



**EASTERN PLUMAS HEALTH CARE DISTRICT  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES**

**Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 9:30 a.m.**

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

Board: Gail McGrath, Board Chair; Paul Swanson, Board Member; Teresa Whitfield, Board Member; Linda Satchwell, Board Member; and Augustine Corcoran, Board Member

Staff in attendance: Doug McCoy, CEO; Katherine Pairish, CFO; Michelle Romero, Infection Prevention/ Employee Health; Lorraine Noble, DON; Lori Tange, HR Director; Paul Bruning, Director of Clinics; and Susan Horstmeyer, Executive Assistant/ Clerk of the Board.

**3. Board Comments**

None.

**4. Consent Calendar**

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Director Swanson, seconded by Director Whitfield to approve all items on the consent.

AYES: Directors: McGrath, Swanson, Whitfield, Satchwell and Corcoran

Nays: None

Not present: None

**5. Auxiliary Report**

Director McGrath reported constant sales and donations.

**6. New Portola Cell Tower**

**Discussion:** Director McGrath reminded everyone the Board had previously voted against the new tower in the proposed location near the hospital, construction has not yet begun. Asked if the Board should send another letter to the City of Portola, and possibly Plumas County, regarding policy on cell towers in addition to tougher ordinances due to possible harm to the health of the community. We need more proof of safety. Director Swanson stated the health concerns associated with cell towers is very contentious. The FAA has requirements for helicopter landing areas or formal landing zones, which the proposed tower could preclude possible expansion of the hospital in the future. Director Swanson stated he is opposed to the current location due to likely impact on future expansion of the hospital and our helicopter needs. The City of Portola needs to take a stand to protect the community via stringent requirements. Director Whitfield stated the community needs the tower for communication purposes and the ability to call for help. Director McGrath proposed a letter from the Board to the City of Portola stating a desired different location for the tower and for an ordinance regarding cell towers.

**ACTION:** Director Swanson made a motion, which was seconded by Director McGrath to send a letter to the City of Portola and Plumas County regarding the location of the tower as well as ordinances regulating such.

**Roll Call Vote:** AYES: Directors: McGrath, Swanson and Corcoran

NAYS: Directors: Whitfield and Satchwell

7. **Staff Reports**

A. Infection Control/ COVID-19

Michelle Romero

Michelle reported Covid infections are stabilizing and testing demand has decreased. The drive through testing is seeing roughly 5 people per day compared to 20+ per day last month. Our skilled nursing facilities had two positive cases last month. Director Whitfield asked a question regarding TB testing for employees and the use of CDC's self-report screening. Michelle replied that we are following CDPH's guidelines which do not allow for self-report screening.

B. Chief Nursing Officer Report

Penny Holland

Penny was not present due to Endoscopies.

C. SNF Director of Nursing

Lorraine Noble

Lorraine reported a current census of 48, 24 in each facility. Restructuring with an assistant DON in the Portola facility and Lorraine in Loyalton. Deborah Mancebo is now the director of staff development. We will have ten CNA students in the upcoming class which starts on April 11<sup>th</sup>. We currently have six travelers between the two facilities, the emergency act ends 3/31. We are testing residents weekly for Covid and allowing families to visit. The State was here on February 7<sup>th</sup> for a reported incident, which resulted in a "D" score with three deficiencies. We are working on the plan of care.

D. HR Director

Lori Tange

Lori reported in mid-January we held a new hire process meeting with managers to clarify roles in the hiring process. Thank you to Britanie who created and facilitated the training, she did a great job. AB 84 is in effect which will compensate employees for Covid related sick leave, retro to January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Our 2022 Employee Satisfaction Survey has had a 60% response rate. We will be formulating the data prior to meeting with managers to discuss.

E. Chief Financial Officer Report

Katherine Pairish

See attached January financial reports.

Discussion: Director McGrath asked if Covid expenses are still being re-imbursed. Katherine Pairish replied we are still reporting expenses. Director Whitfield asked why our Mammography was down. Doug replied we will need to upgrade from 2D to 3D, which required training and new equipment. Mammography should be back up in the next couple of weeks.

F. Director of Clinics

Paul Bruning

Paul reported the clinics are doing well, we have exceeded our 3% growth target and goals for the year. Community demand for Covid testing has decreased. We are working on Covid vaccinations for children at our Graeagle Clinic. Also working on smoothing out the scheduling and registration process. Getting ready for the Loyalton Clinic project. The 2<sup>nd</sup> dentist who came on has decided to take a position elsewhere. Our current full-time dentist will be taking a three month leave from April through June of this year, working on a Locum to replace him.

8. **Chief Executive Officer Report**

Doug McCoy

**OPERATIONAL PLAN OVERVIEW:**

January operating performance continued to outperform budgeted targets and year over year outcomes. January patient revenue exceeded January 2021 by \$702,000 based on increases in SNF, clinic, and outpatient performance. Overall revenues YTD are over the prior year by 22%

and the trend is expected to continue for the remainder of the fiscal year. We continue to message physicians and health care networks on the variety of high-level services offered by EPHC. These include our outpatient therapy services including the only full-time speech pathology program in the area, certified hand therapy, planned expansion programs in both Portola and Loyalton, and numerous upgrades to our clinical equipment.

January COVID rates due to Omicron have begun to decrease both within the county and statewide. Based on County statistics, Plumas County had a 7-day average case rate over the prior week of 4 new cases versus a 7-day average of 42 on January 27<sup>th</sup>. During the spike in case rates EPHC had two SNF residents testing positive but both cases were resolved without hospitalization. EPHC continues to follow all PPE and testing protocols even though the State of California has eased community guidelines. The State reinstated the COVID supplemental pay program retroactive to January 1, 2022. All staff impacted during the period 1/1/2022 ongoing will have COVID related absences covered under this program benefit.

Staffing due to the pandemic continues to be an issue across the state. While approximately 40% of California hospitals have filed for critical staffing designation, EPHC has continued to prevent any disruption to services through the efforts of both management and frontline staff support. We have placed an interim Lab Manager to oversee lab operations and increased the lab coverage after a difficult period through December. We have a CNA class scheduled to begin soon and have 10+ students currently being interviewed as candidates. Additional shift incentives have also assisted with the coverage of vacancies due to COVID cases or quarantines. Based on the significant increases in inflation costs and competitive recruitment by other health care systems, we will be proposing an early COLA (cost of living adjustment) increase versus our historic med-year adjustment.

Three new providers have joined EPHC since the beginning of the year. Dr. Dan Pine and Dr. Scott Landeck are new ED physicians that have been added to our team. Dr. Balian has also joined the Portola Medical Clinic as a new dentist. We have also received a new retinal scanner at PMC and initiated lab services to expedite testing and services in the clinic.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVE:**

EPHC held a training for our Service Excellence Advisors on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. 13 frontline staff members had been nominated by the management team to participate in these roles, and I was very impressed with their level of enthusiasm and commitment to assist us with implementation of our patient experience initiative. Service Excellence Advisors will be providing formal training to all EPHC staff, conduct new hire orientation to our initiative, and participate directly with management on programs impacting both patient care and employee engagement. These 13 individuals clearly have shown exceptional commitment to our mission and service delivery, and I look forward to working with them closely going forward. Our next training session will be held virtually in late March followed by a 2-day session on campus in late April.

Beginning in early April, EPHC will be generating a quarterly community newsletter to the areas we service. This newsletter will provide the community with important updates on new EPHC services, providers, preventative health information, and other information to assist community members in accessing local health care services.

**9. Policies**

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Director Whitfield, seconded by Director Corcoran to approve all policies.

**Roll Call Vote:** AYES: Directors McGrath, Swanson, Whitfield, Satchwell and Corcoran  
Nays: None

#### **10. Committee Reports**

Finance Committee: Director Swanson proposed accepting the COLA wage increases for all EPHC employees as well as accepting the Auditor's report from the previous month.

**ACTION:** Motion was made by Director Swanson, seconded by Director Corcoran to accept the COLA wage increase and accept the Auditor's report.

**Roll Call Vote:** AYES: Directors McGrath, Swanson, Corcoran, Whitfield and Satchwell

#### **11. Public Comment**

Josh Hart of Plumas Wired voiced his concerns regarding "inaccuracies" during the earlier discussion regarding the new cell tower. He noted Verizon can easily upgrade to 5G and even 4G is a potential problem for safe helicopter operations. He expressed concern that PST would be running fiber to a new tower instead of to homes. He would like the Board to object to the tower, consult with an attorney who specializes in this area and consider helicopter specialist, Keith Mackie's, input.

Keith Mackey stated EPHC has two problems with the current cell tower plan: height and location. The current planned location would be a problem for a formal helicopter landing pad and all cell service will soon be going to 5G, which the FAA says interferes with altimeters. He noted there has been very little conversation on this issue as it relates to helicopter safety. He stated it would not be wise to have cell towers located near EMS/ hospitals and noted the issue is easier to solve now than down the road once a tower is in place.

Director Swanson asked Mackey if he would be available to consult on this situation, Mackey agreed and stated time is critical.

Sam Wilbanks mentioned that the City of Portola has had hours of discussion on this issue and wondered why it was coming up again. He appreciates the Board's work.

#### **12. Board Closing Remarks**

None.

**Open Session recessed at 10:44 a.m.**

#### **13. Closed Session**

**A. Hearing (Health and Safety Code 32155)**

Subject Matter: Staff Privileges

- Provisional 2 Year Appointments

- Grier, Barnett MD

Family Practice

- Mills, William MD

Emergency Department

- Borenstein, Yehonatan MD

Tele Psychiatry

**B. Conference with Legal Counsel-Exposure to Litigation (Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2):**  
*1 Matter*

**C. Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Government Code Section 54957)**

Subject Matter: CEO

**14. Open Session Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session**

The Board returned at approximately 12:57 pm.

**ACTION:** All staff privileges were approved.

**15. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

DRAFT