



Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba  
**Morongo Basin Healthcare District**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 7, 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
- Kathy Alkire, Education Nurse (*remote*)
- Janeen Duff, Program Development Liaison
- Beverly Krushat, Executive Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:20 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**

This meeting immediately convened after the Foundation meeting where the observances were observed; the observances were not repeated in this meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were presented.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

**Motion 23-60:** Director Evans motioned to approve the meeting agenda as amended; the motion was seconded by Director Savitt and passed by unanimous vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion 23-61:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Savitt and passed by unanimous vote.

- Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, November 2, 2023.
- Minutes: Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, November 4, 2023.

**ACTION ITEMS**

ELECTION OF OFFICER – *Karen Graley, Board Clerk*

Ms. Graley explained that this election of officers was for the term of office effective with the January 2024 regular business meeting.



PRESIDENT: She opened nominations for President of the Board. Director Savitt nominated Director Evans for president. There were no additional nominations. Nominations were closed and Ms. Graley called for the vote.

- **Motion 23-62:** Director Savitt motioned to elect Director as President of the Board, seconded by Director Greenhouse; motion passed by unanimous vote. Director Evans was elected as President of the Board for calendar year 2024.

VICE PRESIDENT: She opened nominations for Vice President of the Board. Director Evans nominated Director Savitt for vice president. There were no additional nominations. Nominations were closed and Ms. Graley called for the vote.

- **Motion 23-63:** Director Evans motioned to elect Director Savitt as Vice President of the Board, seconded by Director Greenhouse; motion passed by unanimous vote. Director Savitt was elected as Vice President for calendar year 2024.

SECRETARY: She opened nominations for Secretary of the Board. Director Greenhouse nominated Director Stiemsma for secretary. There were no additional nominations. Nominations were closed and Ms. Graley called for the vote.

- **Motion 23-64:** Director Greenhouse motioned to elect Director Stiemsma as Secretary of the Board, seconded by Director Evans; motion passed by unanimous vote. Director Stiemsma was elected as Secretary of the Board for calendar year 2024.

TREASURER: She opened nominations for Treasurer of the Board. Director Greenhouse nominated Director Cooper for treasurer. There were no additional nominations. Nominations were closed and Ms. Graley called for the vote.

- **Motion 23-65:** Director Greenhouse motioned to elect Director Cooper as Treasurer of the Board, seconded by Director Stiemsma; motion passed by unanimous vote. Director Cooper was elected as Treasurer of the Board for calendar year 2024.

She noted that Director Greenhouse will serve as Member at Large.

APPROVAL OF CEO CONTRACT – *Director Greenhouse*

The Board of Directors voted to extend Cindy Schmall’s employment contract as CEO for five years, but legal parameters limit the length to four years. Director Greenhouse called for the vote to ratify the contract.

- **Motion 23-66:** Director Evans motion to ratify the employment contract for Cindy Schmall as CEO for four years, seconded by Director Savitt; motion passed by unanimous vote.



## REPORTS

### HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE – *Cindy Schmall, CEO*

Ms. Schmall spoke briefly to human resources information. She reported that Tom Mannix has resigned.

- HR continues to be involved in high volume recruitment and onboarding due to staff shortages. In November, nine new hires were onboarded: two Patient Registration Clerks, two Community Health Workers, one Care Coordinator, one Medical Assistant, one Clinical Supervisor, one Dental Assistant, and one Operations Manager
- In December we had six new hires who are in the process of onboarding. Management continues to be creative in interviewing and hiring employees. There was discussion about the new trend of hired and onboarded individuals, without explanation, not showing up to work or communicating their separation from the organization. Follow up by staff results in no response. Ms. Schmall indicated that this is not specific to the healthcare District but has become common in the general workforce.
- The employee engagement survey, administered by Press Ganey, will run during the month of January 2024 with results available in late February.
- Statistics: Hired nine full-time personnel; three voluntary terminations and one “other,” two responded to the customary exit inquiry.

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

Chief Community Program Officer, Joe Ruddon referred the Directors to his written report in the agenda packet. He highlighted:

- Hired two experienced and engaged staff for the outreach team.
- Distributed 120 red commemorative ribbons at Walmart for World AIDS Day. We’re getting traction around the HIV grant that ends in August 2024. We are focused on prevention, though testing is part of that prevention.
- The medical clinics and dental team were awarded second and third honors in the newspaper’s Best of the Best community vote.
- LIFT program: we administered a survey in November. Shout out for our drivers. Survey gave them out of five stars for their performance.

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

Cindy Schmall presented Debbie Anderson’s written report. The consolidated financials for the month of October showed a loss of \$30,161 and year to date of \$382,761. The non-clinic financials for the month of October showed a loss of \$81,159 and year to date of \$301,602. The clinic financials for the month of October showed income of \$(50,998) and year to date a loss of \$(123,500).

Investment income was positive this month, which means the non-clinic financials came in with net income for the month. Trends that are emerging are saving on legal fees, and higher electricity costs than budgeted. For October, the change in net position was positive, but not as much as budgeted. However, year to date, we are still doing better than budgeted.

For clinics, trends that are emerging are higher capitation fees, higher quality payments (due to ongoing efforts to improve scores) as well as lower patient services revenue and significant savings on salaries, benefits, physician fees and medical supplies. Staffing is still an issue and that is being reflected in the financials. However, significant hiring did take place during late October



and much of November so the savings being currently reflected in salaries, benefits & medical supplies may not be as much in future months.

Patient services revenue is down since visits are down. Several assumptions went into the budget for visits which included consistent staffing (IE: limited disruptions from staff turnover and/or leaves of absences), estimated start times being met by onboarding staff, and productivity standards. Unfortunately, we've had a few providers that have gone out on FMLA and/or extended leave of absences. We've also had staff turnover in BH. Original providers budgeted have left the District, and new providers to backfill those positions have been slow to come on and of course it takes time to get them up to productivity standards. Leaves & staff turnover has played into lack of visits in BH, adult and dental. Additionally, we've had some delays with the new dentist coming on board, which has then affected dental visits and dental service revenue. And finally, something not immediately realized during the budget process was that virtual only visits have been phased out as the pandemic is being put behind us. Telehealth visits are still allowed, but they involve video in order to be billable. This has played out in that patient visits aren't as abutting as they were when just audio was allowed. Patients can no longer have their therapy session on the go and providers can't just hang up and start their next phone call. So, no shows are higher and not as many visits are taking place. This has also affected visit counts and patient service revenue. Overall, the clinics are losing money, but so far not as much as budgeted.

There was discussion about how to increase patient volumes, specifically telehealth. In behavior health it is mandated by the third-party provider that the patient must come in for an office visit for psychiatry services. Most patients want the office visits. On the medical side, Medi-Cal has mandated that a face-to-face visit is required, either on site or via telehealth platform.

**Motion 23-67:** Director Evans motioned to accept the financial reports as presented, seconded by Director Heidi Stiemsma; motion passed by unanimous vote.

### **CEO STAFF REPORT**

Ms. Schmall gave a verbal report, highlighting:

- The potential provider candidate for 29 Palms clinic toured the clinic. She is interested in working with the hospital as well as in the health centers. Karen Faulis, CEO of Hi-Desert Medical Center, met with her. She does not have a California license so it will be summer before she's available to onboard with the health center.
- Requests for Bid has been published to grade the Split Rock project. Two bids have been received and are with the architect for clarification.
- Ms. Schmall announced she was appointed to the ACHD Board of Directors. She also serves on multiple ACHD committees,

### **CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION**

- CHC business meeting December 14
- District regular business meeting January 4
- District special meeting January 21
- Joint Boards education will be in February. Karen Graley is polling board members for a calendar date.



## **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

**DIRECTOR COOPER:** spoke about the “Adopt a Resident” opportunity at the Continuing Care Center, encouraging participation.

**DIRECTOR SAVITT:** “Congratulations to the clinic teams on winning the Best of the Best honors.”


**DIRECTOR STIEMSMA:** “Congratulations to Cindy on being appointed to the ACHD board. I find the legislative information important, and I think your participation will be helpful to us.”

**DIRECTOR EVANS:** “Thank you everyone for the hard work and I know it is challenging to be in healthcare. I am appreciative of the patient care you provide, the strategies behind it and increasing access to healthcare.”

**DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE:** Thanked the board members and staff for a wonderful year, and wished all a peaceful, happy, health and safe holiday season.

## **ADJOURN MEETING**

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

  
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Pat Cooper, Secretary of the Board

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

