

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba
Morongo Basin Healthcare District
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 9, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

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. No physical site was available for the assembly.

- **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

Guests:

- Paul Hoffman, CHC board member
- Beverly Scott, CHC board member
- Cecelia St. Clair, CHC board member
- Brian Goldfarb, CHC board member

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
- Alex Aquino, Communications Coordinator

- Jenna Hunt, Hi-Desert Star, media
- Hilary Sloan, Z107fm, media
- Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Market, Tenet

CALL TO ORDER

Director Doyle called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

OBSERVANCES

Director Armstrong read the mission, vision and core value statements.
Mr. Paul Hoffman led the assembly in the pledge to the American flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Evans of Desert Care Network gave a quick update regarding COVID-19 preparations at Hi-Desert Medical Center (HDMC). HDMC has suspended outpatient services during the pandemic; precautions and protocols at HDMC and the Continuing Care Center (CCC) have been in place for some time. A positive-ID presented at HDMC within the CCC facility; that resident was transferred to the hospital and measures have been put in place to mitigate any further infection, such as testing staff for the virus.

HDMC collaborates with hospitals throughout the county for best care delivery. HDMC is prepared and has the capability for a surge of 28 patients; 14 ventilators are on hand and staff has worked with physicians for a creative solution that provides for placing two patients on a ventilator. HDMC has not experienced a patient surge like some of the other hospital in the region but they stand ready.



Ms. Evans thanked County Supervisor Dawn Rowe; HDMC CEO Karen Fauli; and MBHDistrict CEO Jackie Combs for their collaboration on the published letters advising the community on efforts to prepare for a COVID-19 surge in patients.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Motion 20-15: Director Evans motioned to approve the meeting agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Greenhouse; motion passed by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda presented the following items for approval:

- Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, March 5, 2020

Motion 20-16: Director Armstrong motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented; motion seconded by Director Evans; motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS

DECLARING A LOCAL EMERGENCY – Jackie Combs, CEO

Ms. Combs introduced the action item. A recommendation was received from the District's attorneys to approve this resolution to declare a local emergency and thereby position the District for access to FEMA funding should it be needed.

The action item follows the declaration made by California Governor, Gavin Newsom, on March 4, 2020, for a State of Emergency for California; and the proclamation by the County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors on March 10. Although the healthcare District is following all CDC and San Bernardino County Public Health guidelines to protect Basin residents and District staff, the financial cost of such actions is unknown. There may be available funds in the future for covering costs related to the pandemic that requires a declaration of a local emergency. The resolution requests to spend up to \$500,000 of the District's non-budgeted funds for emergency purposes during this state of emergency should it be necessary. Such cost would include personal protection equipment for staff, testing supplies and covering personnel salaries.

Motion 20-17: Director Evans motioned to approve Resolution 20-01 to declare a local emergency for the protection of life, health and safety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; motion seconded by Director Sullivan; a roll call vote was taken; the resolution passed by unanimous vote.

PAYROLL PROTECTION PROGRAM LOAN, Small Business Assoc. Loan – Jackie Combs, CEO

Ms. Combs introduced the second action item saying that things are moving very fast in healthcare regarding COVID-19. The intent of this program is to keep people employed during the pandemic. The funds received from these loans are to be used to cover payroll related expenses, mortgage, utilities, and rent. If used for those purpose, the loans can be forgiven. The loan is available only to employers with less than 500 employees. She noted that there is no guarantee we would receive loan monies. To date, the District has kept its employees working and this funding would support that continued effort.

Motion 20-18: Director Evans motioned to approve the Resolution 20-02 to approve a Small Business Association Payroll Protection loan for the District; motion seconded by Director Sullivan; a roll call vote was taken; the resolution passed with a 3:2 vote.



REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT – Presented by Debbie Anderson, Controller

Ms. Anderson announced that she will no longer read the Controller's reports as she has done in the past but will ask Directors for questions for each section of the printed report.

Ms. Anderson updated the Board of Directors on the outsourcing of the billing department as requested in the February 6, 2020 regular meeting, providing the primary considerations that led to the outsourcing decision. Director Armstrong asked if we had budgeted for the change in our billing; we did not.

The District met budget expectation overall in February, 2020. However, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic may impact budget compliance for several months. Patient visits are down 50% due to the self-isolation guidelines.

February 2020 operating income after allocation is \$249,861. Both District and clinic operations contributed to the excess of income.

An adjustment to District income in the amount of \$100,000 was made in February. The Foundation transferred their restricted funds but that amount was not reflected in the District's books at the time. This adjustment reconciles the account.

Motion 20-19: Director Sullivan motioned to accept the financial reports; motion seconded by Director Armstrong; motion passed by unanimous vote.

MORONGO BASIN HEALTHCARE DISTRICT UPDATE, Jackie Combs, CEO

Ms. Combs referred the Directors to Tab 5 of the agenda packet for her written report and provided additional information as follows:

- She stated things are changing every day regarding the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Patient visits are still down by 50%. Cindy Schmall, director of operations, did an outstanding job launching our eCW patient portal where patients can access lab information, request medication refills and leave a message for their provider. Staff have called all health center patients to enroll them into the portal platform. Only 30% of our patients were interested in signing up. We continue to see as many patients as possible through telemedicine. We are also connecting with patients via telephone. We continue to make well and sick child appointments in both 29 Palms and Yucca Valley. Patients and staff are being screened before entering the clinic.
- If a staff's family is under quarantine, staff are instructed to stay home.
- Director Greenhouse had a friend who made and donated masks to the clinics.
- LIFT Transportation and public/patient education classes have been suspended for the time being; Kathy Alkire remains in contact with the class members via email and telephone.
- Ms. Combs stated she participates in multiple webinars and conference calls to stay current on the changing COVID-19 information and practices; the District is consistent with best practice for COVID-19.
- Working with multiple organizations, we have access to supplies for N-95 masks; we are now well-equipped for supplies.
- She submitted a grant to Health Net; funding would replace aged computers that are not equipped with cameras and microphones for the current communication platforms.
- The District was awarded a grant from HRSA for supplies to protect employees and anything related to COVID-19, and includes funding for COVID-19 education within the community.



- Another HRSA stimulus grant was awarded for expanding or maintaining primary clinic services during the pandemic. These monies will sustain us for the next three months and offset our reduced patient visit volumes.
- Debbie Anderson, controller, is currently working on budgets; we appear to be on target for our budget timeline.
- Most everything else is focused on education of the community. The District purchased advertising in the local newspaper to publish the community letters from the county, HDMC and District; additional radio spots are broadcasting seven rotating spots about COVID-19 that were recorded by Joe Ruddon. Karen Graley created an eight-page quick reference guide that will be direct mailed to the community (20,000 copies).
- Staff has exceeded our expectations during the pandemic response, both leadership and front line staff. Within two hours of asking for volunteers to respond to a patient surge at HDMC, 20 employees volunteered to assist.

Director Evans stated that COVID-19 testing has been an issue in the Basin; where would people go for testing? Ms. Combs said several resources are available. For severe symptoms, the candidate would get tested through the emergency room; there are several resources in the Coachella Valley; and the county has a testing site at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. The county is exploring setting up a test site in the Basin, but there has been no official announcement at this time.

Director Doyle asked Jackie to convey to staff the board's appreciation for their extraordinary efforts.

CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION

The calendars for the Board of Directors were reviewed and coordinated.

- Director Doyle announced that we will use the GoToMeeting platform for future Board of Director meetings during the pandemic. There was discussion between Paul Hoffman and Director Doyle about using GoToMeeting for CHC governing board meetings.
- Mr. Hoffman expressed concern about some CHC issues. He will connect with Ms. Combs regarding those issues. He also raised the issue of completing the CEO evaluation.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

- Director Armstrong: "I want to thank staff for the great job they are doing during this pandemic." He reminded Director Doyle that the board also needs to address the CEO's annual evaluation.
- Director Evans: She thanked Jackie Combs for being so pro-active in this pandemic and for her pursuit of funding." It's exemplary that you are protecting the employees and keeping them employed; proactive in screening patients and staff outside of the clinics; and I appreciate being able to do this remote meeting. Also, ACHD is sending information about grants and other resources almost daily. Thank you to Tenet and the County for the preparation collaboration; it speaks volumes that we come together in a crisis." She thanked CHC board members for being present at tonight's meeting.
- Director Greenhouse: "Staff has been magnificent in stepping forward again and again during this pandemic." She thanked Linda Evans for her report and CHC board members for attending. "It will be wonderful to see you again when we can meet at the District office."
- Director Sullivan: Apologized for his tardiness to the meeting due to technical difficulties. "Glad we were able to meet in this way; we are in an extraordinary time." He thanked staff for their sacrifices and for continuing the care of our patients.

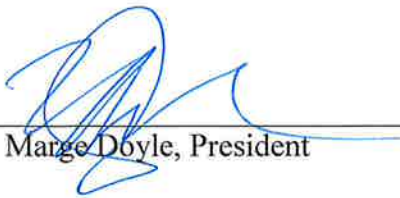


- Director Doyle: Thanked the board and CHC members for being here tonight. “Jackie and I have been in communication numerous times during this week. The collaboration for the benefit of our residents is huge.” She thanked District employees for their hard work in the face of this hardship, and encouraged everyone to stay at home and stay healthy.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Director Doyle adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

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



Marge Doyle, President



Misty Evans, Secretary