regular meeting legal notice was distributed as required.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA / CONSENT ITEMS:

The Meeting Agenda, Auditors Report and Uncompensated Report (Consent Packet) were approved via motion made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Elswick requested an explanation for the high bad debt/charity amount. Casi Densley explained that the Epic system was not matching the amounts correctly for the bad debt write-offs; this resulted in them being in a queue since the Epic system went live. This has been corrected, which resulted in the high amount.

Auditors Report – June:

Warrants #305472 through 305801	1,971,622.01
Electronic warrants: #400294-400295 & 400299, 400301-400313,	407,351.06
Mountain West, Loan payment, disbursed 06/10/2022	<u>40,000.00</u>
Total, warrants and disbursements	\$ 2,418,973.07
Bad Debt/Charity: June 2022, inclusive District Write-off:	\$ 629,660.95

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The June 23, 2022 and Special June 20, 29, and July 7, 2022 meeting minutes were approved via a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joint Conference: Aaron Reinke, MD, Chief of Medical Staff reported the ED has been very busy; the providers continue to stress the need for additional space. A daytime mid-level position is being considered, as well as expanding to open an urgent care clinic.

The providers are feeling some angst with regards to the OB staffing dilemma; he noted 5 additional OB nurses are necessary to open the service line completely. He commended Dr.

Matelich for her efforts in finding alternative delivery locations. Also, NHHS providers can work as Locums at Colville to ensure their OB skills remain current. He noted that space in the clinic is becoming an issue.

Dr. A. Reinke explained that Dr. Fisher partners with Dr. Schicker and will begin a visiting Podiatry practice at Newport in the near future.

Finance: Casi Densley, Controller provided the monthly financial reports. She noted an error was corrected in the Premier system. Approx. \$2.5M of additional CARES Covid funds/grants have not been recognized as revenue. Casi explained when the reporting is completed the funds will be moved from liability status to income. Casi noted AR has been reduced by \$3.4M in allowance on the balance sheet as a bad debt expense. She added there is work to be completed, due to the Epic conversion and the method that contractual amounts in AR differ. The budget for expenses is on track.

Casi reported there has been recent staffing challenges in the Purchasing dept. She welcomed Tom Watson as Purchasing Manager; a Purchasing Agent will begin work on August 8. In the interim, we have contracted with Premier to be on site next week for 3 days to train and assist in the dept. Support will also be provided to the Laboratory to ensure supply orders are correct.

Kim Manus provided financial comparison information for River Mountain Village Advanced Care. Included was information that demonstrated a net loss through the end of June (without depreciation or bond expenses) of approx. \$938K. A new Medicaid contract became effective July 1. The cost per-resident day is \$290; private pay reimbursement is approx. \$192; Medicaid is \$163. Rate adjustments are in order; a 12% increase has been established under the new Medicaid contract, based on current client mix, illness severity, etc.

Kim shared a 2021 Cost of Care Survey Summary and Methodology report that provided the National median monthly rates, percentage of change since 2020 and the 5-year annual growth percentage. Walter "Buzz" Price provided assistance and produced a spread sheet model for rate increases. Over the past period NHHS was paid \$163.07 daily for Medicaid residents; the new contract will pay \$18.18 additionally, or \$181.25 average. The private pay average has been \$5704 per month. A 1-year projection was shared that included client mix, avg. monthly expense to determine our current status vs. break-even. Buzz cited examples using a 53 client base formula – averaging 28 Medicaid and 21 private pay residents. The formula calculates the short fall/gain amounts, and the amounts of increase necessary for (private pay) rates to break even. Several examples were shared.

Kim noted the new contract requires a percentage of Medicaid clients to be in-house (80%) in order to obtain the full reimbursement rate. The lines of communication have been open with the State since opening the facility. Kim proposed a rate increase for private pay, with the percentage to be determined after financial review; she noted there has been no increase since opening the new facility. An annual cost of living increase will be built into the contract that will detail a minimum amount of increase at the beginning of the year – either 3% or CPI – whichever is higher.

Commissioner Johnson commented that memory care reimbursement is typically higher; it is approximately \$11 per day, which doesn't necessarily factor staffing expenses. A 30 day rate increase notification is required for private pay clients.

Kim stated that the timing to increase rates is appropriately in line with the Medicaid rate increase. She noted that private pay clients cannot pay less than Medicaid reimbursement; that would result in the termination of the Medicaid contract.

Chris noted that our employees accommodate residents to doctor trips to Spokane, costing the District fuel and employee wages. The beauty salon and resident laundry services are included; which is not typical – most facilities charge separately for these types of service. An ala carte pricing structure is being developed for those services, at reasonable rates.

Jenny Smith cautioned that the message to the public should be clear, as there have been complaints related to the opening of the memory care wing.

Following discussion, it was determined a preliminary letter will be addressed to our residents and families to explain reasons for the pending rate increase to afford our clients an opportunity to ask questions, obtain information and potentially relocate if they so choose. Everyone agreed that specific amounts will not be included in the letter; Kim suggested an explanation could help our clients understand that the State has recognized the cost of living has increased, and is increasing reimbursement accordingly. In addition, there will be a town hall event to invite families to ask questions and make inquiries; an invitation will be included in the initial letter. Theresa Hollinger suggested that questions could be solicited in advance, as well. Walter Price recommended an option be included within the phone system to route calls and inquiries.

Kim explained that rate information was difficult to obtain and time consuming. She thanked Buzz for assisting in producing the spreadsheets to provide a meaningful presentation.

Nursing Services – Theresa Hollinger, CNO provided hospital operations information and reported “who is doing well and why”. She recognized the Emergency Dept. team for their efforts in managing high census levels and high acuity, especially with many new staff and physicians. Theresa also commended Brian Burkhead, Admitting Mgr. for his stellar efforts in managing the front entrance and welcoming our patients.

Theresa continues to address OB/RN (night shift) staffing challenges, maintaining competencies, and managing the high patient load in the ED. She is meeting with HR to discuss staffing options. We continue to utilize agency staff in the nursing and laboratory areas. In a creative effort to alleviate the staffing shortage, an RN training program offers students the ability to learn the initial set of skills online and train as a Nurse Tech in the hospital thereafter. The option to enlist paramedics was discussed.

Theresa explained there was a download issue involving the mammography unit; the computer was replaced and the issue has been resolved. In addition, a letter has been sent to Shimatzu, our x-ray flat panel vendor, explaining we cannot tolerate the down times and included a request to extend the warranty and increase the preventative maintenance. The portable machine is being utilized during down times; however, it does not provide the same capabilities. Theresa will continue to work on an ultimate solution.

The new chemistry analyzer implementation has been very challenging for the laboratory, due to size/space issues, installation/testing, removal of the old analyzer and connection to the Epic system. Staffing shortages have contributed to the challenges.

We continue to actively recruit to fill OB vacancies and create a marketable service to promote outside of the single episode of delivery. Theresa welcomed and introduced Kimberly Rutland,

who recently accepted a position as Perinatal Nurse Practitioner. Kimberly has worked L&D for nearly 37 years and became a women's health Nurse Practitioner recently. Her goal is to enhance our services while working in cooperation with the physicians, and provide education in a personal, tailored approach. Kim plans to incorporate behavioral health, including pharmacy, and implement a comprehensive educational program.

Commissioner Walrath stated that she was approached by a community member that related she was not able to deliver her baby at NHHS because she was unvaccinated; Theresa asked for more information and will investigate. Theresa explained that staffing is currently very limited and she is working to ensure there is adequate support for patients scheduled for repeat C-sections. She noted that patients could labor up to 24 hours and, at this point, there is not enough staff to manage. When our patients require delivery at another location, Kim will contact the patient during labor or post-delivery to identify challenges and work with the OB leaders to ensure a seamless, positive transition.

Commissioner Johnson questioned why we are not able to accommodate scheduled C-section patients; Theresa noted it depends upon whether adequate staffing is available; Kim is training several current staff members. Kim added that obstetrics is the only nursing division with national staffing standards; this poses a challenge to abide by the standard – 1 OB nurse for mother and 1 trained staff member to care for the infant on admission; in the small hospital setting, this is often a respiratory therapist or a second physician. Theresa noted that NHHS nurses are certified for rescue in the event there are resuscitation needs.

Jenny Smith will be marketing our OB services in the form of informational brochures.

DNV Accreditation Survey – Preparations are being made in anticipation of the survey, expected to occur at any time.

The outpatient service line is expanding with the addition of an RN to begin on September 1. A new Speech Therapist plans to expand the line of business by enlisting her experience with 0-3 year old patients. Early Head Start has identified challenges with their population, due to pandemic, and children experiencing isolation. They will sponsor a child development fair next month at the old LTCU space; we will participate with information related to OB, the Sports Physical Clinic, vaccines, and PT/OT/ST services. Theresa explained that members of Early Head Start (Colville office) will provide screenings; follow up appointments will likely occur here.

Theresa announced she will represent NHHS at the WSHA state-wide Safety and Quality Committee. Key priorities will focus on behavioral health, diagnostic excellence and taking advantage of the tools and resources available.

Residential Care & RHC Updates: Chris Wagar, COO reported that Olivia Low has accepted to serve as Residential Care Services Director. Olivia is working on several projects and developing strategies. Chris reported there are 4 positive Covid cases at RMAC; new admissions are on hold until the health dept. provides clearance. (Chris noted there is only 1 pending admission – the facility will be full thereafter).

The State survey occurred with minor citations; the Plan of Correction is being submitted today.

RHC – Jonathan McCord, a current PA-C student will be joining the District in October. Tom W. made an offer to Dr. Taylor Stewart, who will be completing her residency and entering the OB Fellowship program. She has accepted our offer and will be available early Fall 2023.

Chris stated that members of the community have complained they have been unable to make timely doctor appointments. Chris shared information related to the IHI industry standard to monitor physician availability, titled the "third next available appointment". She explained that this translates as the average length of time (in days) between the day the patient makes a request for an appointment and when the third appointment is available. The third next appointment is used as the industry standard, as it is a more sensitive reflection of true appointment availability. Chris noted wait times are dependent upon the provider, the average is 3.6.

The newly appointed Safety Committee Chair is Aron Hutchinson. Aron is replacing Tim Rumph, who recently resigned. The District is required to conduct Safety Committee meetings. The standard cites that the Committee should be comprised of line staff members vs. managers.

Chris recently met with members of the County and law enforcement to discuss workplace violence. A recent incident involved a NHHS employee; she contacted security, but decided not to involve law enforcement or press charges. The County prosecutor and Sheriff agreed that staff members need to contact law enforcement without hesitation.

Chris has resumed Policy Manager training, noting a delay due to Covid. Our goal is to ensure that all District policies/procedures, Scopes of Service, Bylaws, etc. are located in the program.

HR Report: Laura Hamilton, CHRO referred to the standard HR reports, noting she has included new hires and separations. The current active applicants have significantly increased. The position postings have also been re-structured, resulting in triple the amount of applicants.

Laura explained that by January 2023, all State employers must list wage ranges; Laura explained that NHHS is currently listing wage ranges, which she believes has garnered a greater number of applicants in both clinical and non-clinical areas. Of note, 3 qualified candidates applied for a new MA position within 1 week.

As reported last month, we now have accounts with all local career service platforms and educational institutions. A new program, Applichat launched last Tuesday that identifies potential candidates via social media platforms.

CEO Recruitment – Laura provided the Board members CEO applicant packets and included the request for letters of interest. The 45 day posting period will conclude in 15 days at which time we will convene the Personnel Committee to screen applicants and invite them to in-person interviews.

Quality/PI: Jen Allbee presented the patient experience and HCAPS reports for the month of June. Jen explained that Survey Vitals, the patient satisfaction survey platform, has been purchased by Qualtrix. She is working with members of The Rural Collaborative to engage another company – we have requested a formal contract with PRC; Jen noted the company provides inpatient, ED, and Ancillary patient satisfaction surveys with text, e-mail, and phone survey response options.

DNV Survey – The 2.5 day manager training concluded and we are anticipating arrival of the surveyors at any time. The survey process occurs over a 2 day period. Jen shared an informational brochure outlining survey expectations. The board members will be invited to attend the exit interview when the final report is announced.

CEO Report – Tom Wilbur, CEO was not in attendance, therefore there was no report.

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Lois Robertson, President
Board of Commissioners



Susan Johnson, Secretary
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