

**HUMBOLDT GENERAL HOSPITAL
DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AUGUST 31, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING
MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE--VIDEOCONFERENCE**

BOARD PRESENT:

Alicia Cramer, Chair (via phone)
Michelle Miller, Secretary (via phone)
JoAnn Casalez, Member
Gene Hunt, Member (via phone)
Ken Tipton, County Comm. Member (via phone)
Lewis Trout, Member

Kent Maher, Legal Counsel (via phone)

BOARD ABSENT:

None

MEDICAL STAFF PRESENT:

None

GUESTS:

None

CALL TO ORDER:

Board chair Cramer called the August 31, 2021 board meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

BUSINESS ITEMS-OTHER REPORTS:

1. Hospital Administration / request to approve professional services employment contract for Jeffrey Meter, MD to provide orthopedic services /Administration

CEO Powers explained the scorecard for Jeffrey Meter, MD for his current hospital employment in Bristol, CT, which is 50% clinical and 50% administrative. CFO Plummer said the current \$100,000 a month cost of the Synergy contract contrasted with the projected costs for Dr. Meter will result in a total savings of about \$5,000 a month, and there will be additional revenue from professional fee billing and clinic visits that HGH does not have with Synergy. The additional fees collected will be dependent on the types and number of cases. The MA position currently provided for Synergy will continue with Dr. Meter and HGH will provide a registration/receptionist position through the centralized registration. Clinic provider Robert Johnson, PA-C will assist in the operating room. Board member Tipton commented that he is in agreement with adding Dr. Meter as long as the funding is in the budget. Plummer confirmed the budget has the funds which includes the PERS contribution.

Motion by board member Casalez and second by board member Trout to approve the professional services employment contract for Jeffrey Meter, MD to provide orthopedic services. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF PRESENT:

Tim Powers, CEO (via phone)
Robyn Dunckhorst, CNO
Mike Bell, IT Director
Brian Washburn, DOO
Angela Giese, Chief HR Officer (via phone)
Kim Plummer, CFO
Laura Shea, Marketing (via phone)
Theresa Bell, Project Director
Sara Otto, Chief Compliance Officer
Bertha Higbee, ACNO
Cody Bright, Pharmacy Manager
Shelly Smith, Senior Accountant
Theresa Willis, EMT (via phone)
Jessica Villarreal, Credentialing Specialist

2. Hospital Administration / request for approval to proceed with lab expansion and oncology infusion clinic / Administration

DOO Washburn explained the needs for the lab remodel include updating outdated equipment, providing more space for equipment and staff, and improving patient privacy and satisfaction. It will also decrease the number of send-outs to Quest and increase the number of tests performed in-house, which should result in an estimated additional \$160,000 annual revenue. The proposal includes new equipment, additional equipment, hematology and chemical analyst equalizers, infusion clinic space, and construction fees to cover the cost of the remodel. Board member Trout asked if there is a breakdown of the costs between the lab remodel and the infusion space. Washburn said it is bundled into one cost. CFO Plummer remarked the proposal includes the infusion space and reconstruction of the Sonoma conference room, but it is all in one number. Trout suggested that since the project is phased, the costs need to be separated for each phase. Trout asked if the State evaluates each phase as a separate project. Washburn said he was not sure how the State evaluates the project. Trout asked for clarification on the budget presented in the packet including the contingency cost and the contingency percentage. Plummer explained the budget, including the additional \$900,000 budgeted for the Sonoma conference room remodel which will house the lab microbiology room. Trout asked for clarification on the phases included in the project with phase one being the lab, phase two being the infusion space, and phase three being the Sonoma conference room remodel. CNO Dunckhorst explained the Sonoma conference room is actually part of the lab remodel. Trout asked who developed the numbers for the project. CEO Powers said the budget was developed from the information provided by the architects. Board member Tipton commented that he understands the need and how it fits in the budget and questioned the estimated total project cost. Board chair Cramer said the total cost information was included in the August 24, 2021 board meeting packet, which Plummer confirmed is in the \$2.4 million to \$3.6 million range. Cramer noted the project will not be finished in the current fiscal year and the funds can be moved to the next budget year. Board member Miller expressed concern about the adequacy of revenue in this year's budget with the other items going on, including centralized scheduling. There was discussion on possibly phasing the project to see what the revenue numbers look like.

Motion by Board member Trout and second by Board member Miller to authorize the expenditure of funds for design work by the architectural engineering firm and a revised construction budget be presented to the Board for evaluation no sooner than 90 days. Motion carried unanimously.

Washburn commented there is need to update some lab equipment and the HVAC system whether or not the project goes forward. Board member Trout asked to have an agenda item to consider purchasing lab equipment to replace the antiquated equipment. Board chair Cramer acknowledged the request.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS-STAFF REPORTS:

Board member Trout expressed appreciation for the revenue cycle team and commented on the attention to detail that the revenue cycle team gave to his questions regarding a bill.

Board member Hunt asked if the patients who received the bills from the collection agency also received the communication that was going out regarding those bills. CEO Powers said they should have received a letter but he could not confirm that 100% received it. Hunt commented he never received a letter after receiving the bill. Board member Casalez suggested the postal service may be causing the delays as she just received a letter yesterday and it had a the postage was dated two weeks earlier. Board member Miller spoke with the revenue cycle staff and was told that some letters were pulled if the person was aware of the letter and had already seen the letter to save postage. Hunt commented that he was fine

with receiving it in an email and wasn't so concerned with receiving the letter for himself but for the others in the community. Casalez suggested that it needs to be made aware via social media platform due to poor postal service in community.

Board member Miller asked about the bylaws and the work group that was tasked with updating them. Board chair Cramer explained that several meetings ago she appointed board members Trout and Hunt to the bylaws committee and they can follow up on the process. Trout and Hunt agreed to begin the review.

Board member Tipton asked who is following up with the patients who received the bills/notices from the collection agency and paid the bill that was not owed, and if refunds will be issued. CEO Powers said he was assured that it will be tracked and, if appropriate, a refund issued. Tipton asked if the process will be ongoing. Powers said he will discuss the matter with Revenue Cycle Director Mangrum and present the information at the next meeting.

Board member Casalez commented that a patient came in today with a bill for a Covid test that was dated from a year ago and was told they will have to pay the \$157 administrative fee for the Covid test. Powers said he instructed the team to get rid of all of the costs associated with it. Casalez advised the patient to call Revenue Cycle Director Mangrum to discuss the issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

Board chair Cramer adjourned the August 31, 2021 meeting of the Humboldt County Hospital District Board of Trustees at 6:14 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Alicia Cramer, Board Chair

Alicia Wogan, Executive Assistant