



**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
June 17, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Eagle County Health Service District occurred on June 17, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.; at 1055 Edwards Village Blvd., Edwards, Eagle County, Colorado, in accordance with the applicable statutes of the State of Colorado.

The following Directors were present and acting:

Attending In Person:

Jeff Babb
Dr. John "Chip" Woodland
Mark Bergman
Dan Smith
Janet Bartnik

Also in Attendance:

ECHSD Staff:
Amy Gnojek, CEO/CFO
Steve Vardaman, Operations Manager
Ryan Bush, Operations Specialist
Kevin Creek, Community Health Specialist
Katie Coakley, Communications Coordinator/PIO
Veronica Ross, Finance Manager
Michelle Gennett, Human Resources Manager
Sarah Braucht, Office Coordinator

Attending Remotely:

Scott Lindquist, IT Manager
Jennifer Cooley Follett, Accounting Clerk
Kate Byers-Contractor, Interim HR
Scott Harmsen, Paramedic Supervisor
Ande Rasmussen, Paramedic

Public

None

Call to Order The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of Eagle County Health Service District was called to order by Director Babb on June 17, 2021 at 8:02 a.m. noting a quorum was present.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Dr. Woodland to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Bergman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the May 20, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes and Monthly Expenditures.

BUSINESS & STRATEGY ITEMS:

Employee Housing Assistance & Loan Policy -

Ms. Gnojek included in the Board packet the current employee housing assistance and down payment loan policy. An employee survey was sent out last week regarding housing needs, what would be valuable to employees, and what would help ease the housing burden currently being felt by existing and potential employee candidates. There is presently a job opening for at least two paramedic positions and 90% of the applicants are from the Denver front range area and none are Eagle County residents.

Ms. Gnojek shared the results of the survey (attached). There were some really good and creative ideas, however several employees assumed that the housing assistance program had gone away. The biggest thing is that salaries should be in line with the cost of living. Mr. Smith suggested the District try to dip their toe in some kind of rental assistance program or in-county housing stipend. Holy Cross Energy pays their in-county employees a \$450 per month stipend. Mr. Bergman wants to see what other employer programs look like, look closely at rental assistance impacts, and look at the salary and pay scale of employees. He has a lot of experience with affordable housing programs and can offer quite a bit of expertise in this area. Ms. Bartnik wants to focus on the outcome the District is trying to achieve since employee housing is not an easy issue to solve. Ms. Gnojek stated the EMT pay scale starts at \$46,000 a year and the paramedic pay scale tops out around \$90,000 a year, with both having overtime potential. She wants to start having strategic discussions about where the District is now and where we want to go. The staff is curious about options that are available. Mr. Lindquist stated that housing cost is why he is now in Nebraska and is leaving his job with the District. Mr. Smith thought that financial help with rent might discourage home ownership. Mr. Bergman said there is currently a lot of money available in a federal infrastructure bill right now and that the District may be able to tap into that. He also questioned building housing in conjunction with stations and if employees want to live where they work. Mr. Creek pointed out that each employee has a different lifestyle and to meet them where they are at. Mr. Babb agreed that he would like to see other housing programs and their success rates. Dr. Woodland thinks the District's employee housing program needs to be looked at again and if rental assistance is to be offered, that there should be a time limit.

Ms. Byers stated that 60% of current District employees live in Eagle County and that the cost of housing continues to be a significant challenge for recruiting new employees. Ms. Gnojek said the housing issue directly ties to the capital reserve discussion. The District currently has a healthy capital reserve that could be used towards an investment in employee housing. The

District has done well with fiscal responsibility and has the opportunity to strategically plan some housing options. The down payment assistance program is valuable and she would like to work through ideas at the Board retreat in August. Mr. Babb would like to build employee housing versus a new station, if given the option. The Board agreed to survey other employer housing options, update the District's down payment assistance programs, look at both rental and ownership options, and identify partners (school district, Vail Health, Colorado Mountain College, other first responders, Eagle County government, town governments, banks, etc.).

ACTION ITEMS:

Poverty Level -

Ms. Gnojek has asked the Board to review and establish new area median income (AMI) baselines for District charitable write offs. Ms. Gnojek consulted with legal counsel from Page, Wolfberg & Wirth (PWW) and the District cannot have two different baselines for in-state and out of state residents per Medicare guidelines. She would like to move forward with the Colorado baseline of \$93,000 for a family of four. The District is currently using federal poverty guidelines which has a baseline income of a family of four between \$26,500 and \$79,500 a year. Ms. Bartnik asked how this change would impact the District's financial income. Mr. Smith wanted to know what the current budget is for write offs? Ms. Gnojek stated that it is a percentage of the total net patient revenue and charitable write offs are budgeted around \$75,000 this year. Ms. Gnojek said the District does not advertise write offs, but works with patients through the process if needed. The District looks at the total financial picture of the patient and there is some leeway on using judgement for the amount of the write off. Ms. Ross stated that there is a wide range of patients who ask for assistance and this is the direction Eagle County is taking towards low income housing programs. Ms. Gnojek said it is the District's obligation to give people access to affordable healthcare.

Mr. Bergman made a motion to approve the modification of the District's charity care policy to use the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) state-specific Median Family Income calculations for patients. Ms. Bartnik seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

UPDATES:

Executive/Operations Report –

Mr. Bradford is out of the office for a few weeks, so Mr. Varadaman gave the Operations Update. He is still working on the Vail bay floor drainage issue and has contracted with an engineer who looks promising for solutions to apply an epoxy bevel to the floor. Mr. Bergman wants to make sure there is a discussion of culpability with Vail Health in regards to the floor drain issue.

The Vail Fire Department has submitted a proposal to increase staffing from three to four crew members on each truck, plus a paramedic. Mr. Babb said he can keep a pulse on the Vail Town Council and what are their opinions on the matter. He does not want to fragment advanced life support (ALS) care in the valley. Theoretically fire trucks could arrive before ambulance crews in Vail, but in that case the fire crew can assess the situation before

medical help arrives, which most likely is only a minute or two behind. Mr. Bergman wanted to know if the fire department could get certification to provide ALS? Mr. Vardaman responded that all Vail firefighters are already required to get their EMT certification. Basic life support (BLS) medical direction in Eagle County falls under Dr. Diana Hearn and she would need to oversee any other paramedics in the county. Mr. Vardaman stated that response time for ALS calls, especially in Vail, is negligible between the fire trucks and ambulances.

Executive/Finance Report –

The Special District Association (SDA) is hosting virtual workshops from June 28 to July 2 regarding board and leadership topics. She invited any leadership staff and the Board to attend sessions if they are able. The SDA is having their annual conference in person in Keystone on September 14-16 and Ms. Gnojek and Mr. Bradford have been invited to be speakers. Ms. Gnojek introduced the new Human Resources Manager, Michelle Gennett, and said goodbye to IT Manager, Scott Lindquist, as tomorrow is his last day with the District.

Staff Reports –

The Board was sad to learn of community paramedic Missy Lambertus' retirement in July. Mr. Creek pointed out Branda Hazard's recent article in the Vail Daily on the community paramedic program.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-

Ms. Bartnik made a motion for the Board to convene into Executive Session pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(a), C.R.S., Concerning the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of any real, personal, or other property interest and pursuant to §24-6-402(4)(c), C.R.S., Matters required to be kept confidential by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Mr. Bergman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The Board entered into Executive Session at 9:23am.

The Board reconvened at 10:03 a.m.

Ms. Bartnik made a motion to approve an employee housing loan of \$71,000 per acceptance of the loan policy. Mr. Bergman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bergman made a motion to approve \$2,012 in charitable patient write-offs. Mark moved. Dan 2nd. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment –

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bartnik seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED to adjourn the Regular Meeting of June 17, 2021 at 10:05 a.m.

Eagle County Health Service District Regular Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2021

Respectfully submitted,
Secretary for the Meeting
Sarah Braucht

Approved: Board of Directors






