

North Pine Area Hospital District

“Ensuring Local Access to Quality Health Care”

Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, February 23, 2021 6:30 p.m.
Askov Community Center/Via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Bill Olson, Chair, called the meeting of the North Pine Area Hospital District (NPAHD) to order at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2021.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Olson led the board and other attendees in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Board members present: Catherine Colsrud (Sandstone Township) via Zoom, Andrew Degerstrom-Hanley (City of Askov), Doug Driver (City of Hinckley), Barb Fischer (Danforth Township), Debrah Hultman (District at Large), Chris Ketchmark (City of Willow River), Linda Kvasnicka (Park Township) via Zoom, Brenda Langseth-Perrault (Dell Grove Township), Jeanne Larson (City of Sandstone), Fran Levings (New Dosey Township) via phone, Dennis Liebelt (City of Finlayson), Edith Molgaard (City of Bruno) via phone, Myrna Nelson (Partridge Township), Bill Olson (Pine Lake Township), Ron Osladil (Finlayson Township).

Board members absent: Gary Klein and Steve Nelson.

Others attending: Chris Olson (NPAHD Admin. Director), Scott Nigon (Essentia) via Zoom, Mike Youso (Essentia), Steve Schmidt (NPAHD Accountant), and Kris Sundberg (The Links Group), Michael Waggoner (Ogema Township), Joe Newton (Essentia) via Zoom.

APPROVE AGENDA

Olson called for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion Driver. Second Fischer. Motion carried.

APPROVE JANUARY 26, 2021 MINUTES

Olson called for a motion to approve the minutes from January 26, 2021. Motion Degerstrom-Hanley. Second Liebelt. Motion carried.

GUEST SPEAKER- JOE NEWTON/ESSENTIA AMBULANCE SERVICE

Olson introduced Joe Newton to give the board a general update on the ambulance service. On July 1, 2020 the EMS service was transitioned to an EMS division within Essentia Health. They have one EMS Medical Director, Dr. Chris Anderson out of Fargo. They currently have six different operational locations: Fosston, Detroit Lakes, Deer River, Sandstone, Hinckley/Pine City and Moose Lake. They have 130 employees. They cover 4,800 square miles.

They have moved into the Sandstone Ambulance Building and thank the hospital district for their part in making that happen. They are currently installing computers into the 3 ambulances at Sandstone and the 3 ambulances at Deer River. They are working on increasing their ability to work with stroke victims prior to arriving to the hospital and also Dr. Anderson has launched an initiative for increasing care for sepsis while in the ambulance.

Additional updates:

- They recently bought some electrostatic disinfection sprayers to decontaminate the ambulance quickly with a fine mist. The process takes about 5 minutes. They also make it available to the sheriff's deputies and other ambulances.
- Still working with some first responders. Finished a class in November. Also did a refresher class for the Pine County Sheriff's Department in September.
- They have a new recruiting service and they had a new casual paramedic start work this Monday and a new EMS supervisor will start next Monday.
- There was a dip in requests for services in April (218) and May (247) of last year. However in Oct. and Nov. there was an increase (many were inter-facility transfers) but if you average the months together the result is right around the normal average of 300 responses per month. Transports are also right on target for normal averages. During the Covid surge FEMA brought in about 25 ambulances to Minnesota to assist in inter-facility transfers. Most of those were operating in Metro, Mankato, Rochester, and St. Cloud areas.
- Moose Lake is coming on board which gives them more depth in staffing. They are working separately but in concert with the Sandstone staff. Meaning no staff was shifted from one service to the other. This was very beneficial during Covid times when staff had to quarantine. They could borrow from one another. Previously Moose Lake did not have paid staff for their ambulance service but their model has been changed to include professional, career EMS paramedics and EMT's.

To answer questions regarding eastern Pine County, the placement of rigs and staffing are assigned by volume. Joe asked for specific questions that he could answer or look at. Olson inquired regarding response time on the eastern edge of the county. Joe stated he has a map showing where they responded by number of calls in the previous year. Last year was about 115 calls for the three designated areas on the eastern edge. The total amount of calls responded to in that time frame was 2,500 calls. Olson stated he had heard for 911 calls in that area the helicopter will arrive before the ambulance. Joe affirmed that is most likely true. The closest ambulance would be in Hinckley or Sandstone and the closest helicopter would be in Siren or Rush City. They would have about a 10 minute flight time and ambulance would have a response time of 20-25 minutes. If the emergency call is for major trauma, car accident, shooting etc. they will automatically dispatch a helicopter. That is assuming one the helicopters is available.

Olson inquired as to the process for transfers and how that works. There is concern regarding patients to Rochester, Fargo or wherever which removes a rig from the area. Joe responded that this dives into the mental health crisis in Minnesota. Due to the lack of behavioral health facilities and the demands the transfers can create greater distances. He reports they never take all three of the ambulances out of the service area, but the goal is to get the right person to the right place for the right care.

Driver inquired how the ambulance service is addressing the increased amount of drug overdoses in the Hinckley area. Joe stated all deputies carry a supply of narcan for opioid overdoses. The sheriff's office receives their supply from Central MN EMS by a grant from the legislature. If there is no more grant money available Essentia provides the sheriff's with narcan.

Olson inquired regarding the financial expense for ambulance service in an area and Joe informed the board 1 ambulance responds to approx. 1200-1500 calls per year. Currently of the three Sandstone trucks, 2 are staffed and available 24 hours per day and 1 truck is 18 hours per day. The budget last year for these was just a little over 3.1 million, so each site has an estimated cost per site of approx. 1 million dollars.

PINE MEDICAL CENTER

Olson called for additional questions for Joe and having heard none he thanked Joe for joining the meeting and invited Mike Youso to give an update on Pine Medical Center. Youso reports they are finishing off round 2 of the moderna vaccine. They are hoping to get more vaccine in March.

Youso mentioned they have not had a lot of change since he reported to the board last month. The good news/bad news is their volumes have dropped since the surge of Covid. They have been focused on the vaccines but those have dissipated this past month and that means they cannot get any. The vaccines are now going to the pharmacies and the clinics which is a better option as they are more set up for distribution. If you want the vaccine it is best to call and get on a list or go online at your clinic.

Where services are concerned Essentia will have sleep studies and pulmonology starting up in April. He asked for any questions and then commented he would follow up with Joe Newton on some of the ambulance concerns and questions.

Next Scott Nigon reported on the activity statistics for Essentia.

Actual		Budgeted
Discharged patients	20	20
Patient days	89	54
Emergency Rm Visits Mth	329	422
Emergency Rm Visits Year	2600	2900

Nigon explained the decline in emergency room visits has been realized all over as hospitals are now offering virtual care visits, nurse online visits, video visits. That took some pressure off the emergency room during Covid. The projection of emergency room visits over the health industry is that the visits will be down by 10-15% for the next 2 years due to how they are currently being handled.

He followed with a short financial report.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Olson called attention to a list of the meeting dates for 2021. The November date of November 23 was accidentally omitted. Please add November 23, 2021 on your list. The board needs to decide if there should be a December meeting. Following discussion the board decided to not hold a December 2021 meeting.

Next Olson wanted to discuss process that we currently have in place with regards to items of action the board processes. Covid has presented a new challenge with directors not all meeting face to face. What we do not want to happen is to have directors who are attending via zoom be left out of the discussion portion of decision making.

The executive team meets monthly and the legwork on most items being considered is handled at that level, however, they are not sure that they are doing a great job of informing the entire board of what that legwork consisted of and include enough time for the remaining members of the board to process the information prior to taking action on it. Olson states he believes the Executive Committee is doing okay with working through the variables with discussion and research at the committee level. But what he does not want, is to have a situation where the remainder of the board feels they have to "rubberstamp" something they either do not understand or do not have enough information on. Olson welcomed feedback from the board on

suggestions for improvement. He opened it up for discussion. Fischer made the recommendation that all board members get involved at the committee level. The committee level affords directors to be included in the process of the groundwork, research, and discussion on any given issue. Discussion can go on for multiple months prior to it coming before the board. Secondly, Fischer stated when something is brought to the board for action, currently there is probably not enough information included regarding what went on prior to it coming to the board for action and the committee chairs can do a better job of that in the future. Olson finalized this discussion by welcoming any director to get in touch with him if they have further concerns or comments. He further assured the board the Exec. Board would do better on communication going forward.

Lastly, Olson gave a reminder to all township directors that the statewide township board meetings are coming up on Tuesday, March 9. He urged all to show up at your township meeting and let them know what the hospital board is up to.

FINANCE REPORT

Financial Statements for the month ending January 31, 2021 were distributed to all directors and were reviewed prior to the meeting. Steve Schmidt reported on the January financial statements and made note of the current profit and loss budget, balance sheet and operating cash budget. Olson called for a motion to accept. Motion Fischer. Second Liebelt. Motion carried

COMMITTEES

Fran Levings put together a document explaining what the different committees of the hospital district entail and when they meet and how often. She made an appeal to the new members to become involved with a committee. She stated every member of the hospital district, with the exception of two, serve on at least one committee. Next month she will come back and ask each new member where they would like to serve.

COMMUNICATION UPDATE

Kris Sundberg called the board's attention to the press release in your packet announcing the new physician at Gateway Clinic. She stated the newspapers have not been covering the hospital district press releases very efficiently so going forward rather than the hospital district doing a newsletter twice per year we are moving to 6 per year, every other month. The newsletter will be distributed in the Evergreen so it will go to every household. The next newsletter will be going out the end of March. Sundberg is pushing to have the newsletter finalized and run a small batch quickly to make it available to the directors of townships to take it to your March meeting.

Board orientation was finished last week for the new members and the power point was distributed at the meeting for others to review if they want. One of the responsibilities of Barb's committee is updating the handbook and those items are forthcoming.

Carly Anderson for Ascertain called Sundberg today just to give an update. In 2020 we had 16 drug overdoses vs 4 the previous year. There is a huge spike in substance abuse issues. Not sure what is driving it but the pandemic certainly is not helping.

Sundberg is working with Fran's committee on the grant guidelines so they are clearer. That will be coming before the board in the future.

The Leadership Summit is coming on March 9. The handout is in your packet. November was the first summit with approx. 25 people. The discussion was to examine what is happening in all the healthcare areas. Fran's committee worked through the feedback to examine what areas the hospital district might be able to address. Discussion on Collaboration, Education/Communication, Staffing, Addiction Services, Food Security and Transportation were the topics.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Barb Fischer started by thanking everyone who participated in the orientation meeting. The meeting was a huge success, covering everything the hospital district does and is about. The question was brought up as to whether this orientation material might be something to piecemeal out to the entire board.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Barb attended her first meeting as the treasurer and she expressed her thankfulness for Steve Schmidt our accountant. The committee reviewed the monthly report and had discussion regarding how the report would display the issuing of the ambulance garage monies.

STRATEGIC PLAN SUBCOMMITTEES

Gary Klein of the Capital and Technology Committee, was absent so there was no report.

Fran Levings, Health Care Needs Committee, stated she did not have a report this month. Next meeting is March 18th in the conference room at the office in Sandstone.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is March 23, 2021

ADJOURN

Motion Liebelt. Second Osladil to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Motion carried.

Submitted by Brenda Langseth-Perrault, Board Secretary _____