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GMP for hospital, new Sublette Center set

By Robert Galbreath, rgalbreath@subletteexaminer.com

PINEDALE — A unanimous motion by the Sublette County Hospital District (SCHD) Board of Trustees at an April 10 special meeting locked in the gross maximum price for the construction of the new critical access hospital and Sublette Center. The motion allowed the district to finalize both its contract with Layton Construction, the SCHD's general contractor, and the paperwork from its lender, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, formally setting the building process into motion.

Trustee Dave Bell made the motion accepting the gross maximum price of \$57,653,020. Trustee Jamison Ziegler seconded the motion.

Now that the gross maximum price is fixed, Layton Construction is responsible for any cost increases from subcontractors under the "construction manager at risk" contract.

The total cost for the project stands at \$75,658,000, a 100-percent match with funding sources raised by the SCHD and its predecessor, the Sublette County Rural Health Care District, over the course of three years.

Karl Lueschow, of Lueschow Property Management, the SCHD's owner's representative, presented the balanced comprehensive budget to trustees on April 10.

Primary funding entails a \$32-million USDA loan, a \$25.4 million contribution from the county, a \$1-million donation from the Joe Ricketts family, a \$10-million federal infrastructure grant and the SCHD's own equity and contributions.

The difference between the total project cost of \$75.6 million and the gross maximum price of \$57.6 million consisted of "soft costs," professional service fees, insurance and financing rates and additional expenditures like real estate and owner contingency.

Professional service fees totaled nearly \$4 million of the budget and encompassed payments to architects, civil engineers, interior designers and attorneys. The SCHD has already paid for all of these budgeted professional service fees, so that amount will not change, said Lueschow.

The SCHD also budgeted \$1,350,000 to purchase the old ballfields on the hill next to the Pinedale Clinic for the new health-care campus.

Layton Construction shaved the owner contingency category down from roughly 5 percent of the gross maximum price to 4.9 percent, saving the district \$120,000. Owner contingency funds cover additional costs incurred by inflation or any other overages, explained Kari DeWitt, SCHD public relations director. Under the district's contract with Layton, all unspent owner contingency monies will return to the SCHD at the project's completion, DeWitt added.

Soft costs included medical equipment, building permits, utilities, furniture and information technology, plus the price to demolish the old Public Health building and relocate the irrigation ditch on the hill next to the Pinedale Clinic.

The soft-cost budget also contained \$300,000 to protect the building site and construction through the winter of 2023-2024.

With the finalization of the construction contract, Layton can award bids to subcontractors for each aspect of the hospital and long-term care facility project. Lueschow told trustees he believed the construction budget carried little risk.

"These are all hard bids," Lueschow added.

Jeremy Hobbs, vice president at Layton Construction, recognized that while all projects carry unknowns, he expects the risk for the health-care campus to remain minimal.

"We have looked at each number (from subcontractors) so many times, that my comfort level has increased," Hobbs said.

"Everything looks consistent with what we've seen so far," said SCHD board chairwoman Tonia Hoffman.

Projected construction start date – early June

The finalization of the gross maximum price and the construction contract between Layton Construction and the SCHD officially kicks off the construction process.

The SCHD and its team still needs to prepare documentation reflecting the gross maximum price with the USDA's architect, Justin Bailey, and tie up any remaining financial loose ends, said Lueschow. Layton also requires time to notify each subcontractor that their bid was awarded.

Lueschow anticipated full construction getting underway by the first full week of June, a little later than anticipated.

In the meantime, the SCHD can complete any remaining demolition on the old ballfields and begin work to relocate the irrigation ditch, said Lueschow.

Layton can also commence preparatory work like finalizing plans and drawings with subcontractors, submitting orders for materials and fabricating necessary items for the job site, Hobbs added.

Hoffman thanked Lueschow, Hobbs and their teams for the groundwork they put into reaching a gross maximum price. Dave Doorn, SCHD administrator, expressed gratitude to Hobbs and Lueschow for maintaining a total project cost of \$75 million and avoiding escalation throughout the interim between the receipt of bids in August, the SCHD's successful campaign to bridge a funding deficit and the establishment of a gross maximum price.



VALERIE LEE COURTESY PHOTO

The University of Wyoming Symphony Orchestra performs a concert at the Shepard Auditorium on April 13 in Pinedale. The performance included all four movements of what was previously called Schubert's 'Unfinished Symphony' and Valentin Silvestrov's 'Prayer for Ukraine.' About 100 people attended the free concert in Sublette County.

Marbleton plans for water-account fees

By Joy Ufford, jufford@subletteexaminer.com

SUBLETTE COUNTY — The Marbleton Town Council approved the first reading of its proposed Ordinance 2023-01, Setting Water Turn-On Fee by Resolution, at its April 10 meeting.

Once the ordinance is approved after three public readings, the council can set a fee to connect or disconnect municipal water services.

In March, Mayor Jim Robinson had brought up charging an after-hours fee because residents were calling town staff to turn on or shut off their water at night or over weekends, the town essentially paying for an account holder's after-hours timing.

Town attorney Thayne Peterson said once passed, this ordinance would let the council vote on the fee's actual amount at one meeting.

"We have not set a disconnect rate before," Robinson said. "But some people don't even look for (the main valve) themselves. We want to retrain people to not expect our employees to be at their beck and call."

Councilmembers Jeff McCormick, Roger McMannis, BJ Meador and Karen Wenz agreed to address the issue and that a \$25 fee to connect and \$25 to disconnect might work once the ordinance is passed.

Another item the council approved was the town's proclamation of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, with SAFV Task Force's Mandy Moffat thanking members for their continued support.

Dump vouchers, fair

Town clerk Shannon McCormick asked when the council planned to offer free Sublette County dump vouchers for town residents and homeowners to clean up their properties, another annual community service. Last year's vouchers cost the town about \$1,500, she said.

"It's a good way to get the town cleaned up," McMannis noted.

The council approved running the free voucher program initially from mid-May to Aug. 31.

It also approved spending \$500 for Sublette County Fair prizes and awards "where needed." "We had a number of people noting the town of Marbleton's support," Robinson said. "There were a lot of positive comments."

Town council and staff have met twice to discuss the 2023-'24 fiscal year budget.

Scholarships

Big Piney High School senior Hunter Fisher of Marbleton introduced himself to the council as a college scholarship applicant. Also an athlete and finishing up the track season, Fisher said he plans to take core classes at Western Community College with an interest in outdoor journalism.

The council later clarified that any Marbleton student who graduates is qualified to apply. The scholarships are \$500 and awarded after a student completes a second semester with a 2.5 GPA.

"We don't put a time limit on it because some kids went on missions after school so we waited until they started. Some kids want to go to trade schools or boot camp first," the mayor said. "It's money well spent."

May 9 election

Two four-year council seats are coming up for the May 9 municipal election, with McCormick and McMannis refiled for their long-held seats.

Third candidate Mike Brabazon introduced himself as an 18-year resident in construction who "just decided to throw it out there."

McCormick is a 17-year resident, McMannis for 33 years. Both have been reelected numerous times and welcomed Brabazon.

"We take a lot of pride in what we do in our community," Robinson said. "It's not all fun and games but it can be very rewarding. We appreciate all three of your interests."

Welcome!

Juli Forrester, FNP-C, is now accepting patients.

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