

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba  
**Morongo Basin Healthcare District**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 4, 2023 at 6:45 p.m.**

*Convened on the La Contenta campus; the public was invited to attend the meeting on campus or via Microsoft Teams, an electronic, remote-site platform.*

- **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 Cooper
- Director Evans
- Director Markle-Greenhouse
- Director Savitt
- Director Stiemsma

Administrative Staff:

- Cindy Schmall, CEO
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Joe Ruddon, Chief Community Programs Officer
- Tele Thornett, Administrative Assistant
- Kathy Alkire, Wellness Nurse (*remote*)
- Janeen Duff, Program Development Liaison

Guests:

- Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Market, Tenet (*remote*)
- Jennifer Rendon, guest (*remote*)
- Marc Greenhouse, guest (*remote*)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. The meeting was convened on the La Contenta campus and by electronic platform using Microsoft Teams.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**OBSERVANCES**

Director Stiemsma read the mission, vision, and core value statements.  
Director Cooper led the assembly in the pledge to the American flag.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were presented.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

**Motion 23-24:** Director Greenhouse asked that the report for ACHD should read Advocacy and Education Committee. Director Savitt motioned to approve the meeting agenda with this change; the motion was seconded by Director Cooper and passed by unanimous vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion 23-25:** Director Savitt motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Cooper and passed by unanimous vote.

- Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, April 6, 2023.
- Minutes: Public Hearing of the Board of Directors, April 6, 2023.



## **ACTION ITEMS**

### APPOINT CPA FIRM FOR ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT

Cindy Schmall referred the Directors to the agenda packet to view the contract for services from CPA firm Dingus | Zarecor & Associates. The contract is to administer the annual financial audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

CEO Cindy Schmall noted that it is industry practice for organizations to change auditing firms every five years. Currently, we are within the five-year industry recommended window for Dingus | Zarecor and staff feels that their knowledge about the District that this firm brings to the process is important. Staff is recommending Dingus | Zarecore to administer the next audit.

- **Motion 23-25:** Director Evans motioned to approve Dingus | Zarecor & Associates to administer the annual financial audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, second by Director Stiemsma; motion passed by unanimous vote.

## **REPORTS**

### DESERT CARE NETWORK UPDATE – Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Market, Tenet

Ms. Evans thanked the board for the opportunity to provide an update about Hi-Desert Medical Center (HDMC), the Continuing Care Center (CCC) and Desert Care Network.

After discussion with District staff, Ms. Evans stated that she will present an update to the District on a semi-annual basis though she plans to continue attending the board's regular monthly business meetings.

#### COVID-19 Update:

- HDMC acute hospital and the CCC have no COVID-19 patients.
- DRMC currently has four positive COVID-19 patients and 1 person of interest.
- JFK currently has no positive COVID-19 patients.
- Personal Protective Equipment remains in adequate supply at all facilities with proactive efforts to secure items in advance of a potential surge this fall.

#### Other:

- Blood Drives: HDMC continues to hold blood drives with LifeStream as do the other Desert Care Network hospitals. The need for blood remains critical.
- Community Events: HDMC will participate in the District's Community Health & Resource Fair on Saturday, May 6. Thank you for the invite.

#### Trauma:

- There has been a continued monthly increase in patients, with the majority being motor vehicle accident related.

#### Capital Project Update:

- Acute Hospital
  - New nurse call light system replacement in the acute hospital scheduled for Q3-4 2023.
  - New centralized telemetry monitoring system projected approved for 2023.
  - Acute hospital emergency generator project is in process with anticipated completion Q3 2024. The generator is not being delivered until April 2024.

Director Stiemsma stated, as an employee at HDMC, that the phone conversion on campus was seamless and a comfortable process.

Ms. Evans mentioned in her report that staffing was challenging because of the nursing shortage. Director Savitt asked why there was a nursing shortage. Ms. Evans noted that after



the COVID pandemic many nurses retired. HDMC is working with CMC to explore opportunities to expand enrollment in their nursing program and are participating in high school career days to encourage careers in nursing.

#### ACHD COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Directors Evans gave a report regarding the activity of the ACHD Governance Committee: The mix of committee participants is half trustees and half CEOs from diverse geographical locations. The new ACHD CEO makes sure that we have excellent representation on the committee. Recently, there was a new appointment to the committee from northern California.
- Director Greenhouse gave a report regarding the activity of the ACHD Advocacy & Education Committee: A proposed state law (AB885) is in the works. It would establish the California Nonprofit Fairness Act and cover contracts for goods or services. ACHD does not support the bill because it adds additional layers of unnecessary government bureaucracy to the process. She also spoke about the upcoming annual conference in September. ACHD is launching a new website on June 1 and conference registration will be available then.

#### OUTREACH AND MARKETING REPORT – Joe Ruddon, Director Business Development

Mr. Ruddon referred the Directors to his written report in the agenda packet. He called out the behavioral health program with “May is Mental Health Awareness Month.” A button was created for staff to promote the emphasis; it also promoted the District’s website. He highlighted the Community Health and Resource Fair this weekend and noted that LifeStream will be on site for blood donations. Director Evans requested updated statistics be presented for positive HIV individuals identified through the program. Cindy Schmall stated that any individuals identified as HIV positive are immediately referred to DAP Health and are not treated in the health center.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT – Cindy Schmall, CEO

Ms. Schmall reported that the consolidated financials for the month of March show a loss of \$(185,399) and year to date income of \$1,386,514. The non-clinic financials for the month of March show income of \$449,896 and year to date income of \$1,346,738. The clinic financials for the month of March show a loss of \$(635,295) and year to date income of \$39,776.

The Medi-Cal payment reconciliation amounts for last year were finalized and placed into the general ledger in March. The payback amount is \$(682,350). This adjustment caused the large negative change in net position this month for clinics.

The ARP grant has ended as of March 31; final payments have been received and the grant is in the process of closing out. We spent 100% of the grant funds awarded to us.

Directors asked for clarification on details of the report.

- **Motion 23-26:** Director Stiemsma motioned to accept the financial reports as presented, second by Director Cooper; motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### CEO STAFF REPORT – Cindy Schmall, CEO

Ms. Schmall referred the Directors to her written report in the agenda packet. She reviewed some of the items presented in the report. Additionally, she has spoken with CEO Karen Faulis, HDMC, regarding the QAF monies available to the District through the lease agreement. Those funds are still being processed by the state and a date for delivery is unknown at this time.

She noted that the tenant on the Yucca Valley campus has requested a month-to-month rental agreement. Staff agreed to his request as we are not ready to take possession of that space.



Morongo Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Vargas invited staff to participate in a local community advisory committee which included the college, Sheriff's department, the Town of Yucca Valley, City of 29 Palms, and others. It was an interesting review of broad community issues that many agencies were dealing with. The first items targeted for discussion were employee recruitment and local housing availability; these issues are universal throughout the Basin and impacts every entity represented on the committee. This group will meet quarterly to discuss the issues confronting our communities.

She highlighted the promotion of Tina Huff, nurse practitioner, from director to Chief Clinical Operations Officer.

Ms. Schmall reviewed the HR data presented in her report. The District employee turnover rate is at 20% but a comparison of national like-clinics to CHC has the national turnover average at 31.2%. No negative trends were identified for District employee turnover. A review showed that these employees were not under the same supervisor or in the same departments. There was discussion about an employee satisfaction survey. Ms. Schmall referenced past employee surveys and noted that doing an internal survey with a product like Survey Monkey resulted in an extraordinary employee response whereas, use of a third-party vendor resulted in a poor response. Staff are thrilled with the wellness gym membership approved at the last meeting.

And lastly, she noted the HRSA capital grant, stating that after nine months, we have received HRSA approval for the Split Rock expansion project. However, new information was presented that was not a part of the original grant, HRSA requires a 30-year lean against the property with them listed on the title. This is their standard practice for any use of capital monies and is not negotiable. The grant amount is \$600,000. If we fund the grant now and later need to sell the property, portions of the funding would have to be paid back to HRSA. This will be a future agenda item.

#### **CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION**

- The Community Health & Resource Fair is May 6 at the Yucca Valley Community Center
- June 10 Board Retreat

#### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

DIRECTOR STEIMSMA stated she is looking forward to attending the health fair on Saturday.

DIRECTOR EVANS thanked everyone for attending the meetings tonight.

DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE thanked staff for the reports and the continuing excellent work.

#### **ADJOURN MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

  
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Heidi Stiemsma, Secretary