

Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Board of Trustees Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke (HLY) was held telephonically on Tuesday, January 12, 2021. The meeting began at 5:15 PM.

- **Members Present:**
Gary Keefe, Chairman; Mark Bigda; Sean Collins; Kevin Jourdain; Cindy Lacoste, Isaac Mass
- **Also Present:**
Michael Lazo, Chief Operating Officer; Aimee Desmarais, Chief Nursing Officer; Glen Hevy, Deputy Superintendent, Cheryl Poppe, Secretary, DVS; Stephen Giordano, Interim Chief Financial Officer, Mark Yankopoulos, Legal Counsel; Alda Rego, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, EOHHS; Matt Deacon, Legal Counsel, DVS; Sharon Boyle, General Counsel, EOHHS; Eric Sheehan, Assistant Secretary, DVS; and Nancy Shimel, Recording Secretary
- **Pledge of Allegiance** - All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- **Award Recognition: Val Liptak:**
Gary Keefe recognized Val Liptak as the recipient of the Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service. Val Liptak filled the role of Interim Administrator at the Soldiers' Home for 9 months during the COVID pandemic. There will be a virtual ceremony on 1/28/21 at which Secretary Sudders will present Val with the award. Congratulations to Val Liptak.
- **Recognition of Kevin Jourdain's Service as Board of Trustees Chairman:**
Gary Keefe expressed his thanks to Kevin Jourdain for his service as the former Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Keefe noted Mr. Jourdain's hard work to establish procedures that have assisted the Board and the Soldiers' Home. He stated that Mr. Jourdain will remain on as a Board member. Mr. Jourdain expressed his thanks to all the Board members, administration and all at the Home for the opportunity to serve in the role of the Board Chairman. It has been challenging and rewarding. He noted that the Chair position had been vacant for over 3 years prior to his appointment in 2019. He relayed his best wishes to the new Chairman, Gary Keefe. Mr. Jourdain stated that when he became the Chairman, he laid out 4 goals, outlined below, that he worked to accomplish, some of which are a work in progress:
 1. Hire a highly competent, transformational Superintendent to lead the Soldiers' Home to great potential.
 2. New state-of-the-art facility that is fitting to the residents we service.
 3. Fully implement the recommendations from the Pearlstein report relative to providing care and honor with dignity.
 4. The Board of Trustees would be unified and fully engaged and exert all of its lawful statutory authority, as well as its fiduciary oversight over the Trustee account.Mr. Jourdain noted that there has been a lot of progress made at the Home. We wish to honor those heroes lost by making sure great good comes from this, and that he is focused to ensure this happens. He stated that the Board needs to ensure they preserve their lawful authority under the statutes of state legislature and provide proper oversight. This includes the appointment of a permanent Superintendent and oversight of the real estate and real property of the Soldiers' Home. Mr. Jourdain pointed out that his term on the Board will run until July 22, 2025, and during that time, he looks forward to working to achieve the above noted objectives.
- **Public Comment:**
John Paradis requested to make public comment. Mr. Paradis is a member of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Coalition. Mr. Paradis expressed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Jourdain, noting his responsiveness in all discussions.

Mr. Paradis spoke relative to the COVID vaccinations at the Home, adding that he hopes that there is sufficient dialogue and education being provided on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, as the coalition supports that this is the best way to protect the veterans and staff at the Home.

Public Comment (cont.):

Mr. Paradis also noted that he hopes to hear an update on the use of the Surface disinfection system at the Home.

Mr. Paradis stated the coalition sent correspondence to EOHHS regarding their request for a meeting to discuss both the temporary and permanent memorial. He noted that the coalition and family members would like to have input into any design of these memorials.

Mr. Paradis stated that he is eager to hear the plan for an Ombudsman that is autonomous and independent that can advocate for the veterans and family members, noting that he feels this is a priority hire.

Mr. Paradis would like to hear the efforts by the medical staff regarding outpatient and telehealth visits. He stated that the feedback he has received is that the calls are more of a welfare check. He is concerned that the outpatient veterans may not be getting the medical attention they need and requested an update on outpatient services.

Mr. Paradis wished to re-emphasize that the coalition is solidly behind the authority of the Board to hire and fire the Superintendent and anyone leading the agency – we expect this autonomy is maintained.

Mr. Paradis stated that the coalition will be briefing members of the general court on our recommendations regarding the rapid planning phase for the construction project. He noted that the coalition has a strong recommendation and hope to have a good dialogue with the legislature from Western MA. He will send the invitation to the Trustees, and encourage them to watch the meetings, which are scheduled for this Friday and next Tuesday.

Mr. Paradis requested that anyone speaking during this telephonic meeting, please identify themselves first, as this would be helpful to know who is speaking.

- **Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion by Isaac Mass and seconded by Cindy Lacoste, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the unamended minutes of the Regular Meeting held on December 8, 2020 and Special Meeting on December 16, 2020. The vote was unanimous.

- **Electronic Medical Record Presentation:**

Tom Innis of the Ripples Group, and Eric Sheehan, Assistant Secretary, DVS, provided an update on the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) joint project currently underway for the Soldiers' Homes in Holyoke and Chelsea. Mr. Innis reviewed the goals of the EMR:

1. To improve clinical care and patient access.
2. Develop an interoperable cloud-based secure flexible infrastructure
3. Enhancing billing and fiscal management
4. Facilitate effective, efficient rollout supported by comprehensive change management and training

Mr. Innis reported that the EMR project kicked off in May 2019. He reviewed the progress steps from that point to the present, noting that they are now in the final stages of selecting a vendor.

Kevin Jourdain inquired if it is typical for a 2 year timeline between project kickoff and vendor selection? Eric Sheehan stated that when doing a project of this magnitude, involving many business and technical requirements, it is not unusual for this to be the timeline.

Electronic Medical Record Presentation (cont.):

Kevin Jourdain inquired as to the timeline for vendor selection and implementation of the EMR project. Eric Sheehan stated that they are currently in Strategic Sourcing Team (SST) review and cannot release that information relative to procurement law rules. There is currently an open bid and a bidder has not yet been selected. Until that loop is closed and there is no longer an open bid, we cannot discuss timelines. Kevin Jourdain asked if there is an estimate? Mr. Sheehan reported that they are in the final stages. Mr. Jourdain noted that in the Pearlstein report it was documented that the decision to go with an EMR system was in 2015 – and that there is still not a vendor selected six years later. Mr. Sheehan noted that over the last two years under Secretary Poppe, we have made much progress, noting that this project has run during the COVID pandemic. Isaac Mass inquired as to when the project is expected to be implemented following the selection of the vendor? Eric Sheehan stated that the typical project is anywhere between 12-24 months.

Isaac Mass stated that the Board of Trustees appropriated \$100,000 to this project and are waiting to hear when they will get this appropriation back? Eric Sheehan stated that he is currently working with Alda Rego on processing this reimbursement to the Board. It is expected within 30 days.

Sean Collins stated that he looks forward to getting information on the EMR vendor so we can see what we have ahead of us for opportunities for actual data. Mr. Collins inquired if expenditure of computer equipment to host the medical record is part of the code and bid? Eric Sheehan stated that laptops and ipads were included in the forecast cost over the next 5 years.

Cindy Lacoste inquired on the vendors who responded to the bid. Eric Sheehan stated that information will become public once the bid process is closed.

- **CFO Update**

Steve Giordano reviewed the “Trustee Fund-Summary of Receipts and Disbursement Report for FY21 for the period ending December 31, 2020, as well as the current month’s activity detail. He provided information on the operating budget using the standard reporting format. The UBS and Westfield Bank statements were also provided.

Kevin Jourdain made note of the impressive investment gain during this reporting period. Mr. Jourdain stated for the record that the Board Chairman signs all checks and that any check issued over \$2,000 requires a Board vote.

This concludes the CFO Report.

- **Report from the State and Administrator**

Michael Lazo, Aimee Desmarais and Glen Hevy provided the following update:

This report reflects numbers as of January 12, 2021 at 9:30 AM

Current Veteran Census:

- 126 total across all settings
 - 85 veterans are at the home
 - 17 veterans are in the dorm
 - 2 dorm veteran LOA
 - 21 veterans are currently at the dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
 - 1 veteran in an acute care setting
 -

Veteran Testing and COVID update:

- Regular onsite surveillance testing continues to be conducted on our negative veterans and staff. We are now testing Veterans and staff two times weekly.

Status of the Latest Veteran test results at the Home:

January 7th – January 8th

- 37 out of 38 Veterans tested (including 17 Dorm Veterans)
 - 37 negative
 - 1 refused

Current Employee Numbers:

312 Employees (275.3 Total FTEs)

- 297 Active Employees (264.4 Active FTEs)
 - 15 Employees (11 Direct Care and 4 Non-Direct Care)
 - 95% of our staff is currently reporting to work
 - 1 Employees out due to COVID (1 Non-Direct Care)
 - 5 Employees out due to FMLA (4 are Direct Care and 1 Non-Direct Care)
 - 4 Employees out due to IA (3 Direct Care and 1 Non-Direct Care)
 - 5 Employees out due to other reasons (4 Direct Care and 1 Non-Direct Care)

Status of Latest Employee test results at the Home:

- January 7th – January 8th:
 - 314 Total all staff tested
 - 313 negative
 - 1 positive (non direct care who had not been in the building since 12/28)
 - 201 employees tested out of 206 negative state employees.
 - 97.6% Compliance rate.

Facility Infection Control:

- With Massachusetts documenting nearly 5000 new COVID-19 cases per day and the identification of a new, more transmissible variant in upstate New York, infection prevention remains our highest priority. We continue to follow all guidance and requirements from CMS, CDC, DPH, and public health emergency orders.
- No veterans residing at the Home have tested positive for new COVID-19 infection since late June. A total of 4 veterans at the dedicated nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center tested positive for COVID in the week between Christmas and New Year's, three have fully recovered and the fourth is improving. All will remain isolated for 14 days.
- 2 contractors tested positive for COVID on surveillance screening this past week. Both had not been in the building for extended periods and were testing in preparation to begin work.
- Visitation (except for compassionate care situations) remains suspended until we can assure all veterans and staff remain negative for 14 consecutive days. Upon completion of the second vaccination and the availability of Binax testing, the Home will research ways to re-open visitation in a safe, protected manner.
- We continue to mandate twice-weekly testing for previously negative veterans and employees (including contractors) in accordance with DPH guidance.
- Infection prevention adds complexity to patient care, and visitation restrictions provide challenges to our veterans and families. However, these efforts have successfully prevented any new COVID infections in our veterans since late Spring, despite rising community rates. For the well-being of all of our veteran residents, it remains a top priority of the Home to assist with virtual visitation while in person visitation is suspended.
- Veterans at Holyoke Medical Center received their first dose of the COVID 19 vaccine on December 17th. One veteran refused and one veteran had very recently recovered from COVID for a 90% shot rate. The second dose was administered on January 7th with 1 Veteran refusing and the recovered Veteran receiving the first dose. HMC will provide a second dose to be given to this Veteran on January 28th

Facility Infection Control (cont.):

- The Home conducted its first COVID 19 vaccine clinic on December 29th. All but 7 veterans received the vaccine). The second dosage clinic will be conducted on January 19th where veterans will receive their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Those veterans who did not receive the vaccine in December will be offered the first dose at this second clinic
- Soldiers Home staff also received the COVID 19 vaccination on December 29th with 156 staff and contractors receiving the vaccine.
- The Home is strongly encouraging all staff to receive the vaccine, but it is voluntary. Staff are being provided with educational information about the COVID 19 vaccine in both English and Spanish. In addition to written materials. Staff open forums were held on January 11 and 12 to review the vaccine process and answer any questions.
- 279 members of The Soldiers Home staff have received the mandated flu shot. This requirement has been temporarily suspended in light of the COVID vaccine, since the two vaccines should not be administered within 14 days of each other. Once the COVID vaccinations are complete, staff members will be expected to comply with the flu shot requirement.

Medical Updates:

- Palliative Care physician Diane Dietzen has completed her palliative care evaluation of the facility during December and will be reporting her findings shortly.
- Dr. Higgins has transitioned many of the Chief Medical Officer tasks to the medical staff but will continue to work one to three days per week on-site with phone and text availability as needed through January 31st, 2021. After following the state interview process, a qualified CMO candidate has been identified and is slated to start February 1st.
- Work on the medical bylaws continues in collaboration with Commonwealth Medicine. Similar to the Soldiers Home in Chelsea, these bylaws will be converted to policies and procedures.
- Our updated policy on MOLST and DNR orders has been updated and is pending review and approval by the policy and procedures committee.
- Key Performance Indicators for falls with injury, medication errors, pressure ulcers, lower respiratory tract infections or adverse medication events remain at or better than target.

Clinical Staffing:

- The Home's HPPD remains above the CMS standard for long-term care facility of 4.408.
- Below is the most recent hiring update:
 - The Interim Administrator began with the Home on December 18th
 - The Deputy Superintendent began on December 21st
 - The Director of Social Services began on January 4th and will be oriented by Laurie Signorelli, who has been in the interim position since June, and will be departing in January. We thank Laurie for her dedication and hard work during the past several months.
 - We currently have one Social Worker position and two recreational therapist positions posted.

Human Resources and Labor:

- Nursing set schedules were implemented this month.
- We continue to have monthly labor management meetings with the MNA and SEIU 888.

Quality and Compliance:

- Following our submission of the correction plan, we are awaiting the Joint Commission unannounced survey to review its implementation.
- DPH completed an unannounced survey on October 28th and 29th. The unofficial preliminary findings were overall positive. We are awaiting the official report.

Facilities and Operations:

- We remain at 6 units open.
- Phase 2 of the Refresh project was turned over to the Home on December 28th. Final cleaning and stocking of the floor is on-going
- Planning for moving the Veterans from HMC back to the Soldiers Home is on-going. We are set to welcome 5 Veterans back to the Home on January 14th and 4 veterans on January 15th. The remaining Veterans will be welcomed back to the Home between January 20-22. Rooms have been identified and family notification is on-going.
- In partnership with a vendor a memorial sign has been designed and sent to the Board. It will be placed in the copse of trees at the base of the Soldiers Home hill. The Home will absorb the cost of the sign. A permanent memorial will be discussed as part of the construction of the new Soldiers Home

Veteran, Family and Staff Support:

- On Tuesday, December 29, 2020, the first veteran residents at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke received the COVID-19 vaccination. Robert Aucoin, 78, was the first resident vaccinated at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Aucoin, Airman 2nd Class, U.S. Air Force, served from 1961 to 1965 during the Vietnam era. While stationed at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina, he served as the control tower operator. Aucoin has resided at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke since April of 2018.
- Veterans rang in 2021 with safe celebrations at the Home. On New Year's Eve, the recreation staff went room to room with egg nog, sparkling cider, and snacks. On New Year's Day homemade cinnamon rolls started the day, and the main meal included Chicken Cordon Bleu, Shrimp Cocktail and Ice Cream. The Veterans were treated to a special virtual concert provided by Home Base, and hundreds of holiday cards continue to be distributed. Additionally, the Soldiers' Home had staff on hand on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day to place FaceTime and phone calls for families to connect with their loved ones while visitation is suspended.
- New Enrichment Program
The Soldiers' Home is working with Home Base, a veteran support organization, to help improve the quality of life and decrease isolation for our Veterans during the pandemic. Home Base has linked us to virtual concerts provided by professional and amateur volunteers. The concerts are interactive—featuring musical performances and conversation between the Veterans and musicians. The concerts occur every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The team at Home Base is working with Social Work, Recreation and Nursing to provide other opportunities for virtual activities. The inaugural interactive concerts were a big hit with the Veterans.
- With visitation suspended, families are invited to call the Family Line (413-552-4764) to set up a “virtual visit”
- Family and Veteran Advisory Councils continue this month; Veteran Advocate meeting on 1/7/21 and Family Advocate Meeting on 1/14/21
- Quarterly Virtual Family Meetings will be held in March
- Communications continue to be developed for families, the staff, and the unions. All members of the Board have been added to the communication distribution list for improved communication
- Grief Support Programs continue to be available for staff.

This concludes the State and Administrator Update Report and opened the discussion up to any questions.

State and Administrator Report (cont.):

Isaac Mass asked when the last veteran, who has not refused the vaccine, will be vaccinated with the second dose, and when that dose will reach its maximum effectiveness? Michael Lazo stated that this will be on 1/19/21 and maximum efficacy will be approximately 1 week after the shot vaccine. Mr. Mass requested clarification that any veteran that wishes to have the vaccine will receive it. Michael Lazo stated that we have 7 veterans for which this vaccine will be made available on 1/19/21. If the veterans agree to get the vaccine, then CVS will return on approximately 2/9/21 to give the second dose to these veterans.

Mr. Mass asked what percentage of staff have gotten the vaccine and what percentage of staff have refused the vaccine? Aimee Desmarais stated that approximately 40% of staff have been vaccinated. This includes the contractors. The information on those not having gotten the vaccine has not been reviewed yet, noting there is no declination form for this vaccine, as it is a voluntary vaccine.

Isaac Mass expressed that he does not want to see family visitation being continually shut down due to staff members who have not gotten the vaccine and become positive with COVID. He inquired when we can change the policy to let families back in without risking safety of our veterans? Eric Sheehan stated that there are many regulatory requirements that come into play on how can safety allow family visitation. We follow CMS and DPH guidance around this. If we have any COVID outbreak of one veteran or staff member then we cannot have indoor visitation. The administrative team stays up-to-date on requirements and any updates to these requirements. We need to ensure we keep the veterans and staff safe.

Isaac Mass expressed that while we cannot make the vaccine mandatory for staff, the Board of Trustees has control over policies and can set up policy on visitation. The number one complaint from families is that they cannot see their loved ones. Visitation has been closed more than it has been open. Once we have all the veterans vaccinated, we must let family members in. If not, you will be facing a situation where people do not want to place their loved ones at the Soldiers' Home because they cannot see them. Eric Sheehan stated that he highly advises the Board of Trustees to not take a position of not following the CMS and DPH guidelines. Gary Keefe asked if we can have a DVS representative reach out to EOHHS to work with the bargaining units on this, and provide an update at the next Board of Trustees meeting. Matt Deacon to look into the status of this and provide an update at the next meeting. Eric Sheehan reviewed various staff engagement programs put in place at the Home to encourage vaccination compliance.

Sean Collins inquired on the status of the policy and procedure of the Surfacide unit and whether this unit has been rolled out for use. Michael Lazo stated that the Surfacide policy and the Disinfection policy are in the process of being merged into one policy. The Surfacide unit is being used for terminal cleaning of rooms after Environmental Services does their full cleaning. It has been utilized in the business office and veteran rooms.

Sean Collins asked about the status of the Joint Commission returning for an unannounced site visit. Michael Lazo stated they have been delayed for a return visit relative to the COVID pandemic.

Sean Collins inquired on the status of onboarding a Chief Medical Officer with Dr. Higgins' contract ending 1/31/21. Michael Lazo stated that Human Resources is currently working on this and he will provide any updates on this to the Board Chairman.

Sean Collins asked if any feedback has been received from families on the new room standards. Michael stated that we have not received any feedback from the families on this. The Recreation and Social Work departments are engaging families in the process to reduce belongings in the rooms.

Gary Keefe inquired on what other senior leadership positions are currently vacant? Michael Lazo stated that it is the positions of Superintendent and CFO. Both of these positions are currently filled in an interim capacity.

Gary Keefe inquired if Secretary Poppe had received copies of the DPH surveys? Secretary Poppe has inquired on this with Secretary Sudders. She will update on the status when a response has been received. She also noted that the VA and Joint Commission surveys may be done virtually due to COVID precautions.

OLD BUSINESS:Appointments of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer pursuant to MGL c 6 Sec 71:

Gary Keefe inquired on if the position descriptions for these positions had been provided to the Board. Secretary Poppe to confirm that this has been provided.

The current position of Treasurer is a bargaining unit position. The current CFO position is a management position. Discussion followed on the current designation of these positions and the need to update the position descriptions and delineation of position titles. Isaac Mass stated that senior level financial positions would require the approval of the Board of Trustees. Discussed that this item should be moved to Executive Session. Matt Deacon will prepare the verbiage to be included in Executive Session at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

Discussion of a COVID-19 Patient Memorial:

Michael Lazo provided the specifics on the temporary patient memorial to the Board of Trustees. It will be an 8x4 aluminum sign that includes the military branch logos and a memorial statement. Sean Collins inquired if this was shared with the coalition? Michael Lazo noted that it has not been shared. Isaac Mass added that the sign was well done. Gary Keefe inquired on the steps that can be taken to form a committee that includes leadership from the Home, local veteran service organizations (VSO), and coalition members to discuss the potential design for the permanent memorial? Michael Lazo to further discuss with Eric Sheehan and Secretary Poppe. Gary Keefe suggested Mr. Lazo reach out to John Paradis to identify contacts from the coalition, and to work with Secretary Poppe and Eric Sheehan on the VSO's to ensure we get input ideas from them. Isaac Mas added that there should be someone from the design team on this committee. Mr. Keefe requested that the names for this committee be presented to the Trustees to review for the March 9, 2021 Board meeting.

Ombudsman Program Update:

Matt Deacon continues to work to get a proposal from Elder Affairs on the Ombudsman Program. All the necessary information has been provided to them for a proposal for both Soldiers' Homes. Mr. Deacon is awaiting a response from them, and will send another request for an update. Isaac Mass inquired what will be done with Mr. Delaney, who is the current voluntary Ombudsman, to satisfy the VA standard? Matt Deacon stated that one of the issues was that the Ombudsman was internal to the agency rather than external. Mark Yankopoulos added that the Ombudsman we currently have would meet the VA requirement, but going forward, the best course of action would be to piggy back on state programming, as there is someone here in Holyoke designated. Matt Deacon added that Joseph Delaney has been doing a great job as the Ombudsman, and if he is agreeable to stay, we can work on that process. Kevin Jourdain stated that he looks forward to having a paid Ombudsman in place. He noted that there may be supplemental funds earmarked for the Ombudsman program. Matt Deacon confirmed that there are funds in place. Mr. Jourdain requested an update on this item at the next Board of Trustees meeting. Gary Keefe noted that the Board is available for any needed assistance on this matter.

Information Request of Mr. Giordano from November 10, 2020 meeting: Please provide the 5 year history of retained revenue accounts and how much was carried over annually and preserved vs. how much in general fund state appropriation dollars were unspent annually and returned to the state:

Mr. Giordano stated that the requested data was included within the financial report sent to the Board members. Kevin Jourdain expressed that state funds should be utilized before retained revenue, and lastly the Trustee account. This item will be further discussed at the Finance Committee.

Selection of New Medical Director:

Michael Lazo reported that there is no new update on this item. Human Resources working to identify proper candidates for this position. Kevin Jourdain inquired if Dr. Higgins will stay on until we have a permanent person in this position. Michael Lazo stated that Dr. Higgins has agreed to extend his contract if necessary past the end of January 2021.

Announcement of Committee Assignments:

1. Operations Committee – reviewed the scope of this committee. Gary Keefe wished to clarify what the Board’s role would be relative to the performance evaluation of the Superintendent. Kevin Jourdain stated that he believes it would be in the best interest of the Commonwealth that the Board of Trustees give input on the performance evaluation of the Superintendent. One of the primary responsibilities of any Board member is to give input on the performance of the leader of that organization. The Board of Trustees has hiring and firing authority over the Superintendent position so should have input on the individual’s performance. He noted they are not looking to take this away from DVS, but that the input of the Board was never received before. Cindy Lacoste stated that the Operations Committee would give this input to DVS. Isaac Mass stated that it would be good for the Board of Trustees to be able to view the final evaluation. Secretary Poppe noted that she would have to defer to legal and human resources in terms of what can be shared from a human resources perspective. Management is evaluated under the ACES evaluation system; I believe this is a confidential process. Matt Deacon stated that the Board of Trustees has By-Laws to discuss the responsibility of the day-to-day operation of the facility – a collaborative working relationship with the Superintendent. It states in the By-Laws that the Superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day control of the facility. Catherine Starr advised that this item will need to be discussed internally and she and Matt will provide follow-up on this. Gary Keefe inquired on the inclusion of “primary body”, he asked what is envisioned with this? Kevin Jourdain stated that this is focused on involuntary discharges. The primary issue is relative to how involuntary discharges are handled. Relative to the Pearlstein report, we need to do a more effective job laying out the rules on this. This committee would be the first venue to handle these and make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Residents understand they have the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees. The Operations Committee would have lead oversight on this. Kevin Jourdain stated that these are By-Laws amendments that he is proposing, as we do not currently have standing committees in the By-Laws.
2. By-Laws Committee: Reviewed scope of the committee.
3. Finance Committee: Reviewed scope of the committee.
4. Superintendent Search Committee: Reviewed scope of the committee.

Kevin Jourdain made a motion, seconded by Isaac Mass, to establish the following 4 committees: Operations Committee, By-Laws Committee, Finance Committee, and Superintendent Search Committee. All were in favor to approve the establishment of these committee.

Information Request of Secretary Poppe from November 10, 2020 meeting: please provide the Board with copies of job descriptions for all three of the following positions: CFO, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer:
Secretary Poppe to provide for the next regular Board of Trustees meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed study to research, fund and establish a web based forum (Webex, MS Teams etc.) to conduct future meetings over the internet for public access:

Gary Keefe requested that Michael Lazo look long-term for when the Board meetings are back in the physical space of the Soldiers’ Home to run a web-based meeting format. Isaac Mass asked that this be put on the next regular Board of Trustees meeting agenda to discuss the possibility of having the Board of Trustees meetings moved back into the facility in March 2021. Michael Lazo stated that he will have to discuss this with the Infection Control team at the Home, as we will want to do this in a safe, protective manner for the safety of all at the Home. He will provide an update during the next regular Board of Trustees meeting.

Request DVS have a VA Representative brief the Board on the VA State Home Program:

Gary Keefe would like the Board to get a briefing of where we are with the VA State Home Program, in an effort to ensure we have a strong application for the 4/15/21 deadline. Isaac Mass stated that he wants to ensure the Board is able to weigh in on the applications at an early enough point in the timeline. Secretary Poppe and Alda Rego reviewed the timeline for submission of the application, as well as the steps following the application submission. A decision was made to schedule a special Board of Trustees meeting on 1/27/21 at 5:30 pm with Payette, A&F and DCAMM

Request DVS have a VA Representative brief the Board on the VA State Home Program (cont.):

representatives in attendance to focus on the design process of the Soldiers' Home construction project. Kevin Jourdain requested that the Board be provided with a draft of the application so it can be reviewed at this meeting. He also requested that the Board be provided with the final application so the Trustee can review the final input. He inquired if once the application is submitted, there is opportunity to amend the application? Alda Rego stated that the initial application is at a higher level and the next part is a much more detailed level application. Secretary Poppe stated that there are 7 attachments that are submitted with the initial application and then the full design is to be completed by 8/1/2021, along with matching funds. These attachments can be provided to the Board, as well as an overview of the overall process. Isaac Mass inquired on if the Board would like to make change to the design, will they have the opportunity to make that happen? Alda Rego to confirm this with the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAMM). She stated that they have a scheduled meeting with DCAMM tomorrow and will get started on this discussion with them. Kevin Jourdain requested that the Board be provided with a list of contact information for designated individuals at Payette and DCAMM. Alda Rego confirmed that this will be provided.

Discuss the Establishment of the Following Committees – Building Committee/Strategic Planning Committee:

Gary Keefe inquired on if there has been any discussion about bringing representatives in to develop a strategic operational plan? Secretary Poppe stated that there had been a study done in 2013 on meeting the needs of Long Term Care veterans. Following that, the Long Term Commission, and then UMASS, did a study and made recommendations. There was a study done by public consulting groups on needs assessments of veterans, focusing on the Soldiers' Homes – looking at viability of the Home and noting that veterans should stay in their homes as long as possible with community support, but it was determined that the Soldiers' Home had a role to play. They also looked at the housing for veterans, as well as future needs. We need to look at different cohorts and what the needs of incoming veterans in the future will be, including Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and Behavioral Health. We are in part of that plan and can look at a separate plan. Secretary Poppe to forward these reports to the Board for review.

Adjourn:

Gary Keefe made a motion, seconded by Cindy Lacoste, to conclude the Public Session and move into Executive Session, for the purpose stated on the agenda. Mr. Keefe noted for the public's awareness that the Board of Trustees will not be returning from Executive Session to Public Session. The Board of Trustees will adjourn after the Executive Session has ended.

Roll Call Vote is as follows: Sean Collins (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes), Gary Keefe (Yes). It was unanimously VOTED to conclude Public Session and move into Executive Session at 7:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Shimel
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees