

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba  
**Morongo Basin Healthcare District**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 2, 2023 at 6:00 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
- Deborah Anderson, CFO
- Tom Mannix, HR Director
- Kathy Alkire, Patient Educator (*remote*)
- Janeen Duff, Program Development Liaison
- Diane Redling (*remote*)

Guests:

Nicola Keller, CHC Governing Board, chairperson  
Cecelia St. Clair, CHC Governing Board, member  
MacArthur Wright, Mayor, City of 29 Palms

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 Cooper read the mission, vision, and core value statements.  
Director Evans led the assembly in the pledge to the American flag.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were presented.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

**Motion 23-55:** Director Evans motioned to approve the meeting agenda as amended; the motion was seconded by Director Stiemsma and passed by unanimous vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion 23-56:** Director Savitt motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Evans and passed by unanimous vote.

- Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, October 5, 2023.



## PRESENTATION

Joe Ruddon introduced City of 29 Palms Mayor, MacArthur Wright who is also a member of the transit board. Mayor Wright presented a \$25,000 check for the TAG grant that was awarded to the healthcare District's LIFT program. Photos were taken of Mayor Wright and board members.

## ACTION ITEMS

### POLICIES – *Tom Mannix, HR Director*

Mr. Mannix presented policy HR-218 Paid Time Off (PTO) with revisions for board consideration. He explained that this revision does not impact the employee paid time off but is a clarification of the payroll accrual method. It's not about an employee takeaway but provides clarity and transparency. Director Greenhouse asked about the accumulation of PTO hours; Ms. Schmall said what was addressed in September's approval for the accumulation of PTO hours was not changed in this revision.

- **Motion 23-57:** Director Evans motioned to approve policies HR-218 Paid Time Off as presented, second by Director Stiemsma; motion passed by unanimous vote.

## REPORTS

### HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE – *Tom Mannix, HR Director*

Mr. Mannix referred the Directors to his written report under tab 3 stating that October was a busy month. Onboarding of staff has been the priority, November will onboard twelve new employees. The management team has been very pro-active in recruitment. October was also health benefits open enrollment period. A new "silver plan" was provided as an option (higher deductible/lower premium), and there was an education focus on subscribing to the pre-tax FSA option. We're rebuilding expectations for the January employee engagement survey. Also in October was an all-employee event which included education on open enrollment and Narcan distribution.

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS REPORT – *Joe Ruddon, Chief Community Programs Officer*

Chief Community Program Office, Joe Ruddon referred the Directors to his written report in the agenda packet. He highlighted the annual health fair in 29 Palms which was a great success in its new location. He thanked all the board members who attended the event and helped. He also spoke to distributing Narcan in the clinics and the "no questions asked" stance for distribution.

Director Greenhouse stated that the health fair had adequate parking and people could take their time visiting booths. Ms. Schmall noted that 37 people took flu vaccinations which is a dramatic increase from previous years. She also noted that several people stopped by her table to say how much better this venue and event were than in previous years at Luckie Park.

### FINANCIAL REPORT – *Deborah Anderson, CFO*

Ms. Anderson reported in her written report that the consolidated financials for the month of September shows a loss of \$(18,545) and year to date of \$229,099. The non-clinic financials for the month of September shows a loss of \$(25,365) and year to date of \$301,602. The clinic financials for the month of September shows income of \$6,819 and year to date a loss of \$(72,502).

Investments had negative, unrealized losses this month in the amount of \$(104,190). This is why the net loss for the non-clinics had a negative change in net position. The clinics continue to do better than budgeted, due to staffing shortages, since wages and salaries, as well as benefits and supplies are based on staffing levels.



Patient services revenue (net) is down due to one dental provider who was budgeted but only started in September. 340B variance is due to ongoing changes by the drug manufacturer's distribution of 340B drugs. Capitation fees variance is due to more patients on the capitation roster than budgeted. Quality variance is due to ongoing efforts to bolster quality. Salaries and fringe variance is due to less FTE's working than budgeted, mostly due to a dental provider who just started and medical assistant shortages. Medical supplies are under budget due to providers budgeted not starting right away and because vaccinations expense is typically incurred in the fall.

**Motion 23-58:** Director Stiemsma motioned to accept the financial reports as presented, second by Director Evans; motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **CEO STAFF REPORT**

Ms. Schmall referred the Directors to her report under tab 6. Additionally, she highlighted:

- The City of 29 Palms has approved the Split Rock building plans. The next step will be to take bids for grading the property.
- SB-255 was signed by the Governor but included a stipulation for future adjustments to the law to mitigate the financial impact to businesses. To prepare for this significant liability, we recently made a number of adjustments to salaries in an effort to mitigate some of the financial impact rather than a huge adjustment in June. The next incremental adjustment will be in April when we make the traditional merit increase.
- She attended the IEHP Conference and was impressed by the California Department of Healthcare Services speaker who noted that Medi-Cal was moving patients to managed care and as of January, they expect to have 99% of all subscribers in the managed care program. Because of that transition, the CDPH is supporting it with a program, Equity and Practice Transformation and offering funding to support implementing the program. Medical Association who works with IEHP, assisted us in preparing the application to participate in the program. The grant will provide \$1.6 million over five years. The administrative and management teams met to discuss the program to identify focus areas. We also chose to focus on integrated behavior health (integrating behavioral health and medical care), patient data collection and analysis, as well as three other areas of care. We have named the project Morongo Basin Health Equity Local Program (MB-HELP). Staff is excited about the program and the benefit to our patients. Awarded grants will be announced in December.
- We have applied for a grant from Delta Dental Community Care for \$5 million paid over five years to bring dental access to seniors. The application proposes to bring dental care to patients of the Continuing Care Center, Brasswell facilities and senior centers in the Morongo Basin.

### **CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION**

- November 4 Special meeting

### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

**DIRECTOR COOPER:** She thanked staff for their reports.

**DIRECTOR SAVITT:** "I'm excited about all the grant monies coming in to the District. Finding and delivering these grants is a lot of work."

**DIRECTOR STIEMSMA:** "I'm very excited about dental services for the CCC."



DIRECTOR EVANS: “Without this healthcare district Basin residents would suffer. It’s so exciting to see the growth and innovation, the creativity you all have, and that you continue to provide healthcare access to those who need it most. Beautiful work.”

DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: She thanked Nicola Keller and Cecelia St. Clair for joining the meeting, and thanked staff for their continuing work.”

**ADJOURN MEETING TO CLOSED SESSION**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m. pursuant to section 54957 of the Government Code:  
*Conference involving personnel: Employee Performance Evaluation for CEO*

**ADJOURN MEETING**

The meeting reconvened at 7:34 pm. Director Greenhouse reported that the committee had completed the evaluation process and would deliver the CEO evaluation at the regular business meeting in closed session on December 7. Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

  
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Pat Cooper, Secretary of the Board

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