

Veterans' Home in Holyoke Board of Trustees Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Veterans' Home Holyoke (HLY) was held in person, virtually and telephonically on Tuesday August 8, 2023. The meeting began at 5:31 PM.

Board Members via Webex: Chairman Collins, Mark Bigda, Kevin Jourdain, Isaac Mass and Carmen Ostrander.

Present via Webex: Michael Lazo, Superintendent (HLY); Michael Lynch, Chief Financial Officer (HLY); Dr. Dietzen, Chief Medical Officer (HLY); and Kathleen Denner, Recording Secretary (HLY); Jeff Lenahan, Quality Manger (HLY); Linda Lariviere, Quality Manager (HLY); Debra Foley, Communications (HLY); Brett Walker, General Counsel (HLY); Glen Hevy, Deputy Superintendent (HLY); Kelly Jones, Director of Nursing (HLY).

Roll Call: Chairman Collins conducted a Roll Call as follows: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), and Trustee Ostrander (Yes).

Pledge of Allegiance - All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: No public comment for this month.

Approval of May 16, 2023 minutes: A motion was made by Trustee Jourdain to accept the minutes and it was seconded by Trustee Ostrander. No discussion.

Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes) and Chairman Collins (Yes).

New Board structure

Update synchronization with Chelsea and DVS

Chairman Collin shared that there was a June 27 Council meeting and that the minutes will be coming out soon. He stated that they discussed how the meetings will move forward and if they will be virtual. The next Council meeting is September 26. Chairman Collins confirmed that we will be having the Holyoke board meeting in October and November and in December a Council meeting on the 19th. He said there was Pinnacle training that happened at the Council meeting and introductions of new members. When the Council schedule comes out for 2024 he we will set Holyoke's schedule. Trustee Jourdain shared that a survey was sent out to establish a time of day for Council meetings. The next Veterans' Home in Holyoke meeting is October 10th at 5:30 pm.

By-law uniformity

Chairman Collins said that at the Council meeting it was discussed how are we going to get Holyoke and Chelsea's bylaws synchronized. Mr. Walker reported that Chelsea has a new general counsel, and she may not have had the opportunity to work with the

Chelsea Board so Chelsea does not have proposed bylaws and are using their former bylaws. Chairman Collins asked if there was a timeline to follow to update the bylaws under the new format. Trustee Mass suggested we send our bylaws to new Council and put on our agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Walker agrees that the board has made an effort to create bylaws that will allow us to perform our duties and EOVS has copies of them and he will remind them it needs to be reviewed.

Fundraising / marketing for Holyoke Veterans' Home

Chairman Collins stated that we need to keep on our radar to address fundraising and marketing. Mr. Lazo stated that as an individual Home we have not made any progress with the good news stories and marketing the Home. He continued that we need to work with EOVS to have a combined strategy with Chelsea. Mr. Lazo shared that EOVS is still building a communications team and once that team is together we can address marketing the Home.

Chairman Collins with groundbreaking coming up how will it get it out there to the media so we maximize the good news. Mr. Lazo agrees the invitation for the groundbreaking, Ms. Foley said their will be press at the event and that the press secretary for the Governor's office is taking the lead. Trustee Mass stated that there are two issues want to work with veteran services state wide and press but there is an issue with marketing the Home in Western Mass for two purposes one is for getting people to want to be at the Home, and the second is getting people who want to work here, with the third reason to do marketing is so people will see this as a place where their money is well spent if they donate to the Home. Trustee Mass continued that when it comes to the trustee funds the board is in control of that and we are in a deficit in the account. He said because the staff cannot do fundraising, he thinks that they can do marketing. Where we need a consultant is for fundraising so we should put out an RFP on, or we should see get choices and hire someone to make recommendations on what the trustees can do to grow the account. Chairman Collins said we should have a marketing strategy that we can be building the next opportunity and how do we work that with the board to grow the funds and do not wan to miss the opportunity. Trustee Jourdain shared that it would be helpful if we could get assistance on putting together the RFP or the fundraising services and we will pay for that since the proceeds will go to the trustee's account. He asked for assistance coordinating with the people at the state to help get the process started. Trustee Jourdain hopes there is going to be big marketing for Monday so we can use footage to promote the new Home. Chairman Collins opportunity to highlight the new facility, as a board we fought hard for, stay true to our convictions for the veterans deserve. Trustee Jourdain asked if there is a videographer and a drone lined up? Mr. Lazo replied that the Governors' office is inviting the media and probably not drones and cannot confirm. Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lazo if he needs, they could pay out of the trustee's fund for a videographer for the day whatever you need to line up a done person maybe you could contact the Governor to see what resources they are bringing. Mr. Lazo replied that he can reach to EOVS. Trustee Mass shared that he has a videographer that would be approved for State but not sure if available. Me. Lazo will email Trustee Mass tonight for the information.

DCAMM New Home Quarterly Update (Mr. Lazo)

Mr. Lazo gave an update on the progress that has been made on building the new Home. We did have a neighborhood meeting on July 10 where Commodore Walsh and

DCAMM explained to neighbors what the project will look like and the steps going into the project. Mr. Lazo shared that the discussion with the neighbors was a good step at keeping communications open. He added that as progress goes on there were more trees that needed to come down than expected, the house in back parking lot has been torn down, some work is being done on the small chiller building and it is expected to come down this week, the abatement work in domiciliary has begun and is expected to come down at the end of the month. Mr. Lazo continued the digging of the foundation will begin somewhere around October. The front circle is closed, and all traffic goes to the back of the building to the Rehab entrance. Trustee Jourdain stated that Mr. Lazo did a great job supporting the neighbors' concerns. He added that he also did not expect that many trees to come down. He has two concerns of the water department getting addressed about the size of the water line coming into the home and the other concern is regarding the 300 workers and where are they parking at Holyoke Community College and crossing Homestead Avenue and making sure they are being safe. Mr. Lazo added that on Monday the August 14 we be holding our monthly Family Advocacy meeting with Joe Fazio, DCAMM and Commodore Walsh teams will be presenting to the group. He added that the Veteran Community Information meeting held July 10, 2023.

Mr. Lazo shared

CFO/Treasurer Update (Mr. Lynch)

Mr. Lynch updated the board on the state funds and we closed FY23 and how we are preparing for FY24. He continued that we reverted less than ½ percent on our budget and was a very successful year. Mr. Lynch is hoping that the FY24 process will be completed. He added that the Trustee Fund has normal expenditures in entertainment, memorials, Bingo and 100 birthday party supplies. Mr. Lynch stated that the one expenditure that needs to be approved by the board is the annual subscription to IN2L fees of \$5550.00.

Mr. Lynch discussed the Trustee Fund spending plan that comes in at \$71,000 which is about \$5000 more than the revised spending plan and that is due to the increase in professional services because this year we will audit the Trustee Fund and a marginal increase in subscriptions including the additional IN2L that was donated to the Home by the Friends. Mr. Lynch stated that the FY23 Trustee Fund operated on a \$13,000 deficit and the FY24 if the budget is \$70,000 we could expect a \$10,000 deficit this year. He continued that there is a balance of \$190,000 in checking account and we received donations of \$7500 so far this fiscal year. He continued that the new projects coming are the construction of new building and the EMR transition.

Chairman Collins asked if the audit is done by the same firm, Mr. Lynch replied that the last audit was in 2020 and audit has not been scheduled yet but they have been discussing using the same company.

Trustee Jourdain asked Mr. Lynch what the amount of 3rd IN2L is. Mr. Lynch replied that each of the units are \$2775. Trustee Jourdain asked on the spending plan for FY24 is \$78,845 with the two changes are adding the 3rd IN2L unit and the other is the \$5,000 for the audit. He continued that we need to do the audit every 2-3 years.

Trustee Jourdain stated that once we get on a trajectory back and all of our residents back and our marketing campaign we will be in a better place. He shared that after this

year we will not need to do another audit so that saves \$5,000 and we should support the 3rd IN2L that the Friends donated which is approximately \$10,000. The other we are generating \$75,000 in invested income that is not being included in the \$50,000 what people are donating.

Trustee Jourdain made a motion to approve the FY24 spending plan. Trustee Mass seconded. Discussion. Trustee Mass is concerned about long term trends, and we have had the IG audit in between and he is ok with using the same firm but cautions continuing to use the same firm for a long period of time because things may not be looked as closely and then keep cycling audit firms. He continued with picking up the IN2L subscription this year but thinks we had planned long term after this initial year that it would be picked up by the Home. Mr. Lynch replied that we would discuss because it directly impact veterans and those expenses come from the Trustee Fund for example the entertainment and recreation for the veterans. Trustee Mass asked who pays for the other two IN2L subscriptions and Mr. Lynch replied that the board pays for all of them. Trustee Mass thinks that the board should not be spending on things that the Home should be paying for. Trustee Mass's understanding is that the IN2L is also for therapeutic tool for mental health not just entertainment and maybe it should be on the operating budget. Trustee Mass thinks that the revenue is a concern because you cannot consistently operate in a deficit, so we need to raise more money. He continued the goal is to come close to what Chelsea has for an endowment, you cannot do that if we are not adding to the principle. He added that we need to have an RFP to get a marketing firm to raise money. Trustee Jourdain stated that we used Powers and Sullivan for the audit for the period of July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2019, so we need to review January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2022. He asked Mr. Lynch that he would like to see the receipt and expense ledger start being put together and that would save time and money.

Roll Call Vote to approve the FY24 spending plan which includes the audit: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes) and Chairman Collins (Yes).

Holyoke Veterans' Home Superintendent/Administrator Update (Mr. Lazo)

Mr. Lazo reported that we have 109 veterans in house with 2 beds available with veterans identified for those 2 beds. We have 108 on the waitlist.

Mr. Lazo reported there are 3 COVID positive staff members and we have had 17 veterans exposed with no veteran positives. He continued that outbreak testing with no lateral spread at this time. We are offering bivalent to veterans and staff including the second vaccine for age 65 and over.

Mr. Lazo reported that the Recreation Department is working with veterans including a fishing trip to Grenville Park in Ware on July 25. They are also planning unit based picnics with staff, veterans and families; trying to get back to family interactions and getting to know each other.

Mr. Lazo reported that we filed an application for a grant from the Bowler to Veterans for MindVR for virtual headsets. The application will go in front of their board for approval in the next few weeks.

Mr. Lazo reported that last May we discussed the VA came through the building in January but as we were moving to CMS certification there was a change in the way the pharmacy would work. He continued that we are waiting to work with the VA, DPH and the state operate pharmacy to see what changes will be and how they will impact us. He added that the changes are very minimal, so the VA send us a letter certifying the Home with provisional certification. The VA sharing agreement for medication has be received as a draft for review and we will be sending changes to the VA.

Mr. Lazo reported that the CMS consultant to prepare for CMS certification survey, the application has been submitted and we are waiting to hear from VA on the certification decision.

Mr. Lazo reported that our Pinnacle scores did not come out in July because no surveys were received. He continued that our numbers for June were 100% favorability, 4.71 overall satisfaction, and a 4.83 recommend to other. Out of 16 metrics we were best in class for 12.

Mr. Lazo reported that for staff we have 319 organic or 95% reporting to work with a HPPD for July was 6.19 which is above the CMS gold standard. Mr. Lazo shared new staff additions to the Home and open positions.

Mr. Lazo reported that the current capital improvements for the Home are the construction of 2 South and we are getting close to completion, with some inspections to be completed. He continued that we are looking to open 2 South at the end of August which will allow us to have 12 additional beds on 1 North for admissions.

Mr. Lazo reported that the EMR project kick off meetings have begun with WellSky working with the staff to map out current processes. He continued that at the same time they are working with Chelsea so the EMR's to synchronize processes.

Mr. Lazo shared our community events: the groundbreaking on August 14 in the pavilion with the Governor, Lt. Governor, Congressman Neal, local elected officials, veterans and families.

Mr. Lazo reported that Mr. Walker worked with the veterans to file the paperwork for bonuses from the State for 14 veterans. Mr. Lynch will work with the veterans to make sure the checks get deposited into the VA accounts.

Chairman Collins asked to see the census spreadsheet and the waitlist, if that could be available. Mr. Lazo will work with admissions on that. Trustee Mass asked Mr. Lazo if we have sent an invitation to all the reps and senators from the 4 counties, Mr. Lazo replied yes. Trustee Bigda asked if the ceremony will the opening be at 12 noon sharp because he would like to try to get a flyover. Mr. Lazo said we are waiting to hear back from the Governors team on the exact schedule.

Holyoke Veterans' Home General Counsel Update (Atty Walker)

Mr. Walker updated the group on current cases.

Mr. Walker stated that we are making great progress with policies with the policy team.

Mr. Walker reported that the legal team is working with education to minimize risk to our agency by giving the best training and education for the staff.

Mr. Walker stated that the state representative from Treasures Office worked hard with us, the ombudsperson and social work to get veterans who were entitled to the Welcome Home Bonuses. Chairman Collins asked Mr. Walker to share a list of the amount and what it was for with the board.

Quality / KPI update

Mr. Lazo introduced Mr. Lenahan the new Quality Nurse.

Mr. Lenahan reviewed the KPI indicators through June 2023. He shared on the screen and discussed the standards. He continued with the Pinnacle Veteran Experience. Chairman Collins shared that we are watching the trends over time and at the last meeting it was requested to have a comparison between Holyoke and Chelsea. Mr. Lenahan finished with the quality initiatives: CMS certifications, medication discrepancy and errors, and fall reduction.

Chairman Collins asked regarding the cannabis policy is it prescriptive use, could you explain that a little further. Mr. Walker replied that the cannabis policy because we are VA funded and it is prohibited under federal law and in the statute in Massachusetts regardless of recreational legality cannabis it still remains unlawful on State grounds. Chairman Collins asked if it would be allowed with prescriptive approval? Mr. Walker replied the policy addresses prescriptive and new residents who already have a cannabis prescription. He continued that we cannot prescribe or use in our facility. Trustee Mass added that there are other prescriptions for veterans in place of marijuana.

Official Groundbreaking August 14, 2023

Addressed above.

Adjourn:

Trustee Mass made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Trustee Bigda. Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes), and Chairman Collins (Yes). It was unanimously VOTED to conclude the meeting at 7:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Denner, Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees

Attachments:

