

Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Board of Trustees Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke (HLY) on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 in Conference Room A. The meeting began at 4:00 PM.

- **Members Present:**
Kevin Jourdain, Chairman; Christopher Dupont, Cesar Lopez, Carmen Ostrander, Isaac Mass, Richard Girard.
- **Also Present:**
Bennett W. Walsh, Superintendent; Secretary, DVS; Dr. David Clinton; Deb Foley, Director of Communications and Volunteer Services; Norman Gousy, Chief Financial Officer; Mark Yankopoulos, Legal Counsel; Vanessa Lauziere, Chief Nursing Officer; Jeremiah Laplante, Director of Operations; Jessica Powers, Human Resources Liaison; Secretary Francisco Ureña, DVS; Stuart Ivimey, Legal Counsel (DVS); and Nancy Shimel, Recording Secretary.
- **Pledge of Allegiance** - All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- **Public Comment**
Kevin Jourdain asked if any member of the public wished to address the Trustees. No public comment was offered.
- **Regular Minutes**
Upon motion by Carmen Ostrander and seconded by Isaac Mass, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 18, 2020, with the following changes:
-Under CFO Update: Change spelling in sentence, Michael Rivos, from UBS, will be invited; to, Michael Ravosa, from UBS, will be invited.
-Under Superintendent's Report: Add in the following statement as the last sentence: Kevin Jourdain stated it was inappropriate to call what was called "an audit" of the Trustee Account.
Richard Girard abstained from this vote, as he did not attend last month's meeting.

Kevin Jourdain reviewed minutes process and reminded all that only the Board of Trustees can change meeting minutes via vote. The Board Chairman has not made any changes to any prior minutes without Board approval. (See reference email attachment dated 2/29/20 from Bennett Walsh)
- **Executive Committee of the Medical Staff Meetings**
Dr. David Clinton reported there is no report for the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff as the monthly Medical Staff meeting has not yet occurred. Will give report at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

CFO Update

Norm Gousy gave an update from the Finance Committee meeting that took place on 3/5/20. Kevin Jourdain noted that this was the first Finance Committee documented to have taken place within the last five years. Kevin Jourdain and Chris Dupont thanked the members of the executive team for their assistance at the Finance Committee Meeting. Topics for discussion included review of the Trustee Account, UBS transfers, check signing procedures, electronic bill payments, investment policy, and Trustee Account use policy.

Norman noted that at the Board of Trustee meeting on 2/18/20, a vote was taken to disburse the sum of \$9,922.00 to decedent donor in care of the estate attorney for payment of funeral expenses. He noted that he is documenting this in the financial reports as a net against the donation, rather than an expense.

CFO Update (cont'd):

Norm Gousy reviewed an investment loss during transfer of the Morgan Stanley account to the UBS account between 2/20/20 and 2/21/20, due to a market change during that period. He also noted that on the Morgan Stanley statement, there was an investment loss reflected in February due to large market drop.

Kevin Jourdain inquired whether there is any restriction on the recent \$18,000 donation received. Bennett Walsh stated that the family is interested in the purchase of a medical chair that would help the veterans.

Expenses were reviewed and discussion followed on check signing. All checks payable from the Trustee Account require two signatures; one from Kevin Jourdain, Board Chairman, and the second from the Treasurer's Office, currently Steve Giordano. Checks over \$2,000 will require a Board of Trustees vote.

Norm presented a request to pay the invoice for aviary services through 6/30/20 from the Trustee Account. Kevin Jourdain agreed to approve this request, with the understanding that this would be the last aviary request expensed to the Trustee Account, and to document requesting that this service be budgeted to the state account. Cesar Lopez suggested having the Finance Department obtain three bids from vendors. Norm stated that he had looked into whether a veterinary office could provide this service, but they would not perform the necessary maintenance to the cage. Discussion followed on the need to conduct an annual review of entertainment contracts, and an inquiry was made by Kevin Jourdain on whether feedback is received from veterans on choice of entertainment. Bennett stated that informal feedback has been given to the recreational department on this. Norm noted that there are currently contracts in place with all the entertainers. Norm will add "review of the current entertainment contracts" to the next Finance Committee agenda. Isaac Mass inquired if there is currently a policy on recurring bills as opposed to one time bills. He asked if there is a process for the recurring bills to be brought to the Board of Trustees. Kevin Jourdain stated there is not a policy in place at this time, but the Finance Committee is working towards the creation of a Trustee Fund Use policy that will address these things, as well as structuring an actual budget for the Trustee Account.

Norm Gousy presented a request to pay the subscription invoice for the "It's Never Too Late" (IN2L) interactive program from the Trustee Account. This unique device assists veterans with memory loss; helping to reduce veteran behaviors on the Dementia unit. We have two devices, one for group settings and one which is a portable device. Cesar stated he believes this device is very helpful for veterans with dementia. The subscription will be adjusted to match our fiscal year in the future. The current invoice for payment request is for \$1,200. Cesar Lopez made a motion, seconded by Chris Dupont to approve \$1,200 from the Trustee Account for payment of the IN2L subscription invoice through 6/30/20.

Discussed the retained revenue difference between Chelsea and Holyoke, the split between the two facilities is 60% (Chelsea)/40%(Holyoke); Chelsea's may be larger due to the fact of higher maintenance needs, as they have 11 buildings at their facility. Isaac Mass inquired why the safety net larger at Chelsea than at Holyoke. Norm Gousy to look into to get more specific details on these items.

Christopher Dupont questioned why the Soldiers' Home is asking for only a 1% increase in its annual budget for next year. Is it being mandated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that we can only ask for 1% or is that just what the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke does on an annual basis? Christopher Dupont requested another brief on how the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke formulates their budget process.

- **Superintendent's Report**

Bennett W. Walsh presented the Superintendent's Report via a PowerPoint Presentation and copies were distributed to each Trustee. We have received the VA survey report and are happy to report a "three peat" having met or provisionally met all healthcare standards for the third year in row. Bennett expressed that this was a team effort from not only staff and the veterans, but the families as well. Some of the areas to be addressed include

Superintendent's Report (cont'd):

laundry services for the veterans, sharing agreement, EMR, Life Safety, Ombudsmen, and shaving veterans. We will be working on action plans to address these areas, including having reached out to York Street Industries to explore utilizing their services for laundry. Bennett noted that Dr. Andrew McMahon, VA Director at the Central-Western MA VA Medical Center in Leeds, MA expressed his congratulations on the successful survey and thanked us for our professionalism during the survey. Bennett also reported that DVS, Chelsea and Holyoke presented at the Joint Testimony Hearings held in Duxbury on 2/28/20. He noted that there were not any Western MA legislative representative in attendance. Bennett stated that he would like to include invite state-wide legislatures to next year's Legislative Luncheon.

Bennett noted that the recent flu outbreak at the Home was kept contained to 7-8 days due to early prophylactic medication to the vets, as well as thorough cleaning processes throughout the building. We are taking similar precautions with the recent COVID-19 virus. It was reported that there were no known COVID-19 cases currently. Kevin Jourdain asked how we can be pro-active as the criteria is changing rapidly. Deb Foley noted that beginning tomorrow, there will be a single point of entry for all visitors, where they will be screened upon arrival. They are being asked to not visit if they are feeling sick. Children under 12 are not allowed to visit. Staff are requested to stay home if not feeling well, and are being asked to report any travel plans. Bennett noted that the press have asked for a statement on our COVID-19 precautions. Bennett notified the Board of Trustees that the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke would be stopping entertainment, volunteers and visitors from coming into the Home. Our DVS/EHS approved response has been reported. A listing of events with 50+ people scheduled at the Home has been forwarded to DVS/EHS per their request. Bennett noted that our staff has worked in cooperation with the City of Holyoke via meetings/phone to discuss COVID-19 precautions. Cesar Lopez inquired on the availability of testing kits. Dr. Clinton reviewed our process, as we have a contract with Holyoke Medical Center, and all lab testing would be sent there via courier. He stated that there is strict criteria in place around testing for COVID-19. Isaac Mass inquired if there is a plan in place for staffing shortages related to the COVID-19 virus. Bennett noted that we work with four outside staffing agencies for staffing needs if the need arises above current staff. Isaac also inquired on alternate ways for visitors to connect with the veterans secondary to the current visitation restriction. Bennett noted that virtual connection (i.e. FaceTime and Skype) is being encouraged. Kevin Jourdain asked if there is a computer available for this purpose for any vets that do not have one. Bennett noted that the IN2L devices are available for this, and that the portable IN2L device can be brought to veteran's rooms. In light of the fact that the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke would be stopping visitors, Kevin Jourdain also requested that a room with a computer could be reserved on the first floor for visitors who do not have access to a computer so they could speak with their loved ones. Bennett Walsh thought this was a good idea and would look into it.

Bennett noted that there will be a groundbreaking ceremony planned for the CC1 Outdoor area. The family who donated the funds for this will be invited to attend.

Bennett reported that the set schedules for the nursing/CNA staff have been created and sent to DVS/EHS for approval. He thanked Vanessa Lauziere and her staff for all their hard work creating the templates. Unions will be briefed on these as well.

Bennett reviewed current projects at the home including UMASS Lowell Life Safety, Project, EMR, and Omni cell. He noted the areas of focus in our five year strategic plan. Bennett reviewed ongoing Behavior Watch meetings taking place to address increase in veteran behaviors.

In an effort to increase efficiency, the admission policies are being reviewed. Richard Girard inquired about if this involves changes specific to paperwork. Bennett noted that we are having discussions to ensure we are admitting the right veterans based on needs, and that paperwork is put in place if a veteran's condition changes, resulting in a need to transfer to another facility based on behaviors. Isaac Mass asked if this is around psychiatric needs. Bennett noted that there has been an increase in behaviors; which is expected to continue to rise, and that

Superintendent's Report (cont'd):

psychiatric behaviors can lead to physical dangers to other veterans, volunteers and staff. Chris Dupont noted a case where this had previously occurred with a veteran.

- **Old Business**

Sweatshirts

Kevin Jourdain inquired about cancelling the purchase of the sweatshirts, given that the St. Patrick's Day Parade has been cancelled this year. Bennett stated that the sweatshirts were already ordered previous to the cancellation. Kevin suggested the sweatshirts be saved for next year.

- **New Business**

Plaque for Brian Corridan

Discussed having a plaque made to recognize Brian Corridan's years of service with the Board of Trustees. Isaac Mass suggested having a veteran present the plaque to him. Chris Dupont noted that there is a wall in the lobby where plaques of former Trustees and Superintendents are displayed. Kevin Jourdain requested that this be updated to include all the names to the present. Upon motion by Isaac Mass and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to approve the purchase of a recognition plaque for Brian Corridan, with funds being taken out of the Trustee Account, unless there are funds available in the state budget.

Joint Meeting

Kevin Jourdain thanked Secretary Ureña on assisting with getting both Chelsea and Holyoke together at a Joint Board of Trustees meeting which is scheduled for 4/9/20 at 6:00 pm in Worcester (exact location TBD). Dinner will be provided. Please submit any requested agenda items to Kevin Jourdain.

Adjournment

Carmen Ostrander made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Chris Dupont; the meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Shimel
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees