

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba
Morongo Basin Healthcare District
BOARD OF DIRECTORS **SPECIAL MEETING CONTINUED**
MINUTES

May 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

This meeting was a continuation of the special meeting originally convened on May 19.

- *Convened via GoToMeeting, an electronic, remote-site platform temporarily permitted as per the Executive Order issued by California's Governor in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*
- *Additionally, a physical meeting was convened on the District's campus at 6530 La Contenta Road, Yucca Valley, suite 700. The public was screened for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the building and were asked to wear a face mask while inside. Seating was limited to accommodate the six-foot distancing guidelines.*

- **Mission Statement:** *To improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.*
- **Vision:** *A healthy Morongo Basin.*
- **Core Values:** *Commitment, Collaboration, Accountability, Dignity, Integrity.*

Board of Directors:

- Director Armstrong, Treasurer
- Director Doyle, President
- Director Evans, Secretary
- Director Markle-Greenhouse, Vice President
- Director Sullivan

Administrative Staff:

- Jackie Combs, CEO
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk
- Debbie Anderson, Controller
- Cindy Schmall, Director Operations
- Joe Ruddon, Director Business Development
- Kathy Alkire, Community Education
- Janeen Duff, VDH Manager

Guests at the physical meeting:

- Paul Hoffman, CHC board member
- Beverly Scott, CHC board member
- Pat Cooper, CHC board member

Guests and Staff via remote electronic platform:

- Alex Aquino, Communications Coordinator
- Cassie Souter, CHC board member
- Jenna Hunt, Hi-Desert Star, media
- Hilary Sloan, Z107fm, media
- Niko Lunetta, MBHD Transportation Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER

Director Doyle called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Karen Graley, Board Clerk, conducted roll call and declared a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Hoffman, CHC Governing Board President: He stated that he listened to the remote electronic special meeting on Tuesday. "I've been doing food distribution for eight years through the Rotary Club. In the past, we partnered with Stater Bros in the Basin. They have been supportive of the effort over the years. We gave away food bags to the food banks; did the community drive and the next day delivered the food to the food banks. We asked the banks how many people they serve and what kind of food to purchase to give away. Any money received was also distributed to the food banks. We did everything with volunteers. This year, we collected \$8,000 in our drive and partnered with Sisco; we separated the palets based on the numbers provided by the banks.



Let the food banks deliver the product to the community. If you don't, it will turn into a circus. And don't give anybody perishable food because it will go to waste. I commend you for stepping up and wanting to help people in our Basin. If the food banks needed help delivering to people, the Rotary helped deliver. We estimate there is between 8,000 to 9,000 people in need, but that statistic doesn't include the MUSD student population.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Motion 20-28: Director Evans motioned to approve the meeting agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Sullivan; motion passed by unanimous vote.

PRESENTATION - Jackie Combs, CEO

Ms. Combs began the presentation by stating that "Staff is willing to do what you want us to do." She then presented the distribution plan recommended by Staff.

- The Plan:
 - Staff proposes to provide three meals a day for a family of four for three days. Whatever we do, however long it takes to assemble the boxes, we continue to replicate until we run out of resources.
 - We Googled what products should go into the box. Cindy Schmall went shopping to determine what size box to purchase; we evaluated food items for economy of scale, choosing packaging that gives larger portions.
 - A box costs \$75 and staff recommends including a \$25 gift card to purchase perishable items.
DIRECTOR EVANS: "There are a lot of people who have needs beyond food."
JACKIE COMBS: "We will attempt to secure gift cards that say "Not to purchase alcohol or tobacco products."
JOE RUDDON: "Only one of the two grocery chains in the Basin has the capability to limit what is purchased."
CINDY SCHMALL: Stated she is a proponent of the gift cards for purchasing non-food items such as diapers, soap or pet food.
 - How to purchase the food: The District belongs to a group purchasing organization (GPO); we have reached out to them for supplies but their messaging indicates they are experiencing delays related to the COVID-19 crisis. Not sure when we will get a response from the GPO. In the meantime, we plan to use local food sources to get the project off the ground, always keeping in mind the best value for the dollar. Costco limits quantity of purchases which is not practical for our project. And, there are other food sources in the Basin that we have yet contacted.
 - Collating boxes: We will reassign employees to assemble boxes. Staff salaries will be redirected to the project cost center. We have already been contacted by organizations wanting to volunteer in supporting the project. Until we get an idea of how many boxes we can produce, we can't project an actual numerical goal.
 - Distribution of food boxes would be at health center sites in Yucca Valley and 29 Palms on a Saturday so not to impeded CHC business; and we would deliver to community centers in Wonder Valley, Landers and Johnson Valley.



- Staff will set-up a Hunger Help Hotline where people who cannot go to a food bank or to the District distribution Saturdays can call in for a box delivery; the LIFT Transportation team would be tasked with the deliveries.
- There are several local food banks already established in the community. People know when that food bank is open for them. Staff proposes to support these banks by making a donation of up to \$5,000 for them to use in support of their established clientele. The banks can apply for up to \$5,000 each.
- Whatever we do, we will do a media blitz to get the word out.
- \$500,000 is a lot of money. Rather than getting caught up in setting a number of boxes within a specific timeframe, we propose to continue to administer the project until the resources are depleted.

DIRECTOR ARMSTRONG: “This is a grizzly approach! Thank you. You are on the right path. You’re talking boxes that will make a difference in the community; I’m super proud of Staff to have gotten us to this point. This is going to make a big difference in what has been done. I propose we assemble the boxes and deliver them to the food banks. Giving \$5,000 to food banks is spot on to use for whatever they need to be successful. And I want to be perfectly clear, when you’re packing boxes, I will be here.”

DIRECTOR DOYLE: “I wanted a broad stroke budget for the project and then trust Staff to do the operations part because that’s what they do well. I like the idea of gift cards.”

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN: “I feel it’s important that we limit the gift cards to no alcohol or tobacco purchases.”

JANEEN DUFF: “I observed the logistics of a food bank in 29 Palms; they are a well-oiled machine having years of experience in distributing food to the community. They rent a truck every week to pick up food in Loma Linda and bring it to the Basin to distribute. It’s a hard ship for them.”

JOE RUDDON: “This organization that Janeen mentioned spends \$2,500 a month for vehicle rental. They are a big food distributor in our Basin.”

DIRECTOR EVANS: “I like the hunger hotline. What about a questionnaire for our patients?”

JACKIE COMBS: “We will be doing a food hunger questionnaire which is now required for HRSA annual reporting; and we had a data request from Reach Out for a grant they’ve applied for. The plan is to have food boxes on site so that when a patient indicates they have food issues; staff can immediately provide a box.”

DIRECTOR EVANS: “I like the idea of donating boxes to the food banks but also at district events. I’m willing to volunteer. I’m in support of the gift cards. Can we bump up the gift card amount to accommodate the larger family?”

JACKIE COMBS: “There are other locations in the community that may be able to supply limited gift cards.”

DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: “We can work with the farmer’s markets and provide vouchers.”

DIRECTOR DOYLE: “What do you need from us?”



JACKIE COMBS: “I am uncomfortable with the three-month timeframe for the designated \$500,000. That’s a lot of money and I don’t know if three months is enough time. I would like to continue with the project until we’re done.”

DIRECTOR DOYLE: “Do we have enough staff to assemble the boxes?”

JACKIE COMBS: “We don’t know. We could give up a day a week for everyone working on the District campus, but we don’t know how many boxes we could assemble in that time. Plus, volunteers will impact that productivity. We could run box-assembly three days a week but at this time we have no clue how many boxes could be assembled.”

ACTION ITEMS

DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD TO MORONGO BASIN RESIDENTS IN NEED – *Jackie Combs, CEO*

Motion 20-29: Director Armstrong motioned to approve the distribution of food to Basin residents:

- Assemble boxes to provide three meals a day for a family of four for three days;
- Approximate cost \$100 / box, to include a \$25 gift card; if possible, gift cards to restrict the purchase of alcohol and tobacco products;
- Use District employees and community volunteers to assemble boxes;
- Distribute assembled boxes through District give-away events and local food banks;
- Establish a Hunger Help Line for community to request box delivery; use LIFT Transportation staff to deliver requested boxes;
- Invite established food banks to apply for a \$5,000 donation to support their food distribution.

Director Sullivan seconded the motion; motion passed by unanimous vote.

DIRECTOR ARMSTRONG: “We’re giving people hope.”

DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: “I’m so excited. I think you will have plenty of volunteers to support this project.”

DIRECTOR ARMSTRONG: “I expect an indirect benefit; people will appreciate the project and in turn come to the clinics as patients.”

DIRECTOR DOYLE: “Thank you, Staff for embracing this project after we threw you a curve ball; your solutions are creative. Great job!”

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

DIRECTOR EVANS: “I’m really happy. Thank you, Bob, for bringing it up. Thank you, Staff for the creative ideas; you always come with a beautiful heart. Excited people will have food; and I like including the gift card.”

DIRECTOR ARMSTRONG: “I appreciate Staff. I threw Joe Ruddon under the bus at Tuesday’s meeting, but you rose to the occasion. We’re going to make an explosive impact in the community. In two days Staff put something together that’s impactful.”

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN: “My main concern after Tuesday’s meeting was that we would have another difficult meeting; thanks to Staff for putting this together on such short notice. We brag on Staff regularly, but now even more. Obviously this project will take a lot of volunteer work and I’ll be there. And, I really like this physical space for board meetings. I think we should have our board meetings here in suite 700.”



DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: “Tuesday night it was asked how many meals MUSD provides. The school district serves up to three meals a day, 3,500 meals per day within the school district. Staff, thank you for all you do. Also, I want to address the elephant in the room. Everyone is entitled about how they handle COVID-19 and its okay to do what you want in your home; but to be so disrespectful by not wearing a mask in a public setting is unacceptable; I am disappointed.”

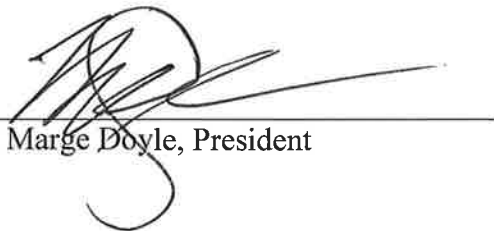
DIRECTOR SULLIVAN: “In response, I want to say our country is divided on the mask subject; there is no proof that the masks are effective. Individuals have the right to assert their opinion how they wish and should not be judged for it.”

DIRECTOR DOYLE: “Thank you, Staff. I know you’ve been doing double and triple duty around the COVID-19 crisis and then we throw this food project at you. Thank you for representing this District so well, and its intent, goals and values in the most blessed way possible. I can’t adequately express how proud I am of your efforts. To turn it around so quickly and with the spirit you have demonstrated, humbles me. Thank you.”

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Director Doyle adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Board meeting minutes recorded by K. Graley, Board Clerk.



Marge Doyle, President



Misty Evans, Secretary