



## Sublette County Hospital District

Mission: To excel at providing comprehensive health services in Sublette County through efficient, high quality, patient centered care.

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### Sublette County Hospital District Board Meeting Minutes November 17th – 5:30 pm County Commissioner's Room Pinedale, WY

#### **Board Members in Attendance**

Tonia Hoffman – Board Chair  
Kenda Tanner – Secretary/Treasurer  
Wendy Boman – Trustee  
Dave Bell - Trustee

#### **5:30 Board Education:** Credentialling and a Medical Executive Committee

This committee will work on credentialling Providers for our future hospital. Each facility needs to provide credentialling for their providers, so if someone new comes to work or if someone wants to expand what they do, then this needs to be approved by the Med Ex committee.

Currently Kelli and Brittany handle the credentialling, but this needs to become a Board responsibility. We will need new policies in place around this.

Tonia asked about the Strategic Planning that was discussed last month and what the timeline is. Mike said that the Providers need to have put in their input by December, which allows the Board to work through the process into May and June.

Tonia asked if we need to wait on printing the Annual Report till after our strategic planning sessions. Mike said that we would usually publish a Strategic Plan later in the fiscal year, closer to May or June. Then the plan would be used for the next fiscal year. So, it might appear in the following year's annual report.

#### **Meeting Call to Order 6:00 p.m.**

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Set Agenda** – Dave Bell motioned and Kenda seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Department Reports:**

**Administrative and Finance: Dave Doorn** – We are in the process of exploring becoming a Rural Health Clinic which is a specific certification for a facility. We contacted the office of Rural Health and are in the process of getting four reports that they will use to see if this designation makes sense for us. It could possibly give us better reimbursements and give us wider access to grants – which are plentiful right now.

Dave wants to congratulate Sharon who has come up with a way to train her staff. We've been looking for new lab staff and haven't been able to find any, so Sharon came up with a way to train her own. She will talk about this in her report.

Dave wants to thank Vicky for all her hard work dealing with the nationwide nursing shortage. She has also come up with some great solutions and will discuss them in her report.

Dave wants to thank EMS for all their hard work. 2020 they had 8 transfers in October and this year they had 44 transfers in October. They have been going above and beyond for months now, and it hasn't gone unnoticed.

Grant money continue to roll in, including a \$25,000 FEMA check yesterday. The Retention Bonuses come out on Friday. They are greatly appreciated by the staff and have helped morale.

Dave wants to thank Kari for rounding up so many free meals donated by the community to both clinics. It's also gone a long way in helping morale in this difficult time.

**Vaccine Mandate** – there are two deadlines. Dec 4<sup>th</sup> we have to have employees have had first shots or filed an exemption. By Jan 5<sup>th</sup> employees need to be fully vaccinated or exempt. It's Dave's personal belief that everyone should have a choice. Dave has calls in to two lawyers to see if our Clinic designation exempts us from having to comply with the vaccine mandate but so far no one has responded. We need to get our policies figured out in case a lawsuit doesn't stop this.

Tonia said that there is a spot later on the agenda for employee comments about the vaccine mandate. Tonia knows the board has to address this and she's with Dave 110% in believing that it should be a personal choice. The thought of losing an employee over this is distressing.

Dave wants to mention that what they are holding over our heads is our Medicare and Medicaid funding, which is too large to lose. The State of Wyoming filed a lawsuit against OSHA. There could be more lawsuits coming, but we won't know for now. We need to get our policies in place.

Quick COVID update, Sharon will give more but this thing doesn't seem to want to go away. They tested 30 people on Monday and 11 were positive. Dave asked if we are seeing people that have tested positive once testing positive again. Sharon said yes.

**EMS: Bill Kluck** – Thank you to the Board for the Retention Bonus. It's really appreciated, especially this time of year. Training continues for ALS, BLS and PALS. There is an interesting airway training coming up on intubation. Safety wise – the animals are out, be careful. And the weather is starting to change, so have the reflective vests and warm clothing.

The transfers are declining, which is good, but that could change tomorrow. Events: Bill had a blast at Halloween. The Christmas parade is coming up Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, and we will get an ambulance in it.

MS216 is repaired and finally back in service. MS15 broke down and was sent to SLC for repairs. It came back still broken and is getting parts ordered. MS40 has a broken shock in the front. That might have something to do with 44 transfers. We put 10,000 miles on MS 40 in October. Another

ambulance hit a deer. The ambulance had a critical patient in the back and was rolling with lights and sirens. The driver handled it well and the patient barely felt a bump. The grill guard did its job, but now we need to fix the grill guard. Tonia mentioned it's a full time job just keeping the rigs on the road.

**Clinical: Sharon Rutsch-** Thank you for the Retention Bonus. It helps a great deal keeping the staff and it's appreciated. Labs remain high, and 75% is for providers outside of Sublette County, so people have really figured out that they can get their lab work done locally. COVID continues. On Monday there were 11 positives and Tuesday had 1 positive. They are also seeing a lot of RSV – sometimes more than COVID. There are weird supply chain issues, such as small tubes are backordered. She continues to order and try to keep ahead of it. Tonia asked if she had seen any flu yet, and Sharon said they had one positive, but it turned out to be a false positive.

She's excited to talk about the Med Tech program. Vicky Haffey told us in Jan that she was retiring, and we've been looking for 11 months and have not been able to find a med tech. People have either not been qualified or taken jobs with large sign on bonuses. So, Sharon decided to train her own staff. She has 4 employees that are interested in taking the MLT program from Casper College. Sharon talked to Casper College and convinced them that the students can do this remotely over Zoom. Sharon, Aaron Donaldson, Vicky Makelky and Carol have agreed to volunteer to help the students do their labs in the Marbleton lab, which is closed on the weekends. These four students can do most of their coursework online and do their labs in Marbleton. The program takes two years to complete. They start in January.

Kari has spoken with BOCES which is the process of approving a \$1000 per adult student education reimbursement, which these four students might qualify for, pending BOCES approving it. There are also Wyoming Workforce Training grants that might be available. And Sharon is applying to the Green River Valley Health Foundation to see if they might help with the tuition.

Sharon says that of the four students, one already qualifies for a Pell grant for part of her tuition. She reiterated that when we become a Hospital, we will need licensed med techs to work in the lab and new blood bank. Having these people trained and in place will be much better than trying to hire. The reason that Sharon is approaching the Board is that though we have many grant opportunities, there's always a possibility that BOCES, Workforce Training, GRVHF, and Pell grants all fall through, so she is asking that the Board increase the education reimbursement fund. There's a big possibility that they won't need it, but if they do then we need it in place, as classes start in January.

Tonia said this seems like a no brainer, as we know we will need these positions. If the people don't get certified as Med Techs, we might not be able to keep them as employees. Tonia also mentioned that she spoke to the President of Western Wyoming Community College and brought up that we need some sort of collaboration to start training nurses.



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Dave Bell applauded Sharon for thinking outside the box and finding solutions. Dave made a motion to amend the education budget for an additional \$21,000 (4 employees x \$5250 allowable educational reimbursement). Kenda seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Vicky Marshall – She wants to say thank you for the retention bonuses. Molly Lander and Vicky completed the TT4 trauma class successfully. We’ve hired a new MA, Stacy Koff and she is currently learning her job duties and doing well. We extended an offer to a local RN and she has accepted, waiting for the returned contract. EMS has agreed to help take some call and have Paramedics cover nurse shifts in the ER. They are stepping outside the box too, and Vicky appreciates the help. And a big congratulations to Shelbi Streiff who passed her exams and is officially an RN. We are glad to have her on the staff!

Public Relations: Kari DeWitt – She now has 370 votes on the Naming Competition, up from 274. The Board would like to leave it open another month. The Sublette County Magazine article is finished and waiting for it to be published. The author wants to pitch it to some wires and see if they want to pick it up. Kari is working with the Centennial Committee on a “Century of Healthcare” in Sublette County. Ann Noble is leading this. Kari also has the Christmas card ready to go and is ready to start on the Annual Report.

Grant Updates: The GRVHF asked Kari to take over the Daisy award for Nurses. This is awarded in May. Kari is watching like a hawk for any spare CARES act funding (which needs to be spent by Dec 31, 2021) to see if we can get support for EMS. The Governor is releasing his plans for the ARPA funding in mid-December. Goal #5 is specific to healthcare solutions, which is where we can pursue funding. So far we have joined a Wyoming Hospital Association ask for Healthcare Infrastruce and a state-wide County Commissioners ask for EMS support.

We applied for a HRSA grant (which is new funding we haven’t pursued before). They are passing out Phase 4 and a Rural Grant component. It’s unclear how much we might qualify for.

### FEMA – COVID DISASTER RELIEF

FEMA part 1: March 2020 – March 2021                    **\$226,499.77** received

FEMA part 2: April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021           **\$25,017.58** received

FEMA part 3: July 1, 2021 – Sept 30, 2021           **\$77,226.77** submitted

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**\$328,744.12**

And there will be more to come as we remain in an official “State of Emergency” due to COVID.

**Committee Reports:**

Finance Committee-Kenda Tanner/Dave Bell – Revenues were up. October was a good month. Same day visits in both clinics were up. We had a net profit of \$535,000. Expenses are down, which means the staff is doing a great job managing within their budgets. We received \$2.4 million in revenue from the county, which gives us some breathing room. They talked about bad debt and are going to continue to drill into that number and figure out what specifically is going on.

They talked about health insurance a bit and Dave Bell weighed in. He was asked to review the three bids received. We went out in the marketplace with an RFP from 4 brokers. One didn't respond, but HUB, Tegeler, and Leavitt did. Very good work was done by the committee and we have a great feel of what the insurance market looks like in Wyoming right now. It's expensive. We are taking a hard look at all 3 proposals. There are a lot of things that are the same and a lot that have some difference. Dave Bell is putting together a report for the Insurance Committee and the Board and he will email it to Dave Doorn Thursday night or Friday morning. He's made an extensive spreadsheet and will be working on trying to compare apples to apples.

Dave Doorn adds that we were worried about what the bids would be and it looks like we might be able to save some money and keep the quality of insurance that we are offering. It's great to see that the cost didn't go through the roof, since we had to come off of the Sublette County group.

Building Committee- Jamison Ziegler/Tonia Hoffman – absolutely nothing to report. At a standstill waiting for the federal review of our loan application. Haven't even had our weekly Monday meeting for the past two weeks, as we are still waiting.

Merger Committee-Merger Status Update -Tonia Hoffman/Kenda Tanner – also have nothing to report. We haven't met as a Joint Planning Committee because we are still awaiting USDA approval. The attorneys have a draft merger agreement but don't want to distribute it until they have USDA approval.

Quality Committee-Wendy Boman – Met last week and are focused on three areas. Patient Satisfaction is number one. We want to be able to do surveys and be able to identify the trends in patient satisfaction. Secondly, we want to improve communication between the departments and how we treat each other. We want to get good lines of communication. For example, the front desk needs to know if it's busy in the back, so they can convey that to the patients waiting in the lobby. We also want to get a uniform set of protocols between ER and EMS so everyone is on the same page. Talked about putting a box in the breakroom for staff to voice complaints or compliments. And lastly, discussed an External Chart review for a third party to do chart reviews. We want to set something in place with Star Valley so their providers who are willing to help with our chart review. Star Valley has found that it's hard to have a colleague review your charts, so having a third party do it works well. Mike added that they were happy to help. Dave Doorn added that this is a good start about improving our processes.

## **New Business**

Update: Agreement Public Health/County Delegation Agreement – The Board gave Tonia the authority to sign a delegation agreement with the County. Tonia and Mike were able to meet with both the County and Public Health on Monday. Trying to figure out the utilities. Happy to report that we are able to iron that out. Tonia attended the County Commissioner’s meeting on Tuesday and the County will continue to pay the utilities for Public Health in their new facility and SCHD will pay the insurance. The SCHD will pay for any overages.

Med Tech Training Program-Sharon Rutsch – covered above.

Federal Covid Vaccination Mandates – Tonia wants this to be an opportunity for employees to voice their concerns. She also wants the Board to voice their opinions. And she has received the draft exemption form.

Wendy has had her three vaccinations but thinks it should be a personal choice. For it to be a mandate goes against what she believes. Kenda agrees that it should be a personal choice. She feels like there is a way to navigate through this and still be able to keep our people. Dave Bell added that he was vaccinated to go to Canada, otherwise he might not have gotten it. He agrees that it’s a personal decision and the mandate ignores everything that is good about America. Dave Bell asked Dave Doorn if the unvaccinated staff all had to leave would we be able to fulfill our mission to provide healthcare to Sublette County and the answer is no. Dave Bell has been asking if we want to follow Campbell County’s example and say we won’t stand for it. But he’s not sure he’s there yet. Tonia has asked Abbi for her legal opinion on if we were exempt from this as we aren’t yet a Hospital, but since we don’t have that back yet we need to get our policy in place.

Tonia wanted to open the floor to our employees. Vicky wanted to say that she appreciates our Board taking a stand. Sharon thanks the board as well, because it takes a lot to stand up and say I don’t agree with this. Sharon sees a few ways to deal with this as a Board. She knows there are people who aren’t going to do the exemption and will end up fired and she thinks their vacation should be paid. Jenny, an employee, appreciates the board saying they are against this. Her concerns are weekly testing. She wants to know how lenient we will be on the exemptions, both medical and religious. She wants to know who will see the exemptions and who will make the decision on whether they are approved. Tonia responded that CMS doesn’t require weekly testing for those who choose not to get vaccinated, so the board needs to hammer out whether we require weekly testing and who reviews the exemptions.

Mike added this is a really important and difficult thing for healthcare organizations across the nation right now. Everyone feels the same way. The concern is the Medicare and Medicaid funding that comes back to an organization. And if CMS says that we are not compliant, then how are we going to provide services to our community without that

funding? Mike has shared with his employees that the last thing he wants is for a staff member to feel like they have to leave and the organization hasn't shown care and compassion about that. It's up to us as an organization to provide you with every bit of information you need to make this decision as an employee. We want the employees to know we are constrained but we want to do everything we can to retain you as our staff. It's a very emotional topic. We appreciate the staff taking the time to come to the meeting to discuss this topic.

One employee stated that he swore an oath to the Constitution in 2004. The medical exemption won't apply to him. The religious exemption will apply due to vaccines being developed with fetal tissue and he is pro-life, but he values his freedom over being forced to fill out a form. If the District insists that employees file for exemptions, he will quit his job.

Tonia thanked everyone for their comments. She said the board will work on getting their policies and exemption forms figured out quickly. Kari reminded the public that Dave will be discussing the vaccine mandate at the staff meeting tomorrow. And that Dave is meeting with EMS staff tomorrow (Thursday) evening at 6pm. Dave is also willing to meet with any employee at any time to discuss this topic.

## **Old Business**

- USDA Application Updates-Dave Doorn – Lorraine Werner has officially given our USDA application her stamp of approval. She has sent it to the National Office with her blessing. We are now waiting for our national loan committee hearing. This is a step that wasn't reached with the previous application.
- Employee Health Insurance update – already covered above.
- Approval of meeting minutes October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Dave wanted to clarify that his comment that insurance companies would give bids to multiple brokers applies only to health insurance, not property or casualty insurance. Wendy motioned to approve the minutes with this clarification. Dave seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Approval of Payroll and Bills – Motion to approve the payroll and bills in the amount of \$786,548.78 Kenda moved and Dave seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment** – None beyond the employees that spoke about the vaccine mandate.

**Executive Session:** Wendy moved and Dave seconded to go into Executive Session at 7:22pm.

## **Personnel and Legal**



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Wendy motioned and Dave seconded to come out of Executive Session. 8:42pm

Wendy motioned that they appoint the Finance Committee and the Insurance Committee to review the Insurance Broker bid numbers as they come in and choose a broker.

They also made some changes to the Vaccine Mandate policy and those will be set forth by administration and distributed to the staff.

Wendy added that a gentlemen contacted her and is willing to donate a case with rocks that look amazing.

### **Adjournment - 8:48pm**

Minutes taken by Kari DeWitt

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tonia Hoffman, Board Chair

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Date

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Dave Doorn, Administrator

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Date