

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

April 22, 2025

The Board of Trustees of Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County met in a special meeting on April 22, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. with Dr. Barbara Sowada, President, presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Sowada called the meeting to order. The following Trustees were present: Judge Nena James, Ms. Kandi Pendleton, and Dr. Barbara Sowada. Mr. Marty Kelsey attended via Zoom meeting online. Mr. Craig Rood was excused.

Officially present during the meeting: Ms. Irene Richardson, Chief Executive Officer; Mr. Geoff Phillips, Legal Counsel. Dr. Alicia Gray, Chief of Medical Staff, and Mr. Taylor Jones, County Commissioner Liaison, attended via Zoom meeting online.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINIC PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Dr. Ann Marie Clevenger, Chief Nursing Officer, asked if everyone had received a copy of her printed information. She provided some background and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to gather information and ask questions related to the proposed behavioral health clinic. She stressed it is really meant to provide an additional service and access to our community. Dr. Clevenger reviewed data of rates and service providers. She reviewed questions from the Board. She reviewed what we are currently doing in detail. Dr. Clevenger reviewed verification of expenses and revenues. She emphasized the return on investment may not be financial. She said, as a healthcare facility, we feel it is the right thing to do for the underserved members of our community. She said collaboration is the key. The process for patients under a Title 25 hold was discussed. They are currently under the care of Hospitalists and are on observation status until medical needs supersede and then admitted as a medical patient. Ms. Tami Love, Chief Financial Officer, said we see an average of 4.8 days per stay. We are projecting to 55 patients this year. Data shows 60% are self-pay, 35% are Blue Cross Blue Shield, and there are some with Medicare or Medicaid. Dr. Clevenger said when someone is here waiting 30-45 days, they were waiting for a bed. When discharged, we often see them back again. Ms. Robin Jenkins, Director of Care Management, said a location we wait for openings is Wyoming Behavioral Institute (WBI). Dr. Gray said most patients go to the Wyoming State Hospital. She said it is very difficult to get patients into WBI. She said it is really up to the State Hospital where these patients go. Dr. Clevenger said the plan to start is two separate clinics and then evaluate. We would like to start small, try to grow to see the impact to our community, and if positive, then enhance an opportunity to bring a psychiatrist. Ms. Love reviewed the financials. She said the insurance is no different through COPIC for providers than what we offer now. Dr. Clevenger said we added one day a week on to our QLER contract. She said that would/could go away. Dr. Sowada asked what problem we are attempting to solve. Is our goal to provide counseling or is it to get people stabilized on their medications? Dr. Clevenger referred to the nurse model and said the focus is on medication management. If we go to a counseling model, we will never have enough providers. Dr. Clevenger said the purpose is to solve a disparity of service. She said providers practice in their realm of practice. Dr. Sowada said the direction we take determines which staff are hired. Ms. Crystal Hamblin, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services, said if it was her as the provider, she

would want to focus on medication management. She said she personally likes to refer to the experts. Ms. Pendleton said she appreciates the starting small approach clarified today. Ms. Jodi Cheese, Specialty Clinics Practice Manager, said the majority of what we are currently doing in the clinics is medication management. Dr. Clevenger referenced working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Southwest Counseling moving forward. Mr. Phillips mentioned additional liability issues with enhanced federal standards related to HIPAA. Ms. Suzan Campbell, In House Legal Counsel, said we would not have any additional liability issues. Dr. Gray said the clinic would be an added benefit to our community. She said medication management appointments sometimes take 1 – 2 months to get so that would be a benefit alone. When asked how long we think it would take to start, the response was 60-90 days. Ms. Pendleton thinks this is step 1. She said we can't get to step 10 without starting at step 1. Commissioner Jones said the County Commissioners will not tell the Board what to do. He said Title 25 is a big thing. Mr. Kelsey said he would like more information on our relationship with Southwest Counseling. He said this presentation has been helpful and is appreciated. He said it is certainly worth discussion, deliberation, contemplation, and thought. Ms. Richardson thanked Dr. Clevenger and the team for the great, informative presentation. She said we want to do everything we can to help our community and address their concerns. She thanked the Board for their questions and agreed this is a very important topic. The Trustees thanked the presenters. Dr. Sowada said the topic will be on the May meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Dr. Barbara Sowada, President

Attest:

Judge Nena James, Secretary