

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

September 1, 2021

The Board of Trustees of Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County met via Zoom in regular session on September 1, 2021, at 2:00 PM with Mr. Taylor Jones, President, presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jones called the meeting to order and announced there was a quorum. The following Trustees were present online: Mr. Taylor Jones, Mr. Marty Kelsey, Ms. Kandi Pendleton, Dr. Barbara Sowada, and Mr. Ed Tardoni.

Officially present: Ms. Irene Richardson, Chief Executive Officer; Dr. Jacques Denker, Medical Staff President; Mr. Jeff Smith, Sweetwater County Commissioner Liaison; and Mr. Geoff Phillips, Legal Counsel.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Jones led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Our Mission and Vision

Mr. Kelsey read aloud the mission and vision statements.

Mission Moment

Ms. Richardson read aloud a thank you card from a patient's family. Mr. Jones shared a story relayed to him by a friend that visited the emergency department. He said everybody was great, prompt, pleasant, enjoyable, and he was all around grateful. Mr. Jones said the positive stories are always good to hear.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Dr. Sowada; second by Ms. Pendleton. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The motion to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2021, regular meeting as presented was made by Dr. Sowada; second by Mr. Tardoni. Motion carried.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

There were no comments.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 Preparation and Recovery – Incident Command Team Update

Ms. Kim White, Incident Commander and Director of Emergency Services, referenced recent press releases and reported there has been a significant increase in covid cases and an increase in acuity. We are currently still allowing visitors in other areas of the Hospital outside the emergency department. Ms. White said we hope our community will be patient with us. We have stopped elective surgeries due to the staff needed in other areas. We have approximately 120-150 people going through the swabbing station daily. Ms. White said we know it is frustrating to have to wait in lines. She asked that people please be patient with us as we work to move as quickly as we can. Ms. White said staff in all areas are doing an amazing job. Staff are exhausted and we are doing all we can to support them in every way. We are anticipating six to eight weeks in this crisis. We continue to evaluate adding elective surgeries back. Ms. White gave a shout out to our community partners and to everyone supporting staff. We have expanded the swabbing line to 9 AM to 5 PM Monday thru Saturday. Dr. Kari Quickenden, Chief Clinical Officer, reported 290 people went through the line August 30. Mr. Kelsey expressed appreciation to Ms. Richardson for reaching out to the schools. He said he sees very few students wearing masks. Ms. White reported we are offering a drive-thru vaccine clinic every Wednesday from 3-6 PM. Ms. Deb Sutton, Marketing Director, said we plan to expand to Tuesdays from 3-6 PM in mid-September. Commissioner Smith suggested giving the vaccine during the swabbing line process. Ms. White agreed and said we are currently offering that service. Dr. Ann Clevenger, Chief Nursing Officer, reported Ms. Noreen Hove, Director of Infection Prevention/Employee Health, is flexible and working around schedules to try to meet everyone's needs. Ms. White said people can take as many covid tests as they want but they are only counted positive one time. Dr. Sowada asked if major employers are encouraging staff to be vaccinated. Ms. Richardson said she meets with industry leaders regularly and she shares data with them. Ms. White said we are having to triage and have people wait in their cars until we have a bed available for them in the emergency department. We are doing the best we can to provide care for people quickly. Mr. Jones said he knows this is a stressful time and thanked everyone for all they are doing.

Termination and Appeals Policy, Introductory Period Policy, Rules of Practice Governing Hearings

Mr. Jones said placeholders remain on the agenda for the Termination and Appeals Policy, the Introductory Period Policy, and the Rules of Practice Governing Hearings.

Medical Staff Bylaws

Ms. Kerry Downs, Director of Medical Staff Services, reported Dr. Denker had to leave the meeting to meet with patients. He asked her to provide an update. She reported the medical staff met two weeks ago and reviewed legal recommendations. A meeting will be scheduled with the general medical staff. When the bylaws are approved, they will come to the Board.

FY 2022 PIPS Priorities Update

Ms. Kara Jackson, Director of Quality, Accreditation, Patient Safety, Risk and Compliance, said she brought PIPS (Performance Improvement and Patient Safety) information to the Board for review and approval a couple of months ago. The Board had great questions about timelines, baselines, and data. The information was updated and is included in the meeting packet.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Jones said there was no new business for the meeting. He said this used to be largest portion of the meeting. Mr. Jones said this goes to how much hard work has been done over the past several years.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Ms. Richardson thanked Ms. White for an excellent report and for being the Incident Commander from the beginning of the pandemic. Ms. Richardson said she wanted to go into a little more detail. Ms. Richardson said the Delta variant is more infectious than previous variants and results in more severe illness and hospitalizations. The patients we are seeing in our own hospital are younger; in their 40's and 50's and they are much sicker than what we have seen before. During the height of the covid pandemic in November and December of 2020, the maximum number of covid patients we had in the hospital at any given time was nine patients. After that covid surge, we may have averaged anywhere from one to three covid patients in-house and less than five covid positive patients coming through the emergency room on any given day. Over the last three weeks, Ms. Richardson said, we have seen an increase in our covid positive inpatients and our covid positive patients that come in through the emergency room. We currently have 11 covid positive patients in the hospital today. We have seen as high as 15-18 covid positive patients coming through the emergency room on any given day, and we have been averaging about 6-8 covid positive patients per day in the emergency room. Ms. Richardson said that since last November and December, some things have changed. There is a statewide, regionwide and nationwide shortage of clinical staff; including physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists and medical technologists that has exacerbated this pandemic this time around. Hospitals around the nation are having to close beds and units due to limited staff. Ms. Richardson said this means that due to the staffing shortage around the nation, and the increase in transmission of the delta variant and the increase in covid cases, it is difficult for our physicians to transfer critically ill patients to higher level care hospitals. The reality is that all hospitals are facing this dilemma. This means that when a critically ill patient, for example, a trauma patient, or a patient who has suffered a heart attack or stroke comes into our hospital for care, it is very difficult to find a hospital that will accept this patient. She said our emergency room physicians and our hospitalists call many different hospitals in several states until they can find a hospital that will accept these critically ill patients. Ms. Richardson gave a shout out to our staff and our physicians. She said they are here every day taking care of our community and our patients. They work tirelessly and selflessly in order to be here when our patients arrive. Ms. Richardson said our staff is taking on additional shifts and staying after their shift is over to help their coworkers. They are exhausted, but they are strong and they are committed and she is very proud of them. Ms. Richardson said our community should be proud of them and we all owe them a debt of gratitude for being here to take care of our patients and community. She said we are very fortunate to have these professionals here in our hospital to take care of everyone who

walks in our doors because they care about our patients. As of August 23, we had a 34.79% vaccination rate in Wyoming and 31.24% in Sweetwater County. The majority of covid patients we are seeing have not been vaccinated. We do know that by getting the covid vaccine, you may still be able to transmit the virus, or contract the virus. Ms. Richardson said there is a lower likelihood of transmitting covid if you have been vaccinated and studies show that by getting vaccinated, if you contract covid, you will reduce your risk of becoming seriously ill or being hospitalized. Ms. Richardson said if you have questions about the vaccine, please reach out to your healthcare provider. They will help educate you and answer your questions. She said we have our drive thru vaccine clinic available every Wednesday from 3-6 at the front door of the hospital. It's easy and convenient. Ms. Richardson said we also know that we can help slow the spread of the virus by wearing masks, physically distancing and practicing good hand hygiene. She repeated the stress of this pandemic is being intensified by the fact that it is becoming more difficult to transfer patients with life-threatening illnesses. She said this affects all of us. Ms. Richardson asked that everyone please help us lighten the load for our staff and hospital so we can continue to be here to take care of all of our patients. She said we need the community's help. Mr. Tardoni said the vaccine is widely available. Mr. Kelsey asked if we aren't already out in the community can we please do that. Ms. Richardson is working with senior leaders on a letter out to the community to help educate the public. Mr. Jones said there is a letter from the Board of Health on the City of Rock Springs site.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Quality Committee

Dr. Sowada said the minutes and report are in the meeting packet. The narrative to the quality dashboard is modified and reports are easier to read. She encouraged Trustees not on the Committee to read the reports in the portal because it makes everything much more understandable.

Human Resources Committee

Dr. Sowada reported turnover is higher and recruiting clinical staff is difficult. She said we, as a community, need to do all we can to stay as healthy as possible.

Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. Tardoni said his comments are in the packet. He noted the improvement of the Hospital's Standard & Poor's rating.

Capital Expenditure Requests The motion to approve capital expenditure request FY22-13 for \$56,165 for software was made by Mr. Tardoni; second by Ms. Pendleton. Mr. Tardoni said this is non-budgeted and sole source due to compatibility with Cerner. The motion carried.

Bad Debt: The motion to approve the net potential bad debt of \$1,039,059.62 as presented by Mr. Ron Cheese, Director of Patient Financial Services, was made by Mr. Tardoni; second by Ms. Pendleton. Motion carried. Mr. Tardoni noted the majority is in emergency room accounts.

Mr. Jones congratulated everyone for the move up in Standard & Poor's and said he appreciates everyone's efforts.

Building & Grounds Committee

Mr. Kelsey said the chair report and minutes are in the packet. He gave a shout out to Mr. Jones for getting someone who could help us involved and said it looks like we have a plan in place moving forward. Ms. Love said we have received a proposal for someone to come onsite to look at issues and grounding. Mr. Jones said the sooner the better.

Foundation

Mr. Jones said the golf tournament went well and was successful. We are looking forward to doing it again next year.

Compliance Committee

Mr. Kelsey said the Committee hasn't met since changes were made in summer. A small group will meet September 9 to review the structure and plans. A meeting is planned for the last week of September.

Governance Committee

Mr. Jones said the Committee meets September 3.

Executive Oversight and Compensation Committee

Mr. Jones said the Board will discuss in executive session.

Joint Conference Committee

Mr. Jones said there is nothing new to report.

Board Education

Dr. Sowada asked for the Trustees' assessment on how well our Board is doing with quality and do they feel the iProtean videos are beneficial. Mr. Jones said he feels we have room for improvement but have a good start. He said he thinks the videos and quizzes are good. Mr. Jones said it is a great opportunity to move forward because of where we are starting. Ms. Pendleton said it was very good. Mr. Kelsey said he enjoyed the videos particularly setting quality targets at the board level and compliance with core measures. He noted the need for benchmarks with other hospitals. Mr. Kelsey said he appreciates Dr. Sowada's efforts to get this going for us. Mr. Tardoni said it is the nature of reporting and the way we are receiving it. He asked what are the mathematics involved? He said we must be selective of what we are paying attention to. Dr. Sowada said she went through it with an eye of what are we doing vs. what is recommended. We annually approve the PIPS Plan, do credentialing, doctors are becoming more engaged in quality, dashboards consistency with state and national benchmarks. Do we know what is important to our physicians

regarding quality? Do we understand what is behind the numbers? Dr. Sowada said overall she thinks we are doing a pretty good job of meeting what is expected by a board related to quality. She said we have a really nice foundation due to a lot of people's efforts. The topic for discussion at the November 3 meeting is credentialing and privileges modules.

CONTRACT REVIEW

Contract Consent Agenda

The motion to approve the ambulance agreement with Castle Rock as presented was made by Ms. Pendleton; second by Mr. Kelsey. Motion carried.

MEDICAL STAFF REPORT

Dr. Denker stated Ms. Richardson is cool, calm, and collected, and keeps us on track. He said Dr. Melinda Poyer, Chief Medical Officer, directs the day-to-day activities for the general medical staff. Dr. Denker said we really appreciate the help they give directly and indirectly. He said, in general, the covid patients are younger and sicker. We are experiencing a national, regional, and local staffing shortage. We are presented with new challenges regarding transfer of higher acuity patients. Dr. Denker said we have suspended electives surgeries due to bed and staff shortages. The operating room is open for urgent and emergent cases. On the medical floor, we have two Hospitalists working together. We are doing our best to get the message out to the community to get vaccinated, wear masks indoors, distance, and wash hands. Dr. Denker said he is working with Ms. Jackson on the physician report on quality. Dr. Denker said he has been reviewing C-diff, mortality, transfer data, sepsis, perinatal and surgical measures. He said HCAHPS and quality measures are trending in a positive direction. Dr. Denker said we need to understand where we are at to know where to go. He said there are long waits in the emergency department and the staff are doing their best. Dr. Denker said we are always working to improve our processes and the patient experience. Dr. Sowada asked if people are being encouraged to use the walk-in clinic. Dr. Denker said the walk-in clinic has been very busy and they are seeing many covid patients. He said the walk-in clinic gives the community urgent access to a healthcare professional. Dr. Denker thanked the Board for access to iProtean board education materials.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Jones said we are going through a tough time and said he appreciates what every person is doing because every job is difficult. He recognized the good leadership and thanked Ms. Richardson.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Jones said there would be an executive session. He said the Board would take a break until 3:20 PM and reconvene in executive session. The motion to go into executive session was made by Dr. Sowada; second by Mr. Kelsey. Motion carried.

RECONVENE INTO REGULAR SESSION

At 3:29 PM, the motion to leave executive session and return to regular session was made by Mr. Tardoni; second by Dr. Sowada. Motion carried.

ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

Approval of Privileges

The motion to approve credentials for everyone on the list provided by Ms. Downs was made by Dr. Sowada; second by Ms. Pendleton. Motion carried.

Credentials Committee Recommendations from August 10, 2021

1. Initial Appointment to AHP Staff (1 year)
 - Jessica Nielson, Clinical Social Work (SWCS)
2. Reappointment to Active Staff (2 years)
 - Dr. Astrid Haaland, Emergency Medicine (U of U)
 - Dr. Alicia Peterson, Emergency Medicine (U of U)
 - Dr. Philip Craven, Emergency Medicine (U of U)
 - Dr. Justine Macneil, Emergency Medicine (U of U)
3. Reappointment to Consulting Staff (2 years)
 - Dr. Albert Ybasco, Tele Radiology (VRC)
 - Dr. Kristi Sobota, Tele Radiology (VRC)
 - Dr. Karen Simmons, Tele Radiology (VRC)
 - Dr. Safdar Ansari, Tele Stroke (U of U)
4. Reappointment to Locum Tenens Staff (1 year)
 - Dr. Kamran Khan, Pulmonary Medicine
5. Reappointment to AHP Staff (2 years)
 - Ross Little, Licensed Professional Counselor (SWCS)
 - Charles Michael, Clinical Social Work (SWCS)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jones thanked everyone. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Mr. Taylor Jones, President

Attest:

Mr. Marty Kelsey, Secretary