

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, November 26, 2019 in Conference Room A. The meeting began at 4:00 PM.

- **Members Present:**
Kevin Jourdain, Chairman; Christopher Dupont, Cesar Lopez; and Carmen Ostrander
- **Also Present:**
Bennett W. Walsh, Superintendent; Dr. David Clinton, Medical Director; Jessica Powers, HR Liaison; Jeremiah Laplante, Director of Operations; Norm an Gousy, Chief Financial Officer; Mark Yankopoulos, Legal Counsel; Stuart Ivimey, Legal Counsel (Department of Veterans' Services); Eric Sheehan, Deputy Superintendent (Soldiers' Home in Chelsea); 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.
- **Employee Activities Committee:**
Jermame Potvin, representative of the Employee Activities Committee (EAC), presented an overview of the EAC to members. The EAC is sponsoring an employee holiday party on February 7, 2020. Jermame sought the approval from the Trustees for a contribution from the Trustee Account towards the cost of this holiday party. Cesar inquired about expected attendance rate. Kevin Jourdain inquired about the contribution amount from the Trustee Account last year. Kevin Jourdain thanked Jermame for his presentation, and stated that the Trustees will take this request under consideration.
- **Regular Minutes**
Upon motion by Cesar Lopez and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 10, 2019.
- **Executive Session Minutes**
Upon motion by Cesar Lopez and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the minutes of the Executive Session held on September 10, 2019. The Executive Session minutes will remain confidential until further advisement from legal counsel. A Roll Call VOTE was conducted. The Role Call Vote is as follows: Brian Corridan (YES), Cesar Lopez (YES), Carmen Ostrander (YES), Christopher Dupont (YES).
- **Ripples Group Presentation**
Tom Innis from the Ripples Group presented information on the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) project via a Powerpoint Presentation and copies were distributed to each Trustee. Tom expressed his thanks to Secretary Ureña, Superintendent Bennett Walsh, Superintendent Cheryl Poppe and the Trustees for their support with this project. Kevin Jourdain inquired about the selection of vendors. Project will be put out for vendor bid in Mid-December. Kevin Jourdain asked about the staff training timeline. There will be an approximate two year staff training window – proposal of two full-time positions for dedicated staff training. Cesar inquired about certifications of these trainers, as well as the Human Resources posting language to ensure skill sets with EMR. The Commonwealth of MA Human Resources does a MERS check to ensure candidates meet the minimum requirements for the position. Cesar asked about time savings with EMR versus paper charting. Tom stated that EMR will assist us in meeting regulatory requirements. Kevin Jourdain inquired if both the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke and the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea contributed an equal amount from their Trustee funds for the EMR project – both have contributed equally. Kevin Jourdain thanked Mr. Innis for the presentation.

- **Executive Committee of the Medical Staff Meetings**

Dr. Clinton presented the report of the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff Meetings on Thursday, November 14, 2019. He reported that template for the Medical Orders/Treatment Orders template has been streamlined, resulting in tremendous time savings. Dr. Clinton also presented a status update on the Westfield State College Physician Assistant (PA) program, which has been very successful to date. He also reviewed the Flu Shot Program – have a very high compliance rate among veterans and staff. Contracted services were reviewed – only identifiable area is with Dental Services – due to staffing issues, dental services provided by Holyoke Health Center for the Veterans have temporarily been reduced. We continue to advocate for additional staffing so service days can be increased once again. Dr. Clinton also presented on the Geriatric Psychiatric Program at Providence. In addition, Dr. Clinton sought approval for two year appointments for Shalina Ray, NP and Richard Yen, DMD from Holyoke Health Center. Kevin Jourdain discussed whether appointment of Richard Yen, DMD, should be temporary until a permanent dentist is hired. Dr. Clinton expressed that a two (2) year appointment would be optimal. Upon motion by Christopher Dupont and seconded by Cesar Lopez, it was unanimously VOTED to approved the above mentioned appointments. Dr. Clinton also sought approval to reappoint Paul Mintzer, MD, Ophthalmologist and Stanley Swierzewski, MD, Urologist, to a two (2) year term to the Medical Staff. Upon motion by Christopher Dupont, and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to approve the above mentioned appointments. Upon motion by Kevin Jourdain and seconded by Cesar Lopez, it was unanimously VOTED to accept that report of the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff Meetings.

- **CFO Update**

Norman Gousy presented information on his professional background prior to his new position here as the Chief Financial Officer. He reviewed the “CHIA Hospital Cost Report Comparison” and distributed copies to the Trustees. He also discussed the “FY2019 Expenditures through October 31, 2019/ Trustee –Combined Cash Account Activity” and copies were distributed to each Trustee. Kevin Jourdain inquired on the EMR payments. Norm to follow-up with specific information on what has been paid to date. Kevin Jourdain also asked about the \$82,000 Front Runner Bus. This was payment for a new 14-passenger vehicle for the Veterans, purchased from donation funds. Kevin Jourdain inquired on Trustee approval for this purchase. Kevin Jourdain also inquired on the purchase of the Bose Speaker/IPad . These were purchased for karaoke for the Veterans. Details will be provided to the Chairman on both of these purchases. Kevin Jourdain also requested specifics be provided on the transcription services expense . This was the transcription fee for the UMASS Dignity Project interviews. Discussed revamping Trustee Fund report in an effort to make it more user friendly. Norman compiled a three year report detailing all expenses from the Trustee Fund between FY2017-FY2019. Discussed creating a Finance Committee to discuss investment strategies, management controls, and expense details, possibly including an outside advisory opinion. Kevin Jourdain positively acknowledged the Superintendent’s decision for a financial review submitted in May 2019 to DVS and EHS. Also discussed having an audit completed of past financial records done by an outside auditor. Norman Gousy stated that we should focus this on the Trustee Account, as audits are routinely done on the other accounts. A motion was made by Kevin Jourdain, and seconded by Cesar Lopez to approve an audit/financial review from an independent auditor of the Trustee Account and to empower the CFO/Legal Counsel/Superintendent to prepare an RFP, and to expense the audit cost to the Trustee account. It was unanimously VOTED to approve this.

- **Superintendent’s Report**

Bennett W. Walsh presented the Superintendent’s Report via a PowerPoint Presentation and copies were distributed to each Trustee. The Egress Project continues – the completion date slightly delayed due to necessary heating/cooling changes to be made. Reviewed many recent events that the Soldiers’ home has both held and been involved with over the last month to recognize Veterans’ Day. The Legislative Lunch will be held on January 17, 2020 . Upon motion by Kevin Jourdain and seconded by Cesar Lopez, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the Superintendent’s Report as presented.

- **Old Business**

Employee Scholarships – Mark Yankopoulos presented the Ethics Committee written response on the Employee Scholarships and distributed to Trustees. After discussion, it was recommended that the program be placed on hold until further notice.

Trustee Letter to Staff – Cesar Lopez made a motion to approve, seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to approve the Trustee Letter to Staff.

Deputy Superintendent/Hiring Authority – The hiring process has been restarted for the Deputy Superintendent position. Recommended candidate names have been submitted to DVS. We are awaiting response on candidates to be interviewed. Mark Yankopoulos reported on the legal opinion regarding Hiring Authority, and distributed copies to Trustees. Kevin Jourdain suggested editing language on statutory construction.

NASVH Winter Conference Participation – Bennett Walsh is attending the NASVH Winter Conference being held 2/10/20-2/14/20 in Alexandria, VA. Discussion took place regarding if any Trustee would like to attend – if no other Trustees are interested in attending, Cindy Lacoste would like to attend.

- **New Business**

Employee Gift Cards – Discussion regarding the purchase of gift cards for employees in the amount of \$35.00 each. This falls below the \$50.00 gift threshold. Discussion took place to ensure the purchase of these is in conformance with Human Resource and Ethics guidelines – if it confirmed that it is, there was a motion made Christopher Dupont to approve this purchase, and seconded by Cesar Lopez.

Board of Trustees By-Laws – The Board of Trustees By-Laws are up for 3 year review. Kevin Jourdain will request a member of the Board to assist himself and Legal Counsel to review.

Policy and Procedure Committee – Mark Yankopoulos has resumed the Policy and Procedure Committee meetings. Policies and procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Dining Room Furniture Purchase Approval – The item is tabled.

Board of Trustees Meeting Dates 2020 – There will not be a December meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 4:00 pm.

- **Board Chairman Discussion:**

Kevin Jourdain reported that Brian Corridan has resigned from the Board of Trustees. He will request that Mr. Corridan submit a written letter of resignation. He thanked Mr. Corridan for his services with the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke.

Committees – Kevin Jourdain will seek information from the other Trustees regarding strategic goals, formation of committees, suggestions on future direction, as well as upcoming meeting schedule.

- **Adjournment**

Kevin Jourdain made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Cindy Lacoste; meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bennett W. Walsh
Secretary for the Board of Trustees