



Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba
Morongo Basin Healthcare District
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 3, 2024, 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 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, Equity.*

Board of Directors:

- Director Cooper
- Director Evans
- Director Markle-Greenhouse
- Director Stiemsma
- Jacquelin Todd

- Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Care Network (*remote*)
- Sarah Bridge, ACHD (*remote*)

Administrative Staff:

- Cindy Schmall, CEO
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Beverly Krushat, Executive Assistant
- Deborah Anderson, CFO
- Janeen Duff, Grants & Special Programs Manager

- Mark Greenhouse, CHC board member
- Vikas Sharma, guest
- Unidentified resident from 29 Palms (*remote*)

CALL TO ORDER

Director Evans 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 platform.

ROLL CALL

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

OBSERVANCES

Director Greenhouse read the mission and vision statements. Director Evans led the assembly in the flag salute.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None were presented.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

- **Motion 24-62:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve the meeting agenda as presented; second by Director Greenhouse and passed by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- **Motion 24-63:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; second by Director Greenhouse and passed by unanimous vote.
 - Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 5, 2024
 - Minutes: Special Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 11, 2024

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – Sarah Bridge, VP, Advocacy & Strategy, ACHD

Ms. Bridges gave a brief overview of current legislation.



There are pieces of legislation of note for Morongo Basin Healthcare District.

SB399: This bill puts restraints on employee communication by employers, providing protection against political or religious information. ACHD has published a guide for healthcare districts to help them navigate the new law safely.

SB1220: This bill is a call enter bill that was vetoed by the Governor. Every facility that receives public benefits dollars is subject to this piece of legislation. It addresses automated decision making and artificial intelligence software review. This would include electronic patient information and any other system that potentially uses AI.

PROPOSITION 35 - MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATION TAX: Makes permanent the existing tax on managed health care insurance plans, which, if approved by the federal government, provides revenues to pay for Medi-Cal health care services. Result should be significant funding for FQHC facilities.

PROPOSITION 5: Allows approval of local infrastructure and housing bonds for low- and middle-income Californians with 55% vote to pass. Accountability requirements. Provides for increased local borrowing to fund affordable housing, supportive housing, and public infrastructure. The amount borrowed would depend on decisions by local governments and voters. Borrowing would be repaid with higher property taxes.

Ms. Schmall asked Ms. Bridge to elaborate on propositions 35 and 5. Ms. Bridge stated that ACHD is actively supporting both propositions because they are favorable to healthcare districts. Proposition 5 increases the ability to generate infrastructure and critical dollars. Proposition 35 will ensure that we are seeing the targeted medical increases where they are needed most, rather than just a general offset to the state general fund.

SB525 Minimum wage schedules for covered health care employees:

Ms. Schmall asked if there were changes to SB525. Ms. Bridge noted that the healthcare worker minimal wage bill had been postponed and was just recently approved. The increase has now been triggered and the new minimum wage will take effect October 16. Additional tiering of the minimum wage will trigger in 2027.

Ms. Schmall and the Directors thanked Ms. Bridge for her update.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION: BANK SIGNATURES – Cindy Schmall, CEO

Ms. Schmall presented Resolution 24-02 to add Directors Cooper and Stiemsma to the list of authorized signatures on District accounts.

- **Motion 24-64**: Motion by Director Stiemsma to approve Resolution #24-02 to add Directors Cooper and Stiemsma as authorized signatures on District accounts; second by Director Greenhouse; the motion passed by with a unanimous roll call vote.

PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING BOARD MEMBER COMPENSATION

Ms. Schmall presented information regarding the increase for the Board of Directors' stipend from \$105 per meeting day to \$110 per meeting day. Two public hearings are required to receive public comment, which staff has scheduled for November 7 and December 5 before convening the regular monthly business meeting.



- **Motion 24-65:** Motion by Director Stiemsma to approve November 7 and December 5; second by Director Todd; motion passed by unanimous vote.

REPORTS

ACHD CONFERENCE UPDATE

Director Greenhouse wished everyone Rosh Hashanah new year celebration.

- The conference theme was “Building bridges together.”
- A guest speaker addressed board frustrations, handling the media, public clarity of our rules, having appropriate policies in place, and assessing programs and services for the health of our clients. Focus on services, programs and our patients.
- Beach Cities Healthcare District reads their code of civility at every board meeting, not necessarily for their benefit but for the public who attend their board meetings.
- Petaluma Healthcare District spoke about their behavioral health program and homeless crisis intervention. They meet monthly with mental healthcare counselors, law enforcement and youth. They maintain a safe team with a couple of vans available 24/7. Their program addresses behavioral health issues, substance abuse and homelessness.
- Another take-away was the importance of LAFCO.
- AI was mentioned frequently.

The conference very helpful. Director Greenhouse thanked the board members for allowing her to represent them at the conference.

Tricia Gehrlein also attended the conference. She added that the interactions with other healthcare districts was beneficial. ACHD did a great job in balancing districts with hospital and district without hospitals. Our district is an anomaly in that context, but it was a fantastic networking opportunity and learning from others.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Debbie Anderson, CFO

Ms. Anderson reported that the consolidated financials for the month of August show income of \$326,726 and year to date income of \$1,341,573. The non-clinic financials for the month of August show income of \$412,358 and year to date income of \$1,580,299. The clinic financials for the month of August show a loss of \$(85,632) and year to date loss of \$(238,726). This month we received a grant for \$24,500 to the transportation program.

Additionally, we continue to have staff turnover. Budgeted positions are not fully filled, which is why there are positive variances in salaries and wages. Also, 340B drug restrictions continue to take a toll on our 340B revenue. Finally, the third year of the HIV grant ended August 31, 2024. Ms. Schmall stated that additional grant monies have been offered; staff is studying whether it would be useful to the District and the community.

Quality payments are not as high due to complexities of timing, bundled scores, improvement from the previous year, and other factors. The physician fees are over budget due to an unexpected necessary contract hire for dental. Supplies for the clinic are over budget due to equipment being bought for the ARP capital grant. This was not budgeted since we were unsure if HRSA was going to approve the grant change from construction of the modular building to equipment purchases.

- **Motion 24-66:** Director Stiemsma motioned to accept the financial report as presented, second by Director Todd; motion passed by unanimous vote.



CEO REPORT – Cindy Schmall, CEO

CEO Cindy Schmall reported:

- Good news! The Split Rock building foundation is placed. Next comes electrical, plumbing etc. “I did a walk-through without flooring, and furniture. It’s much nicer than I expected.” Staff is receiving equipment purchased through the capital grant.
- Ms. Schmall invited Tricia Gehrlein to update the Directors on the roll out of the new transportation name. Wellness Wheels’ new name will be pushed out to the public mid-October. There has been patient dissatisfaction because our previous name LIFT Transportation has been confused with LYFT whose service displeased those using the program. We have a new program management team in place. We offer more complete service than our competitors. The transport vans will be re-wrapped with the new logo.
- HRSA scheduled their three-year audit in March 2025. Staff has been working on preparing for the audit, such as reviewing policies, and updating information.
- We were not awarded grant monies for Behavioral Health project.
- Met with HRSA today who wants us to keep the HIV grant. Staff is working on a plan and budget to present to them for consideration.
- Yong Kim MD, internal medicine, will see patients at Split Rock. Mohamed Elsayed DDS has accepted full time employment with the District. Both doctors have presented other candidates for consideration.
- Staff attended the job fair at CMC which resulted in two new hires for the health center.

CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION

- October 12 annual health fair event, 29 Palms Freedom Plaza, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- November 7 Public Hearing for stipend increase.
- December 13 Employee holiday party, Directors are invited to attend.

DIRECTOR COMMENTS

DIRECTOR COOPER: She thanked staff for the information presented at the meeting.

DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: She thanked Linda Evans (remote) and the unidentified 29 Palms resident for attending tonight’s meeting (remote); she also thanked the husbands of board members who were present. “And thank you, it was an honor to represent the board and District at the ACHD conference.”

DIRECTOR TODD: No comments

DIRECTOR STIEMSMA: “Thanks Director Greenhouse for representing us at the ACHD conference.”

DIRECTOR EVANS: No comments

ADJOURN OPEN SESSION TO CLOSED SESSION



Open session adjourned at 6:56 pm. A brief break was provided before convening the Closed session at 7:01 p.m.

Closed session adjourned at 7:28 p.m. Director Evans reported that no action was taken by the Directors during closed session.

ADJOURN MEETING

Meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.



Heidi Stiemsma, Secretary of the Board

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