

**MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR MEETING
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL OF SWEETWATER COUNTY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

April 2, 2025

The Board of Trustees of Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County met in regular session on April 2, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. with Dr. Barbara Sowada, President, presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Sowada welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Dr. Sowada requested a roll call and announced there was a quorum. The following Trustees were present: Judge Nena James, Mr. Marty Kelsey, Ms. Kandi Pendleton, Mr. Craig Rood, and Dr. Barbara Sowada.

Officially present during the meeting: Ms. Irene Richardson, Chief Executive Officer; Dr. Alicia Gray, Chief of Medical Staff; Mr. Geoff Phillips, Legal Counsel; and Mr. Taylor Jones, Sweetwater Board of County Commissioners.

Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Sowada led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission and Vision

Mr. Kelsey read aloud the mission and vision statements.

Mission Moment

Ms. Richardson shared a personal mission moment involving the care of a loved one. He was admitted after testing in the Emergency Department. He has a complicated case and comments were shared that everyone providing care was excellent. Ms. Richardson said Dr. Gray took such good care of him. Nursing staff was wonderful. Everyone was great across the board. He told Ms. Richardson he is very grateful and she said she is also grateful.

AGENDA

Dr. Sowada asked for requests for any items to be moved from the Consent Agenda to New Business. There were no changes. Dr. Sowada asked if there were requests for Senior Leader or Board Committee Reports to be removed to New Business. There was a request to move Finance and Audit Committee to New Business. The motion to approve the agenda with the item noted as moved to New Business as requested was made by Judge James; second by Mr. Rood. Motion carried.

Mr. Kelsey clarified why Employee Policies – Access to Personnel Files was included under Old Business this month. He said there was no official document or record of what was passed so he asked for it to be placed on the April agenda to verify approval. Mr. Kelsey said he agrees with all of the changes made by the attorney. Dr. Sowada thanked Mr. Kelsey for bringing this to the Board's attention. Mr. Kelsey also noted we have an official online agenda item in the packet for Approval of Bad Debt under the Consent Agenda.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

There were no comments.

OLD BUSINESS

Quarterly Progress Report on Strategic Plans and Goals

Ms. Richardson gave a shout out to staff and said everyone is on the same page in regard to working on the Strategic Plan. She reviewed the update provided to the Board in the portal and shared updates on each of the Strategic Pillars: Patient Experience, Employee Experience, Quality and Safety, Community Services and Growth, and Financial Stewardship. Mr. Kelsey thanked Ms. Richardson for the very nice report and asked if it would be possible to explore graphing the key metrics for patient satisfaction.

Employee Policies – Access to Personnel Files

The motion to approve the policy as presented was made by Ms. Pendleton; second by Mr. Kelsey. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

The motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Mr. Kelsey; second by Judge James. Motion carried. Items approved: March Meeting Minutes, Capital Expenditure Requests, Bad Debt, Quality Committee Charter Update.

NEW BUSINESS

Behavioral Health Plan

Dr. Sowada said Dr. Ann Marie Clevenger, Chief Nursing Officer, and Ms. Crystal Hamblin, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services, have developed a Behavioral Health Plan, which is a huge project and a big plan. Dr. Sowada said the purpose at the meeting is not to approve/disapprove but to gather information. Dr. Clevenger thanked the group. She provided a summary of how the plan was developed. She said bringing this forward helps to build the clinic and address strategic priorities alignment. Dr. Clevenger said we want to improve access to care. She said Southwest Counseling has made a big impact in providing services and QLER has also helped. She said many staff members across multiple departments have helped develop the plan. Dr. Gray recognized Dr. Clevenger and her team for all the work they have done. She said the physicians recognize there are barriers and are supportive and happy to answer any questions. Dr. Gray reviewed the process acute care patients go through. Mr. Kelsey thanked the group for the presentation. He said he has questions revolving around mental health, our responsibility, and the responsibility of other county organizations. The Board requested a workshop to review the information in more detail.

Policies from the Governance Committee

Mr. Kelsey said this journey began about nine months ago. The Committee looked at current policies with staff and proposals were developed. Mr. Kelsey said it became apparent there were

some legal implications and so they involved legal counsel. The information presented is primarily the work of Mr. Phillips. Mr. Kelsey said these are the bedrock or foundational policies that govern how we handle policies at MHSC. He said there are extremely critical legal implications. Mr. Phillips reviewed the process and said we must have a proper separation of powers regarding the development of policies and we must ensure that we identify who is going to be adopting, approving, developing, etc. He said as a government entity we retain our sovereign immunity. The Board has a statutory duty. He said the matrix is really the key. Mr. Kelsey said as we move forward if we run into trouble we can tweak it. He said staff was wonderful with their help to develop the policies. Dr. Sowada thanked everyone involved for their work.

Request from the Medical Staff – Changes to Emergency Medicine Privileges and Pediatric Privileges

Dr. Sowada asked the Board for their pleasure to review or to approve on first review. The motion to approve the Changes to the Emergency Medicine Privileges as presented was made by Ms. Pendleton; second by Judge James. Motion carried. The motion to approve the Changes to the Pediatric Privileges as presented was made by Ms. Pendleton; second by Judge James. Motion carried.

Patient Safety

Dr. Sowada said 20% of each Board meeting should be spent on patient safety. She said how information is brought to the Board will be a work in progress. She said in the late 1990's, a large study was conducted. "To Err Is Human" was a report issued that found there were a number of deaths that occurred due to errors in the practice of medicine. The total study was reviewed again two or three years ago and the numbers hadn't really changed. Dr. Sowada said when Quality Department staff and other staff look at our hospital scores, we show we are doing really well. She said hat's off to everybody. Dr. Sowada said we have a lot in our community to be thankful for including good processes and good people in place.

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. Kelsey said Mr. Ron Cheese, Patient Financial Services Director, brought to Finance and Audit an update on the revenue cycle project started by Clifton Larson Allen. He said Mr. Cheese did a good job with his report and Mr. Kelsey thinks this is something the entire Board should be aware of. He said the information is available in the portal. Mr. Kelsey asked Trustees to review the information carefully. Mr. Rood said it is a nice report and it is good to see we are making progress. He said we need to stay on top of that. Ms. Tami Love, Chief Financial Officer, said the update will be included monthly in the Finance and Audit Committee meeting packet. Mr. Kelsey said a question was asked at the recent Committee meeting about when will we be all caught up with the old billing. Staff said hopefully by the end of May. Mr. Kelsey suggested by the end of the fiscal year. He said he knows we are submitting piecemeal for a reason and said he thinks that is a good idea. Mr. Kelsey noted net patient revenues were down through February. He said expenditures were also down. Dr. Sowada thanked Mr. Kelsey.

REPORTS

Chief Executive Officer Report

Ms. Richardson thanked everyone for the work done related to Critical Access designation. She said we started in January 2023 and involved the Medical Staff. She said she thinks it really is the best thing we could do for this hospital and our community. Ms. Richardson said many of the OB units have closed around us. She said we are committed to keeping our unit open. We added Dr. Ken Holt and Dr. Cesar Hernandez to our group and they are helping us solidify our presence here. Ms. Richardson said we have been extremely busy and we are grateful to have great providers and great staff. We presented a proposal to the County Commissioners for remodeling of our OB unit with some remaining funds. The Commissioners asked us to explore grant funding. Ms. Richardson asked staff to investigate. The Lab renovation is coming along nicely and we plan to have the work done by the end of the calendar year. Ms. Richardson said we are very busy right now with annual education, competencies, evaluations, and our operating and capital budget process. As we prepare our budget to submit to the County, we are mindful county revenues are down and we will adjust our budget accordingly. Ms. Richardson said Doctors Day was March 30 and we are celebrating our physicians April 10. She said we are so lucky to have them at MHSC. We will celebrate Hospital Week May 12-16 and a service award banquet event will be held that week. Ms. Richardson will attend the American Hospital Association Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. May 4-6. She said she is honored to have been asked to introduce Senator John Barrasso as one of the speakers. The Wyoming Hospital Association (WHA) CEO and Trustee Spring Meeting will be in Casper May 30. Ms. Richardson will attend the WHA Region 4 CEO Meeting in Afton June 11. The WHA Board Retreat is in Jackson June 12-13. The WHA Annual Meeting will be in Laramie September 3-4. Ms. Richardson ended her report with a huge shout out to staff for their hard work. She said she is happy to be part of it.

Medical Staff Services Chief of Staff Report

Dr. Gray highlighted Dr. Cody Christensen and Emily James, NP, for their great care. She shared some of the recent comments shared by patients and said we are grateful for these great providers. The Medical Staff are reviewing readmission rates and collaborating with the Emergency Department to improve outcomes. We continue to focus on the Pain Task Force. We are working to improve care coordination between departments. Dr. Gray recognized Dr. Banu Symington for her recent appointment as Chair-Elect to the American Society of Clinical Oncology's State Affiliate Council. Dr. Gray said we are all dedicated to improving patient care.

County Commissioner Liaison Report

Commissioner Jones said Dr. Sowada announced she will be stepping away from the Board at the end of June. He asked that anyone interested in serving on the Board complete an application with the County. He said typically the Liaison pre-screens. Commissioner Jones said he believes strongly that Trustees not be afraid to ask questions. The Liaison then makes a recommendation and the Commissioners vote. The more people who apply, the better the selection. Commissioner Jones provided a budget update.

CONTRACTS

Wolters Kluwer

The motion to approve the contract as presented was made by Ms. Pendleton; second by Mr. Kelsey. Motion carried.

EDUCATION

Ms. Pendleton said she thought the *Veralon Community Partnerships: A Strategic Imperative Parts 1 and 2* was very good and timely. Mr. Rood said he thought it was interesting that we look at the money as well as the cause. He agreed it was timely. Dr. Sowada liked the questions the Board should ask about partnerships.

GOOD OF ORDER

Ms. Richardson said a family member wanted her to give a shout out to the Health Information Management Department for all of the requests he has made and they are so responsive and helpful every time.

Mr. Kelsey said he needed to give an admonition to the staff. He said that as a prior CFO, he knows we are always under pressure to add staff. He urges everyone to be very careful and scrutinize every request carefully. He said he will be looking at that closely and cautioned everyone to be mindful and careful.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The motion to go into executive session at 4:01 p.m. to discuss legal, personnel, contracts, and items considered confidential by law was made by Mr. Rood; second by Mr. Kelsey. Motion carried.

RECONVENE INTO REGULAR SESSION

The motion to leave the executive session and return to the regular session at 5:14 p.m. was made by Ms. Pendleton; second by Mr. Rood. Motion carried.

ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to the notice provided in the agenda, the Board of Trustees held discussions and action was taken.

The motion to grant clinical privileges and appointments to the medical staff as discussed in executive session was made by Judge James; second by Ms. Pendleton. Motion carried.

Credentials Committee Recommendations to the Board of Trustees for Granting Clinical Privileges and Granting Appointment to the Medical Staff from March 11, 2025

1. Initial Appointment to Associate Staff (1 year)
 - Dr. Benjamin Childs, Orthopedic Surgery
 - Dr. Joginder Singh, Medical Oncology
2. Initial Appointment to Consulting Staff (1 year)
 - Paul Crane, Tele-Neuro (U of U)
3. Initial Appointment to Advance Practice Provider Staff (1 year)
 - Mariah Pacheco, Family Nurse Practitioner
4. Reappointment to Active Staff (3 year)
 - Dr. Kurt Hunter, Family Medicine
 - Dr. Wagner Veronese, OB/GYN
 - Dr. David Dansie, Family Medicine
 - Dr. Brytton Long, Family and Occupational Medicine
 - Dr. Jacques Denker, Orthopedics and Sports Medicine
 - Dr. Joshua Binks, Radiation Oncology
 - Dr. Rahul Pawar, Nephrology
 - Dr. Augusto Jamias, General Surgery
5. Reappointment to Consulting Staff (3 year)
 - Dr. Ethan Tumarkin, Cardiovascular Disease (U of U)
 - Dr. Clark Moser, Tele-Neurology (U of U)
 - Dr. Robert Kadish, Tele-Neurology (U of U)
 - Dr. Frank Rembert, Tele-Radiology (VRC)
 - Dr. Jana Wold, Tele-Stroke (U of U)
 - Dr. Stephanie Lyden, Tele-Stroke (U of U)
6. New Business
 - Dr. Name Change
 - Revised Pediatric and Emergency Medicine Privileges

The motion to approve contracts and authorize the CEO to sign as discussed in executive session was made by Judge James; second by Ms. Pendleton. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Dr. Barbara Sowada, President

Attest:

Judge Nena James, Secretary