



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 22, 2024

Call to Order – Kay Olson called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on February 22, 2024 at 8:59 a.m. in the Board Room.

Adjourn to Closed Session – Mary Sanders made a motion to adjourn into closed session as permitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. §145.64 subd. 1(d) to discuss decisions, recommendations, deliberations or documentation of a Review Organization; pursuant to Minn. Stat. §144.581, subd. 5, which permits closure to discuss contracts related to the Hospital's competitive position with other health care providers that offer similar services; and pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 2 to discuss not public medical data. Steve Frykman seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Summary - The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from January 17, 2024; the Medical Staff Report from January 17, 2024 and the February 21, 2024 Credentials Committee Report were discussed. The Board was provided information regarding cybersecurity events and communication with the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice.

Reconvene - The North Shore Health Board reconvened in regular session at 9:31 a.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Steve Frykman, Kay Olson, Mary Sanders, Randy Wiitala and Patty Winchell-Dahl (remote via zoom). Ms. Winchell-Dahl is at the Grand Portage Community Center, 73 Upper Road, Grand Portage, which is open/accessible to the public.

Members Absent:

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad, Troy Batchelor, Lori Ericson, Michele Silence, Jason Yuhas, Greg Ruberg and Community Members.

Approval of Agenda: Mary Sanders requested an additional item be added under New Business to discuss a microphone donation. Mary Sanders made a motion to accept the meeting agenda as modified; it was seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Olson shared a change in process regarding questions from audience members. We, as a board, have been allowing the audience to ask questions during the meeting. In discussion with board chairs from other Hospital Districts, this is not something allowed. Going forward we ask that if you have questions to please submit them in writing to the CEO and/or Board chair. They can be emailed, mailed or dropped at the Registration Desk.

Public Comments: The following individuals provided public comments: Anne Deneen and Vicki Biggs on behalf of the Concerned Citizens for Cook County Healthcare, Steve Sande and Siri Anderson.

Approval of Minutes for January 9, 2024; January 18, 2024 and January 25, 2024 – Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2024; January 18, 2024 and January 25, 2024 meetings as presented and the motion was seconded by Mary Sanders. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Kate Surbaugh was unable to attend the meeting but shared a written summary of activities at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC). It was noted that Kristin DeArruda-Wharton, NP officially started at SMC on January 15. Welcome Kristin.
- b. **County Board:** No report.
- c. **Board Members:** Randy Wiitala congratulated Greg Ruberg on Lake View's recognition as one of the top 100 Critical Access Hospitals in the United States. Mary Sanders shared she purchased the book "Healthcare Leadership and Rural Communities" by Tim Putnam, Nikki King and Bill Auxier. Doug Sanders just completed the book and highly recommends it. Patty Winchell-Dahl expressed her gratitude for the assistance of the Care Center and Dietary staff for helping make Doris Blank's 100th birthday special. Ms. Olson suggested that the Board hold Board meetings in various locations throughout the County; similar to the process held during the building design. The members of the Board agreed that meetings should be rotated to different areas in the County.

Board Presentation – Human Resources, A Year in Review and Looking Ahead – Michele Silence

Ms. Silence presented the Year in Review and plans moving forward for the Human Resources Department. She shared information, addressed questions and provided clarification regarding the following:

- NSH Turnover rate – 19% compared with the national hospital employee turnover rate of 22.7% and high-rated nursing homes with an average turnover rate of 34%.
- Turnover by Reason
- NSH Staff Longevity
- Review Completion Rates – 95% in 2023 versus 77% in 2022.
- Introductions of Quarterly Reflections

- NSH Participation in Outside Organizations
- Earned Safe and Sick Time
- Short Term Disability Insurance
- NSH Benefit Package
- Educational Scholarship Program
- Immigration - Green Card Process
- Rural Healthcare Burnout Survey
- Culture and Gaps Survey
- Employee Engagement Survey – NSH has received quotes from two companies that were recommended by the Leadership and Development Educator at the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative: Press Ganey and Workforce Research Group.

After review of the information provided by Ms. Silence and discussion regarding the options for the employee engagement survey, Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to engage Workforce Research Group to conduct the employee engagement survey and the motion was seconded by Randy Wiitala. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports: Ms. Ericson presented the January 2024 financial statements. There was a Loss from Operations for the month of 299K. The Statements of Net Position, Statements of Revenue and Expenses and Change in Net Position were reviewed. Gross Patient Service Revenue for the month of \$2.1M is 15.0% more than budget. Inpatient, Swing Bed, Outpatient and Home Care revenues are above budget with the Care Center being \$10K under budget. Contractual Adjustments are \$375K compared to the budget of \$257K. Total Operating Revenue for the month of \$1.755M is 9.82% more than budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$2.054M are 3.11% less than budget. The days cash on hand, debt service coverage ratio, current ratio and payer mix were reviewed by Ms. Ericson. Steve Frykman made a motion to accept the January 2024 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Randy Wiitala and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

a) **Organization Review Update:** NSH has received the culture survey from Dr. Bill Auxier and the AUXIER Group this week. The survey will be sent to all NSH staff, leaders, executives and the Board of Directors on Friday, February 23, 2024, with two weeks to complete the survey. The National Rural Health Association and Stroudwater is in the process of developing the engagement letter for the updated Strategic, Financial and Operational Assessment. It is taking longer to develop with the addition of the physician services evaluation.

b) **Other:** None.

New Business:

a) **2025 Ambulance Purchase:** Karla Pankow, North Shore Health EMS Director, discussed the fleet management program that has been developed for the ambulance service. In spring of 2023, members of the EMS Department began the research and planning process for a replacement ambulance as well as a remounting schedule for those rigs in the fleet that can be 'rebuilt' over time. Throughout the past year, the

group has met with various companies and brands, toured demo ambulances, and met with directors of other services. The current fleet consists of three, Type 3, 'box-style' ambulances that were reviewed in detail. As part of the fleet management program for 2024 and beyond, the EMS Department is now rotating the rigs to best accommodate the demands of 911 calls and transfers and to balance the wear and tear across the fleet. In planning for the future of the Department, there is consideration of the purchase of a new custom build, a Type 1, 4-wheel drive ambulance. This would be the first Type 1 and first 4WD in the fleet. The cost for a new replacement ambulance ranges from \$250,000-\$310,000. As supply and demand continues to impact the availability and pricing of new builds, the turn-around time on a replacement ambulance is currently at 530 days out from the time of a signed proposal. Approval is being requested to enter into a purchase agreement up to the amount of \$310,000. This will be a 2025 capital budget item as no funds will be expended until delivery of the ambulance. Therefore, due to the extended delivery time this is not a 2024 unbudgeted capital equipment request, rather it is a commitment for 2025 capital budget. Grant opportunities will continue to be pursued as they have been in the past. Randy Wiitala made a motion to enter into a purchase agreement up to the amount of \$310,000 for the purchase of a new custom build, a Type 1, 4-wheel drive ambulance. The motion was seconded by Steve Frykman and the motion carried unanimously.

- b) **Microphone Donation:** At the request of Ms. Sanders, this item was brought for discussion. An anonymous donor has offered to purchase a microphone for use at the Board meeting. Ms. Olson stated that she has consulted with our IT coordinator and he is willing to look at the item being offered to see if it would work for North Shore Health. We are waiting for information about the microphone to review. There was a discussion about the value such a microphone might have in the space.

Management Report:

The Management Report for February 2024 included in the Board materials was reviewed. LeadingAge Minnesota held their 2024 Institute from February 7 – 9. North Shore Care Center sent five staff members (Veronica Heslop, Mary Tank, Vicky Tuorila, Kimber Wraalstad and Jason Yuhas) to the Institute. Congratulations was offered to Jason Yuhas on his graduation from the LeadingAge MN Leadership Academy Not only did Jason graduate, he was also invited to serve in the role of one of the coaches starting this year. Jason joins Kelly Swearingen, Kathy Bernier, Malorie Brazell, Kris Phillips and Sarah Groth who are graduates of the Leadership Academy. The LeadingAge Minnesota and the Long Term Care Imperative 2024 legislative priorities were reviewed: Financial Policy Reform, Workforce Solutions and Regulatory Reform. LeadingAge Minnesota is hosting their 2024 Day at the Capitol on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. Those willing and interested in participating at the Day at the Capitol should contact Kimber Wraalstad to be registered. The Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) 2024 advocacy areas are as follows: Finance and Reimbursement, Workforce, Mental Health, Protect the 340B Program and Stop Bad Mandates. Cibola Health has officially begun the initial steps for the analysis of developing a Minnesota High Value Network. At this time, 17 members committed, along with a few hospitals who may yet join later in February. An information request has been sent to all members to begin to gather data to define High Value Network potential. Cibola Health will be scheduling individual meetings with each organization during the month of March. In December, North Shore Health was notified that UCare (Insurance Company) is moving all Medicare Certified Home Health Providers from the LUPA (Low Utilization Payment Adjustment) methodology to PDGM (Patient Driven Grouping Models) methodology. This will

have a negative impact to the reimbursement for service of Home Care clients with UCare Insurance. We continue to negotiate with UCare to receive a payment neutral contract. Employees who have any patient or resident contact may be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including a respirator, such as an N95 face mask. Employees must be fit tested before they use a respirator for the first time and then once each year. Fit testing is the method for finding the respirator that fits the employee's face and making sure it provides a tight seal to help provide protection. During the next month, fit testing will be completed for the employees with patient or resident contact. An analysis completed by the American Hospital Association that "Hospitals are Critical to Preserving Access to Care for Rural Communities" was shared. A report from the Chartis Center for Rural Health noting that "Unrelenting Pressure Pushed Rural Safety Net Crisis into Uncharted Territory" was also shared. The report notes that rural health has been in crisis mode for years and the challenges are increasing as are the number of rural hospitals that have closed or that are "vulnerable to closure."

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mary Sanders and seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting will be held on March 21, 2024.

The regular meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.



Chair



Clerk