

**Soldiers' Home in Holyoke
Finance Committee Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke (HLY) was held telephonically on April 20, 2022. The meeting began at 5:35 PM.

Finance Committee Members Present:

Kevin Jourdain, Finance Committee Chair; Cindy Lacoste; Isaac Mass

Also Present:

Maggie Feyre, Recreation Coordinator; Debra Foley, Communications; Michael Lazo, Interim Superintendent; Michael Lynch, Chief Financial Officer; Stephen Giordano, Business Office; Michael Ravosa, UBS; and Kathleen Denner, Recording Secretary.

Roll Call is as follows: Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Lacoste (Yes).

Pledge of Allegiance - All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes of the March 16, 2022, Finance Committee Meeting

Upon motion by Trustee Mass and seconded by Trustee Lacoste. It was unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes from the Finance Committee Meetings held on March 16, 2022. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda items were taken out of order.

New Business

A review of any new requests for expenditures from Trustee Fund

Mr. Lynch stated that the first two requests were bingo for \$100 and entertainment for \$2675 that includes 14 entertainers ranging from \$100-\$450, both for the month of May. The third request is for subscriptions IN2L invoice that was mentioned at last month's meeting, I wanted my team to do some investigating to verify its accuracy. He continued that it is accurate and the reason for the second bill is because how IN2L works is when you procure a product it runs on a contractual period so we procured product at two separate times and that is why we saw on bill this past fall and one bill now. They were able to confirm because of this contractual period I won't be able to align the two billing cycles.

Mr. Lynch stated moving forward we will have one bill in the fall and one in the spring. The reason for the second bill is that we have a second tv and subscriptions on in the north unit and a laptop was associated with it as part of the subscription services Mr. Lynch stated this invoice was for \$3182.70 now when we look at the spending plan as well as subscriptions, we had set a \$5000 for spending plan and we already had spent some on the previous IN2L bill and the chamber of commerce. If we pay this in full, we would overextend the subscription line item by approximately \$851. He continued by asking the finance committee to move \$851.70 from legacy reserve to subscriptions which will equal

the amount to pay the additional IN2L invoice and we would be at 100% year to date spending versus the actual bill. Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch to walk through the subscription a little bit and is this now annually the same amount we have been paying or is this more, Mr. Lynch responded that this is more and that we had asked IN2L and have a delay in getting a confirmation from them so we are hoping over the next couple of weeks we can speak to an accounting manager and make sure that we are on the same page as to the timeline of these two invoices, but we have confirmed their accuracy and that the costs are consistent with prior years. Trustee Jourdain said he heard two different things on that side of things he asked the question is this more than we have paid in prior years and then you said no and then at the end you said this is consistent with what we have paid in prior years. Mr. Lynch replied that we are not spending more this fiscal year that we have in priors. The costs are consistent, and I can pull up the exact numbers when I am in the office tomorrow over prior years. Trustee Lacoste asked if Mr. Lynch if he meant that one subscription is higher than the other. Mr. Lynch replied that she is correct and that the one in Fall is about \$2460 and the one in the Spring is roughly \$3200.

Trustee Lacoste made a motion to move from legacy to cover this invoice.

Trustee Jourdain stated that if he adds \$2460 and \$3182 that is the total annual cost to have this service and that is what we have been paying, \$5642 a year. Mr. Lynch replied yes. Trustee Jourdain inquired how is that calculated, is it per veteran? Mr. Lynch responded that the cost that they list on the invoice for subscription services with equipment purchased up front.

Trustee Jourdain stated if he called up and wanted services at my house it would be the same costs, Mr. Lynch replied that it would depend on the type of programming that you would want. Trustee Jourdain asked if know what it depends on that and where does this number come from? Mr. Lynch said we are working with the accounting department to verify the accuracy of the invoice, so we have communicated with IN2L and they also presented at the NASVH conference. Trustee Jourdain stated that he never understood in the past how it was calculated so we were paying it for the service even when no one was using it because we were down for a while. Mr. Lynch answered that was over a year ago and he does not thing they would give us a credit with an annual subscription. Trustee Mass can we ask in place of an annual subscription that would allow you to align the bills. Mr. Lynch replied that he will ask and continue to try for that.

Ms. Feyre added that on the classes related to 2 units that we have and that they charge monthly for each unit and they are used constantly. She continued that one is a large television on wheels and a smaller one on a cart that can go room to room for floor to floor and they are used on a daily basis. Trustee Jourdain stated that he is trying to understand the calculation on the amount and asked why didn't we have this funded enough in our or it this just something we missed. Mr. Lynch replied that he saw the IN2L amount of \$2460 and that is what I planned on. He also saw other types of subscription services in years past and we have shifted a lot in our vision and what we are willing to work with and what we are willing to fund on the state side versus the trustee fund so based off of use policy I will make sure, as we begin to think about 2023, that the spending plan has a more

accurate figure as we can look at a number of other categories and make adjustments based on the actual expenditures for this year. Trustee Jourdain stated at this time for subscriptions at this time we have this and the chamber of commerce so we will need to have about 6000 for next year.

Motion on the floor by Trustee Lacoste to transfer \$851.70 from legacy reserve fund to trustee account and it was seconded by Trustee Mass. All in favor motion passes.

Trustee Mass made a motion to approve \$100 for bingo and \$2675 for entertainers. Trustee Mass motion and seconded by Trustee Lacoste. All in favor motion passes.

Entertainment Opportunities for Residents

Trustee Jourdain asked Ms. Feyre if there are other entertainment options out there that you may have wanted to do with the residents but either you didn't have the funding or otherwise. He continued that we are trying to branch out here a little bit and think about all the things that we could be doing. Ms. Feyre gave a history for the board. She shared that pre COVID we were offering anywhere from 155-165 activities per month that included evening activities which were wither entertainers or the veteran fraternal groups like American Legions, VFW, DAV, AMVETS and they are trying to start coming back but they have some hesitations due to age and COVID.

Ms. Feyre stated on the flip side, in my past history I have averaged spending around \$3000 a month for entertainers and parties. She continued that you are going to see entertainers coming every month for the veterans and that is not because of me it is because of the veterans, we discuss with veterans to see if they want them to come back. Ms. Feyre reported that only a certain amount of people are allowed in the canteen so now going forward I have hired 4 new entertainers that will be performing the next 2 months, 5 bands to perform outside because they have anywhere from 12-30 members. She continued that you will see more purchase orders coming and more spending, in the past from the entertainers coming in from outside, pig roast, luaus, theme parties probably 6-10 times a year and they are hard to have indoors due to the number of people, hopefully COVID restrictions will loosen up so that I can get the veteran fraternal groups back. I have never had a problem asking the board for money because this makes the veterans happy, they have been stuck in their rooms and things are starting to open up. Ms. Feyre informed the board that they will be receiving a bill from the DOT because her people are required to take the physical from the Department of Transportation so that we can start taking veterans out on trips. She continued that Infection Prevention has not opened that up for them yet but we are preparing for that. The AMVETS and Elks that invite us monthly for spaghetti dinners, themed dinners, blue sox, movies, lunch, Walmart, breakfast.

Ms. Feyre wants to tell the board that I want to spend more money because it makes the veterans happy, and I only bring back entertainers that they want back. Trustee Jourdain Trustees added that we have been discussing the picnic, Ms. Feyre suggested the picnic be earlier in September because the weather may be better, she reminded the board that the food comes from the food budget because it is the meal of the day, and she hires the

DJ and some decorations. Trustee Jourdain let her know if she needs money for supplies and DJ let us know. He added that he really likes that she is surveying the veterans on the entertainers and getting that feedback. Trustee Mass asked Ms. Feyre the question from us is not that you are spending too much we were concerned you weren't spending enough, please explain further what the process is you use to book the entertainer to get people in. Ms. Feyre replied that a few of the new employees came from long term care in recreation and they have the next new ones coming in, networking with other long term care facilities or if I go out socially and an example of that is when I was in Ireland a few years ago and I was at the Dingle Pub and I liked the band so I gave them my business card and other than COVID they come back every year "dreams of freedom" and the friends of the soldiers' home pay for that. Trustee Mass asked do you think you are getting the same quality or better than the general public, he just wants to make sure we are getting quality. Ms. Feyre replied that we have such better-quality entertainers because the board lets us spend the money and we make sure the quality is there. We are expanding on these quality entertainers. She continued that the get only the best for the veterans and if not then they do not come back.

Trustee Mass offered to Ms. Feyre to bring the veterans for a free private show in our movie theater anytime. Trustee Jourdain asked Ms. Feyre how she can review their work before they come in, Ms. Feyre said most are on YouTube to view and if they are not on YouTube they will send her a DVD. Trustee Lacoste thanked Ms. Feyre for all she has been doing, you are do a great job and everyone loves working with you. Trustee Jourdain asked Ms. Feyre how many years has she been with the Soldiers' Home, Ms. Feyre answered that this is her 38th year. Ms. Feyre remembered that the Mass Elks used to pay the cable bill and wanted to know if they still do, Mr. Lynch replied that they do not.

New Business

Review of UBS Fund Performance and Westfield Bank Checking Account balances

Mr. Ravosa stated that the market continues to be choppy and rough. He continued with reviewing the asset allocation page of the report and explained that the representation and the different asset classes in stock and bonds. He continued between a cash and b fixed income we are about 50%, it will move up and down and we don't want to let it get out of wack. Mr. Ravosa continued that returns better than the market and the benchmark different asset classes within stocks slant toward dividend stocks so the cash flow coming into the account is terrific. He continued that on the 2021 we finish at 11.47% and we have a rolling one year of 1.03%, a three year 539 and we haven't had a five-year return number yet because of when the account was inceptioned.

Mr. Ravosa stated that we are still in positive territory, and we have given back a little profit. He discussed the expected cash flow chart and we have over 73,000 coming into the account every year and as the account grows and that buffers the account and is a great safety net. He reviewed page 5 our numbers versus benchmarks so you can see how we measure up against other benchmarks so for example in 2021 we did 11.47% our equity portion did over 22% and the bond account lost .78% you can see the benchmarks under that that with the exception of 100% equity aggressive benchmark we did really well. In the past one year from 4/14/21 to 4/14/22 we are up 1.03% and you can see all the

benchmarks are down almost 7.5% so we have been able to avoid a lot of the market pitfalls from top to bottom. Mr. Ravosa stated that we are doing better than the benchmarks. Over the long run you want to make sure I am staying ahead of the benchmarks. He continued, in his opinion, that the markets will remain choppy until the November election, earning season has been really good so far but that does not negate the inflation numbers and what is going on in Russia. He feels in November when the elections come and the house and senate change it could potentially create a rally but in the interim if we maintain the course of our value stock position and in fixed income with the individual bonds and shorter maturities when they come due we will be made whole and do well.

Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Ravosa if he could keep looking for veteran owned business, Mr. Ravosa replied he is always looking.

Old Business

Soldiers' Home Budget Process and Capital Plan

Mr. Lynch reported that we recently submitted our responses to the House Ways and Means Committee that is currently where the budget stands. He continued once the House Ways and Means has finalized their budget it will be sent to the Senate Ways and means Committee for their review and then ultimately, they will release their budget. Mr. Lynch shared that the Home is looking for the FY23 budget of \$29.7 million and last year at this time the Senate Ways and Means added a million dollars above what the House had.

Mr. Lynch stated that the capital plan site work began for screening trailers and site work will be wrapped up this week, security project discussion with DCAMM to fund a study of any façade improvements. He continued that when certain projects eclipse a certain dollar amount Massachusetts Procurement Law requires you to do a formal study with architect and designers to review the project.

Mr. Lynch reported that we are responding to any type of exercise that we have to complete for oversight agencies, so we are compliant there and we are moving along in the budget process. Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch if the \$29.7 million was the house one the governor's budget and Mr. Lynch replied that House Ways and means Committee budget matched exactly and technically it is house 2 this the governor's budget, Trustee Jourdain said so far we are tracking in line in the house with the governor's request, Mr. Lynch replied yes. Trustee Jourdain asked how much over current budget is that level funding from where we are at for 22%, Mr. Lynch replied it is a 4% increase for FY22. Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch if he feels if we were to get that we should be in good shape. Mr. Lynch replied absolutely. Trustee Jourdain asked in terms of the capital plan with the screening trailer, security, and what was the third item. Mr. Lynch explained it is façade improvement because when it rains, sometimes it rains sideways and the water can seep into the building so we are looking into a couple of things specifically rain leaders, the home has those , but maybe they are not working as best as they can so we are looking into repairing them and we are looking at any façade improvements in certain

areas possibly repointing the brick but even maybe going beyond just repointing and have someone who is a licensed architect do so. Trustee Jourdain asked with these 3 bullets what type numbers are we talking about for approximate budget cost related to the screening trailer, the security and the façade. work Mr. Lynch replied that the screening trailer, with the support from DCAMM is covering the majority of what this project is it is close to \$150,000 and the home will be covering the lease on the trailer. He continued that the Security project is still in the design phase and has not gone out to bid yet and the facade improvements with anything over \$100,000 project needs a study to be completed, a design firm is looking for us. Trustee Jourdain stated that it will be over \$100,000 and Lynch stated most likely.

Non-veteran license plate inquiry

Trustee Jourdain reviewed the report that he gave at the full board meeting and so the question dives into potential other fundraiser alternatives. He continued that the one that comes to mind is what do we want to do as board members to reach out to corporations or do we want to have a campaign and put our name out there or did we want to consider having an event like an annual fundraiser for the Home? Any thoughts? Trustee Lacoste stated that we do have a budget from the state and our trustee funds covers the other stuff so the funds that we would be getting to grow the trustee account, Trustee Jourdain asked what can we do to raise additional funds for the trustee account to do additional things for the residents He stated that we will leave this as a standing item and do some brainstorming, if you have any ideas feel free to email me.

CFO Annual Evaluation Due by June 15, 2022

Trustee Jourdain discussed the CFO evaluation and the revised due date of June 15. He continued that we heard from the attorney at EOHHS she was going to look into a number of points that the trustees made about the goals. Trustee Jourdain stated in the interim we needed the job description for your position Mr. Lynch so we can see what the core duties are, can you circulate that around Mr. Lynch so the finance committee can weigh in. Mr. Lynch already sent it around to the committee members. Trustee Jourdain is hoping to get any additional goals and see how we are tracking to make sure we are all aligned. Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch to give a self-evaluation, with what you have done over the last year on these key duties and that would be helpful for us on how you feel you reached these objectives. Trustee Jourdain continued that we will complete this by the next finance committee meeting. Trustee Lacoste asked if we are doing this in executive session or a public meeting? Trustee Mass replied it is Mr. Lynch's choice, and we need to give him notice so he can have council. Mr. Lynch replied that he will think about it and let the committee know when he sends in the self-evaluation.

Confirmation that Executive Order 597 is being enforced with respect to Russia

Trustee Jourdain asked the board members if they have any concerns regarding investments, we are complying with the governors Executive Order 597. Trustee Mass thought we were getting a report on our Chinese exposure just to see how much of the international portion was Chinese, so we knew for situational awareness. Trustee Jourdain forgot to ask Mr. Ravosa while he was on the call, I will reach out to him. Trustee Lacoste said we received something after the last meeting regarding what countries we

invested in. Trustee Jourdain searched for the email and reviewed the email and it stated that we have 5 international holdings, Diego, headquartered in London; SHUB headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland; Accenture headquartered in Dublin, Ireland; Winday headquartered in Dublin and Medtronic also in Dublin, Ireland. He continued that nothing of these seem to be troublesome. Trustee Jourdain will report the information to the full board and this topic is completed.

Report from CFO on Christmas Gift for Residents from Trustee

Trustee Jourdain reported that the trustees approved \$50 for a gift or a meal for the veterans. Mr. Lynch shared that we did not have a formal expenditure request for a gift around Christmas time this is one of the most busiest time of the year for the Home, we received generous donations from various groups gifts, the provided board fleece jackets for Veterans Day, and around Christmastime each veteran received a USA themed blanket for bedrooms, hygiene kits, wheelchair coats, various groups came to the home and gave donations. He continued on the holiday the home provided a traditional holiday themed meal just confirming we did not utilize what the board voted on. Trustee Jourdain stated maybe we can redeploy those resources this year to do something a little extra. Mr. Lynch shared that something extra they can do, that Ms. Feyre referred to, theme parties supplies.

Trustee Mass asked does every veteran have a tablet for personal use in their room. Mr. Lynch said does not think so. Trustee Jourdain asked didn't we have a donation of tablets probably around 100, from US Family Health Brighton Marine. Trustee Lacoste shared that the VFW gave the initial 15. Mr. Lynch replied that we have a significant stock at the home from the donations you are referring to. Trustee Mass asked do they know that, Mr. Lynch yes. Trustee Mass how many are being unutilized, Mr. Lynch will get the number that we have in stock. Trustee Mass asked whether or not the veterans have Netflix accounts, because currently every resident of the Franklin County House of Corrections has a tablet in their cell with Netflix. Mr. Lynch hat is a great point I will find out how many tablets we have, and I know some families provide Netflix for their family member and we have to look into it is the future of streaming services. He continued that we are looking at various ways that we can utilize modern technology or even just how fast technology adapts itself and how we can bring that into the home.

New Business

Westfield Bank Checking Account balances

Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch to review the Westfield Bank account balance and give us an update on the account signature. Mr. Lynch reported that he received Chairman Keefe's back yesterday and he dropped off the forms at Westfield Bank today so that should be all set. He continued that as of this morning the Trustee account balance is \$263,169.10.

Review of FY22 Trustee Fund Spending Plan/Budget

Trustee Jourdain asked regarding the overall the FY22 trustee spending plan and budget if everything is tracking ok. Mr. Lynch stated that they are looking at total donations and

interest just over 42,000 with expenditures just over \$34,000. Mr. Lynch shared that the model we have set in place is working, as I mentioned earlier there is going to be some fluctuation based on what we have accomplished so I believe in the month of May I will start to plan for and build out the FY23 spending plan.

Mr. Lynch stated because we have consistent expenditures with entertainment, supplies, petty cash, events, Bingo, QuickBooks and now that volunteers are back in building, he will see if they need any supplies to complete their activities. Trustee Jourdain shared that volunteers are back, we do volunteer recognition such a gift possibly a fleece jacket or we give tribute/recognition significant time. Trustee Lacoste stated that before COVID there was an volunteer appreciation dinner at the Knights of Columbus and recognized the top volunteers. She believes we should bring this back and not at Christmas when it is really busy, we need to keep that in our view to bring that back. Trustee Jourdain suggested next spring we should bring back the traditional.

Trustee Jourdain asked if the State gives any money for entertainment? Mr. Lynch replied to his knowledge that the entertainment or performances has always been paid for by the trustee's fund. Mr. Lynch believes that is one of the most important things that the trustee fund can provide it is something that directly impacts the veteran on a daily basis.

Review of Cable Television or Video Streaming (i.e. Roku) needs in rooms for residents

Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch to tell the board about the current cable television package that the state is paying for but we were thinking for those who would like to have streaming like Roku and maybe if we allocated some funds. Mr. Lynch replied that it is a great point it is what happening in the world today, a lot of this is being done through streaming services. He continued that each veteran has a bedside television with a good channel list, it is better than basic cable and Direct TV in the canteen so if there is a certain type of program or an event that we want to watch and there is also over 4,000 types of programs via the IN2L subscriptions. Mr. Lynch shared that when he brought this question to some of the team leaders in the Home, he was told they tried it approximately 4 years ago and that there were issues with the bandwidth within the Home. He believes technology has changed in the last 4 years so we can test with IT and see what can work and what that expense looks like, He continued do we sign individual veterans up with accounts or get a Soldiers' Home account and just have access for everybody, we will continue to investigate. Trustee Jourdain asked if we have Comcast, Mr. Lynch replied no we have provider we pay a company called Allbright and they provide all these channels he believes it is a version of Direct TV with 50 or so channels. Trustee Jourdain asked if that is who gives us our internet service too, Mr. Lynch replied we use the States network for internet service and there is Wi-Fi within the building. Trustee Jourdain said if we start expanding this out it we may reach some limits there. Mr. Lynch stated that if we could find a device because the existing TV do not have the ability to become a ROKU type device or to download apps, so we would be talking about procuring new equipment or new types of TVs that will have to be compliant with a clinical setting and to have this type of programming. He continued that as we plan for new building it will have the newest and greatest. Trustee Lacoste was glad to hear they have a good base of television stations

including music and sports. Trustee Mass stated this is a streaming question again and all of those premium's channels have streaming services and we could go to a wireless system to avoid technical issues, but I hope we do not have to wait 5 years to give them better quality, and I understand this will take some time to figure out. Mr. Lynch replied that we will look into it and that these televisions are not clinical in long term care type televisions, we will look into it.

Tower Revenue opportunities for current building and new building

Trustee Jourdain want to make sure our team that are doing the outfitting/consulting are hearing from leadership and we are making sure there is plenty of capability for cell towers and hardware that can go up there. He continued that this is going to be an 8-floor facility that is a massive location, a cell towers dream for an operator with serious cash flow to the State and to the Soldiers' Home. He believes we may be able to max out this opportunity, maybe we can get a 5-year deal on our current building, and he wants to make sure with you there every day and the conversations are happening that the leadership is not losing sight of the potential revenue. Trustee Jourdain believes it was not in there forefront of the consultants thoughts for the capabilities of the new facilities. He continued whether it is that we have to make sure electrical on the roof, wires running, down certain columns of the building and we have to consider all the opportunities to max this out.

Trustee Jourdain also wants to revisit what public services we provide to local law enforcement and how will they be impacted, I would like the board to see how these conversations are going and what relationships we have out there including agreements, commitments we have made and start looking at the old agreements.

Mr. Lynch responded as you mentioned at the last board meeting it is under consideration for the new building, we currently have antenna services and I believe the plan is to continue to have antenna services at the new building. He continued that DCAMM owns the building so any type of antenna or tower would have to be run through DCAMM. He continued that they posted a bid on COMMBUYS to solicit any type of additional sources that may want to utilize our antenna services at the Home and came back with zero bids, so this is something we should continue to monitor as we plan for the building. Trustee Jourdain can you send us the posting on that when you zero interests do you mean for the current facility of the new facility? Mr. Lynch replied the current facility had a bid to see if any type of entity was interested in utilizing our current antenna and the bid received zero responses. Trustee Mass stated that COMMBUYS sucks because it is passive, you are expecting Spring, ATT, Verizon to be monitoring COMMBUYS to look for an opportunity that might come up they are too busy to be looking, very unlikely that is going to generate a response unless we are proactively soliciting bids bot just reactively soliciting bids. He continued that COMMBUYS is not the easiest and I know the law requires us to put things on COMMBUYS in order to make it available to the public generally, but that is not the best way about getting interest in use. Mr. Lynch COMMBUYS is a unique system, so it is definitely something that we have to use and this is DCAMM's jurisdiction and they are the ones who posted the bid and I was just providing the information as context for this conversation. Trustee Mass said it is the minimum it's the floor not the ceiling and we can take the extra step of sending some solicitations out to people directing them to

COMMBUYS, reach out to some of the utilities to make them aware. Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch if he could invite a representative from DCAMM to talk to the board at a future meeting to discuss what we do to market this opportunity. Mr. Lynch will reach out to DCAMM to see if anyone who worked on that prior bid would be interested in joining. Trustee Jourdain would like them to be part of our critical path to success and they are locked in with us and not just the next 5 years but to really go out to market this.

Motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Lacoste and seconded Trustee Mass. It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Denner
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees

Attachments:



UBS Report April 20
2022.pdf