

Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Board of Trustees Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Soldiers' Home Holyoke (HLY) was held in person, virtually and telephonically on Tuesday, October 12, 2021. The meeting began at 5:27 PM.

Members Present:

Gary Keefe, Chairman; Carmen Ostrander, Cindy Lacoste

Board Members via WebEx:

Isaac Mass, Sean Collins, and Kevin Jourdain

Board Members Not Available:

Mark Bigda

Also Present:

Sharon Boyle, General Counsel (EHS); John Cronin, Chief Financial Officer (DVS); Matt Deacon, Legal Counsel (DVS); Diane Dietzen, CMO (HLY); Robert Engell, Interim Administrator (HLY); Debra Foley, Communications (HLY); Stephen Giordano, Business Office Accountant (HLY); Kelly Hansen, Quality Manager (HLY); Michael Lazo, Interim Superintendent (HLY); Caitlin Menard, Director of Social Services (HLY); John Paradis, HSH Coalition; Cheryl Poppe, Secretary, Department of Veterans Services (DVS); Alda Rego, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance (EHS); Eric Segundo, HSH Coalition; Mark Yankopoulos, Legal Counsel (HLY) and Kathleen Denner, Recording Secretary (HLY).

Roll Call:

Chairman Keefe conducted a Roll Call as follows: Kevin Jourdain (Yes), Chairman Keefe (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), and Sean Collins, phone could not unmute joined after the approval of the minutes.

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

Approval of Minutes:

Upon motion by Trustee Ostrander and seconded by Trustee Jourdain it was unanimously VOTED to accept the minutes of the Board Meeting held on September 14, 2021 and the September 28, 2021 Operations Subcommittee minutes. The Board of Trustees minutes with the following edit on page 8 change the word bale to bail.

Chairman Keefe conducted a Roll Call vote on the approval of the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting as amended on September 14, 2021. The Roll Call vote is as follows: Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Keefe (Yes), Trustee Lacoste (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes). It was unanimously VOTED to approve the minutes as amended.

Public Comment:

Mr. Paradis stated that coalition has been calling for reforms on how two homes are governed and managed. The coalition is closely tracking and monitoring what the legislature is now considering and so far we are disheartened that the conversation on Beacon Hill has been about placing and further consolidating control of the state's veterans home under the Department of Veteran Services and to eliminate the homes two governing bodies that

meaning the board of trustees in Holyoke and Chelsea. He shared that the coalition would like to call on the trustees to take a strong stand on this, if not local autonomy and local governance will be eliminated. He believes that it has taught us about the tragedy that occurred in Holyoke.

We lost signal with Mr. Paradis so moved to the CFO report and will come back when Mr. Paradis has established a connection.

CFO/Treasurer Report (Mr. Giordano):

Mr. Giordano shared the trustee fund received total donations of \$5950 for the month which is above our previous 12-month average, expenses included entertainment, bingo, trustee picnic and engraving for the tree of life. He stated that Mr. Lynch will have the transfer of \$275,000 previously approved by the board by the end of month. He also shared the state's fiscal 2022 spending plan was approved last week.

Mr. Giordano informed the board that the Home is currently engaged in staff education and is monitoring the final costs of the refresh project. He shared that they are in the initial phase of the 2023 budget.

Mr. Giordano stated there are two trustee fund expenditure request for the board to vote on including the annual subscription of "It's Never Too Late" which provides digital entertainment and educational services for the veterans and the second request is for Veteran's Day related expenditure for fleece jackets for veterans' with the Homes logo and say heroes live.

Mr. Giordano said the Mr. Lynch has not received the conference presentation slides and has reached out to the president.

Trustee Jourdain asked if the amount for fleece jackets so we can make a motion to approve. Trustee Lacoste said she received an email from Mr. Lynch with the amount of \$2724.85.

Trustee Jourdain made a motion to approve the renew the subscriptions to INTL in the amount of \$2460 and in addition we support the fleece jackets for the veterans in the amount of \$2724.85. Trustee Lacoste second. Discussion. None heard. Chairman Keefe conducted a Roll Call Vote: Trustee Collins (yes), Trustee Jourdain (Yes), Trustee Keefe (Yes), Trustee Lacoste (Yes), Trustee Mass (Yes), and Trustee Ostrander (Yes). Motion is approved.

Chairman Keefe asked if there were any other finance questions. None heard he then asked Mr. Giordano if there were any other Veteran Day expenses and Mr. Giordano said no.

Trustee Mass asked if there was an update on application for non-veteran license plate. Chairman Keefe has the form and application from Secretary Poppe and Mr. Deacon and it requires a bunch of signatures and the National Guard has taken the forms and will start getting signatures, need 1500 signatures but if military organization cuts in the number of signatures in half. Mr. Deacon confirmed 750 signatures. Trustee Mass asked if the trustees can collect signatures. Chairman Keefe replied yes and once he gets the executive directors final review; he will have more information to push it forward. They will work with other

organizations to get the plate out there. Trustee Mass wants to make sure the revenue going to trustees account? Chairman Keefe replied yes.

At this point we went back to Mr. Paradis.

Mr. Paradis reported that they have serious concerns that the legislation at the Home and the conversation on Beacon Hill has been about placing and further consolidating the two Homes under DVS and with eliminating that is what we are most concerned about. He stated with this legislation with eliminating each of the Homes two governing bodies that mean the board in Holyoke and Chelsea we firmly believe the trustees need to take a stand on this and if not we may not have local autonomy and certainly local governance for the veterans community in Western Massachusetts is going to be eliminated. He said for us as a coalition the biggest takeaway is about the tragedy that occurred, and we want to emphasize that there were 33 veterans that also died of COVID-19 under the care of the Chelsea's Soldier Home. Mr. Paradis said we need an overhaul on how the state manages care of our veterans and how it will ensure care with honor and dignity. The trustees must play an important role in the homes future and on that premise our testimony to legislature and we ask of the board is to support our recommendation which are to put both homes under the supervision under the supervision of the Department of Public Health Bureau of Hospitals not under an agency such as DVS that is not a health care agency and does not have the ability to properly run a long term care facility for some of the most vulnerable senior citizens in our Commonwealth and most importantly to give more strength to the trustees and to ensure you too have local autonomy because you are our representatives and you understand the interest in the veterans and our diverse set of needs because at the end of the day it is important issue. Mr. Paradis reminded the board that they have sent the board their testimony, their position paper which includes more information and details including the data the regarding the 77 veterans deaths in in Holyoke and that the total number of deaths from the homes are nine times higher then the four facilities run by DPH.

Mr. Paradis would like to see the Payette presentation from the last board meeting so he can share with coalition members and also to send their appreciation to Mr. Lazo for following up on several of their interest items from last month. Mr. Paradis reported that Mr. Segundo will follow up with Mr. Lazo regarding admissions questions. Chairman Keefe said the board has been reviewing the legislation.

Trustee Jourdain has a resolution to offer tonight in support of the coalition if it is appropriate, he would like to go over it now and with this moving as quickly as it is we do not have the luxury to wait to the next meeting to put together a resolution. Trustee Jourdain made a motion to pass the resolution and then he read the resolution. See attached. Trustee Mass seconded. Discussion.

Chairman Keefe asked what is when you mention the board of trustees recommended a membership what are you recommending that if one of the board of trustees leaves then the board of trustees makes a recommendation based on applications or individuals to be forwarded up for appointment. Trustee Jourdain responded not that we recommend but there be established an open and transparent process to appoint a diverse and professional board to include the creation of a nominating committee, to provide the Governor with a list of

candidates from which to select, so it not coming from us but it is encouraging the creation of a nominating committee to provide the governor with a list of qualified people.

Mr. Yankopoulos interjected that because this topic was not listed on the agenda it could be tabled.

Trustee Lacoste has a question about DPH versus DVS, I know the coalition is very in favor of DPH because it is healthcare, but DVS does brings services to veteran that are different from normal nursing homes and I do not think it is a cut and dried or black and white decision that can be made right now. I support having DPH involved in the Home and to have the twice a year visits and also believes DVS should have a hand on the Soldiers' Home. Trustee Lacoste is not sure she can vote for something that does not let DVS still have involvement with the veterans.

Trustee Jourdain stated he does not think what is being suggested by those who are advocating would not to fall under DPH and that DVS won't still be involved. Trustee Lacoste does not believe it is saying that and it has to be clarified that you want DPH take care of the medical part and DVS would still take care of its' veterans, possibly a joint. Trustee Jourdain suggested the board review the language because you are raising an important point that the homes would become under the jurisdiction of DPH but not to say that DVS would not have input, on the other hand what you have today is it's under the jurisdiction of DVS and people feel two Homes should be under DPH. He believes there is an executive director of the homes position who would still be under DVS unless they decide to move that position as well. Trustee Jourdain stated that many think these homes are medical facilities and should be regulated as such. Trustee Ostrander feels the DVS takes care of veterans and DPH takes care of public health and the overseeing of the homes should fall under the veterans because they are not going to be able to help with mental health, loss of limb, loss of life, loss of best friend, they are going to deal with infection control, immunizations, and drug therapy we need the veterans with DVS and let public health deal with the other part. The DVS needs to be the overseeing body and they need to work as a cohesive unit the more care part of how the home is run, so much more life than just being part of public health you are dealing with a person not just black and white.

Trustee Mass wants the board to think about how we are in an interesting time there is DVS and they report to DPH the proposals out there if you have to fall under one or the other and my concern is if that happens there is not guarantee that the person running DVS will have healthcare knowledge. Chairman Keefe said DVS and DPH both answer to EOHHS. Trustee Mass my understanding is the proposal by Senator Velis creates a secretary level position for Department of Veran Affairs which would eliminate that report. Chairman Keefe said if the homes move to DPH and DPH still answer to EOHHS and DVS would move separately and would still have some type of involvement, but it is very convoluted as to what the role will be. He shared that It is very confusing, and it will need to be reviewed further. Trustee Mass asked if Trustee Jourdan should strike the language related to this particular issue from the resolution because we are in agreement on the rest of it and have more time to review issues and weigh in. Trustee Collins agrees with Trustee Mass that it is very confusing what the legislation is getting after, liked the idea to have more time to look at the language, the coalition has done fantastic work and we are all in agreement just a little bit of the language.

Trustee Jourdain stated we could go in two directions. We could table this until the next meeting or striking the sentence after we have time to look at DVS and DPH roles. We have a duty to study these issues and to guide the legislature. Chairman Keefe asked Trustee Jourdain if he is withdrawing his motion. Trustee Jourdain replied he is modifying the motion to delete the sentence that says to place two home under jurisdiction of the Department of Public House Bureau Hospitals to ensure competent and professional oversight of the homes, we would strike that sentence and leave the rest of it intact. Chairman Keefe motion to table this and let the bylaws committee chair send out the legislation, keeping in mind, what Trustee Jourdain just recommended and give the entire board the opportunity to review the legislation. Chairman Keefe has reviewed this several times and cannot follow where it is going and what the benefit is on some of this. He also does not agree with 12-person committee and we agree with coalition on that and not sure where the deputy secretary of homes plays in where the homes wind up. Trustee Jourdain suggested we can weigh in on all those issues and is concerned that if we don't say anything and does not want to be silent for a whole month until the November meeting, we can at least weigh in on this part of it and table the DPH/ DVS question until the next meeting. Chairman Keefe agreed with Trustee Jourdain and suggested scheduling a separate meeting. Trustee Lacoste stated that she wrote down most of the items Trustee Jourdain and she is in agreement that we can do 11 of the 12 items you read and table the DPH, there were so many you read so fast maybe you could read them again. Chairman Keefe thinks is it important besides just sending the resolution as a board when we are offered the opportunity to testify that we have a decent number of us testifying.

Trustee Jourdain will we have the opportunity to testify? Chairman Keefe said he will work with DVS to find out when legislature looking to put this together. Trustee Lacoste asked Trustee Jourdain to read again the 10 items that we can push forward today and table the other ones. Mr. Yankopoulos reiterated this is a fairly substantive discussion and since it is not on the agenda it should probably be tabled. Trustee Mass stated this is a resolution and we are not taking any substantive action, and this is just a statement of the will of the board to the legislature in response to the public comment and that a resolution should be permissible. Trustee Jourdain added that this is reasonably expected conduct of the board considering the tenor of the discussion that is happening relative to the home.

Trustee Jourdain reviewed the resolution and there are 6 items and if we eliminate number 1 which is the DPH. The second one was to retain the board of trustees at the Soldiers' Home and truly enable the autonomy of the board. The third one was to empower the board of trustees as the governing body of the Homes in compliance with federal regulation and state law and including our appointment power. The fourth one was to establish an open and transparent process to appoint, a diverse, and professional board of trustees and to include that creation of a nomination committee to provide the governor with a list of candidates from which to select an appointee. The fifth one was to allow the board of trustees to establish budget requirements for the safe and efficient operation of the Home to include staffing levels throughout the Home as well as to meet the operational and maintenance requirements of the Home. The last one was to ensure the implementation of a person directed care model to include that creation of self-managed work teams with transition which transitions the position of CNA into the role of Chavez while receiving 128 hours of additional training to better coordinate and provide individual care plans for residents. Chairman Keefe made a suggestion to table the rest of these and meet again in two weeks and have a special meeting to discuss.

Trustee Mass made a motion to table the resolution and Trustee Lacoste seconded. Chairman Keefe proceeded with a Roll Call Vote: Trustee Jourdain (No), Chairman Keefe (Yes), Trustee Lacoste (Yes), Trustee Mass (No), Trustee Collins (Yes), and Trustee Ostrander (Yes). Motion passes to table the resolution.

There will be a Special Meeting on October 19 at 5:30 p.m.

Trustee Jourdain added that we have monthly meetings, Mr. Chairman, and people need to come prepared to these meetings and do their research in advance of these meetings we should not have to have special meetings. Chairman Keefe responded this was never even listed on the agenda, no one sent an email that we were going to be talking about this. He continued that it came up because of a public comment and I understand it is something we all want to talk about but if you, Kevin, had a resolution ready to go I would have gladly added it to the agenda.

At this point we went to the DVS Staff Report (Secretary Poppe)

DVS Staff Report (Secretary Poppe)

Secretary Poppe followed up with what is happening with the department overall we have been very busily engaged with supervising the Soldiers' Homes and monitoring them and supporting them on a daily basis. They have also been engaged in a policy academy on suicide prevention among service member, veterans, and their families (SVMF) and reiterated the priorities focusing on is to "ask the question" to identify whether or not you have served in the military and if that could be asked at every point of entry that would be helpful with that identification process. They are also working on expanding peer support and access to care. The third priority is reducing access to lethal means and safety planning, as a result to all of that they have created a fourth priority which is training clinicians on military culture so if they are going to care for veterans they will have more of an understanding of military culture. Secretary Poppe shared that there is a tentative training date of November 19 with a full agenda to be shared. Chairman Keefe will be speaking at that presenting introductory comments. She also reported that Veterans Day is usually at the State House but this year due to COVID concerns it will be at Faneuil Hall being a smaller scale event. Secretary Poppe said that last year the cemeteries were not able to have ceremonies, but they are planning on having their ceremonies at 9 am in Winchendon and 1 pm in Agawam. She also shared the Women Veterans conference that was held virtual last year will be a hybrid this year. With women veterans being the fastest growing population of veterans we want to make sure that we are getting together and helping them with their needs. There are two pieces to this: we will be doing a study on women veterans and we are looking for what types of questions to ask and working with a partner to do the study for us on women veterans throughout the Commonwealth. The conference live version is going to be at Dunn State Park in Gardner at 10 am on November 13 and that will be followed by a sequence of webinars being held November 16th through the 18th.

Registration is at www.womenveteransnetworkmass.org

Holyoke Soldiers' Home Administrator/Staff Report (Mr. Lazo)

Mr. Lazo reported that the current COVID situation at the Home staff surveillance has shown that our staff and veterans remain negative. However, pre-shift Binax testing identified one non direct staff member as positive, the staff member was sent home immediately and IP conducted contact tracing and identified 6 additional staff members that were near the affected staff member. H also shared that in conversations with DPH and checking our policies that these folks did not find definition of exposed, however out of an abundance of caution we Binaxed all 6 daily and through this process no veteran has been impacted, visitation remains open. Mr. Lazo also reported the widely publicized vaccine mandate has us at 95% vaccinated and 5-6 staff members have yet to comply and they are out of the office until they either comply or the discipline process takes hold. He stated the loss of staff does will not impact the home greatly the most impacted will be on second shift. He reported all units will be staffed well above the CMS 4.408 hppd.

Mr. Lazo shared that we continue to prepare for veteran positive by using tabletop exercises and we have completed one with Dr. Dietzen, we are working on a second and run thru the process again. The plan will be to make sure that the knowledge is spread far and wide He stated that 2 south still remains our isolation unit, the unit is pending HVAC work to make negative pressure space so once when 1 north is completed from a refresh standpoint we are considering using that unit it as isolation unit. The DPH guidance is to conduct our pandemic planning and that is why we are running the exercises. Mr. Lazo shared the VA grant has no updates as we continue the process with Payette, right now we are finalizing design work including lighting and coordination with Holyoke fire and town services. We are reaching a critical point in construction design where the design phase is turning into construction document and Payette will provide an update at the January meeting. Mr. Lazo informed the board on the existing building the phase 4 continues on 1 north, some materials have been backordered so that is slowing down progress, but we are still expecting to complete by the end of the month.

Mr. Lazo said that since we have opened to family visitations we have had 4300 visitors and we are working on the Front Lines newsletter which is constant contact newsletter which people can click on a link on the family emails that go out and they can sign up to receive the newsletter.

Mr. Lazo shared that we are continuing to work with staff support from Riverside Trauma to provide trauma counseling thru November when the FEMA grant expires and are having discussion to have services extended. The Onsite academy is available and there is 5-day retreat for anyone who needs it and we strongly support any employee that needs such a service to please feel free to take advantage of that.

Mr. Lazo passed on the stats from the Outpatient Department that 1,538 veterans have been contacted or received letters, approximately 56 have passed or moved from the area, 867 followed up with the Home and out of the 867, 821 have new primary care physicians, 46 are now engaged with Social Work to help them find a new primary care provider, 134 records have been copied for veterans, there are 509 that we have not heard from and outpatient will be reaching out.

Mr. Lazo reported the recreation provide excellent activities for the staff and continue with spiritual classes, exercise classes, zoom concerts, pet visits. The planning has already begun for Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah. The Finance Committee has already approved the fleece jackets for the veterans for Veterans day, thank you for approving.

Mr. Lazo revisited the DOJ visit from last month and we still have not received a report yet, they were very complimentary regarding our staff's willingness to engage and answer questions they reported that everything is trending in the right direction.

Chairman Keefe confirmed Payette to get in for a quarterly review the next one will be in January. Chairman Keefe referred back to Mr. Paradis asking if the Payette slides got on the website, Ms. Foley confirmed.

At this point we went to Eric Segundo.

Public Comment (continued)

Mr. Segundo spoke on behalf of the Western Massachusetts Veterans Services Officer's Association which represents all the cities and towns and the municipal districts offices for all three counties. He then thanked Mr. Lazo and staff for setting up the engagement meeting for November. Mr. Segundo wanted to comment on the admission plan with the current plan stating reopening admissions when refresh is complete, but no date has been confirmed. He shared the concerns of the group being they have a number of families contacting them who are telling them their loved ones need immediate long-term care and why they can't get a bed at the Home. Mr. Segundo stated that it has been a year and a half since the Home admitted any new residents and he would like the Trustees to establish a date on when new admissions will begin because this will help letting the families know a timeframe when admissions will begin. He would also like clarification on understanding any staffing constraints considering your current census we ask the trustee what the Homes current hours per day is. He also shared that our veterans need skilled nursing care from our State and this delay is causing undue hardship on our veterans their families and our communities. We are requesting the trustees that the admissions resume because the families are frustrated and passing their complaints along to them. Chairman Keefe clarified that they are looking for an opening date for admissions and to confirm hours per patient rate. Mr. Lazo replied that we are pending completion of 1 North and that all the veterans are in their final spot not moving and we are able to identify exactly how many beds, exactly what the acuity of each open unit is so we can make sure that we are putting veterans in the right spot and we are staffing appropriately. He responded to the question around regarding hours per patient day, per the report the staffing department put out this morning we are at 8.4 hours per patient day which is double the CMS gold standard of 4.408. Trustee Lacoste asked Mr. Lazo when we open admission I thought the discussion was we were only going to have 10-15 beds can you estimate? Mr. Lazo replied the number remains approximately 15 we do have 3-4 veterans in our domiciliary moving over to the long-term care side as they are on the cusp of not being able to independent. Trustee Mass asked are we doing anything to redirect families that have inquiries to the Chelsea Home to see if they have openings there, I know it is not ideal for everyone to go out to the other side of the State but those who have an acute need care and

maybe signing some sort of a memorandum of understanding that we will take back as soon as we have openings. Mr. Lazo replied he does not believe we are referring to Chelsea, just based on the distance, and he will discuss with Secretary Poppe and Superintendent Johnson.

Trustee Mass asked a question regarding out of state travel, he sat through a finance committee reviewing budgets for community college today which had out of state travel for the president for the past two years and they are unaware of any executive order restricting employees for any out of state travel, he wonders if the board of trustees could we get a copy of the executive order and see if DHE is exempted and if they are why are they to get some answers on the unequal treatment and if the community college is doing something wrong, we want to fix that too. Mr. Lazo will look into and see if there is documentation we can share.

Trustee Collins asked in regards to those staff members refusing vaccine at this time if the impact on shifts are these licensed staff members. Mr. Lazo replied out of the staff that were not vaccinated only one was a licensed staff member and she had a medical issue that an accommodation was not granted. He also shared that we have 5-6 other staff members CAN's and maintenance staff. Ms. Hansen added the licensed staff member was not on second shift.

Trustee Collins asked after action report from tabletop exercises for COVID response do you have reports that we can review at the operations committee. Mr. Lazo replied that we did do some after action work, but I don't know if that was completed we will have to look at that. He shared that there was some discussion held on ways to improve for a second exercise. Chairman Keefe asked what was the original projected date of completion for refresh? Mr. Lazo replied the beginning of October, so we are off about 2-3 weeks.

Trustee Lacoste asked if we can have veterans' groups come in and sign up for volunteering. Mr. Lazo replied we are in the final steps to recommend a veteran volunteer coordinator to reinvigorate the volunteer program. He also shared that we have a few veteran organizations coming in for coffee including the DAV and VFW around veterans' day and the holidays.

Trustee Jourdain stated in terms of 1 North working on that but is there any availability on any other units. Mr. Lazo replied yes, we do have some openings in other units however the idea was to complete all construction before we bring in new residents. Trustee Jourdain asked what is the logic behind that? Mr. Lazo answered that is a safety issue and that it is a dementia unit and it is a special population that we would want to have open to admission as well. He added that it is a matter of making sure the building completely finished and ready to go. Trustee Jourdain followed up with If you are a non dementia patient you should you be waiting for a unit that has nothing to do with 1North, do you really think that is a good reason to shut all admissions down. Mr. Lazo said we can reopen the discussion and discuss with Secretary Poppe and her team to see what we can do.

Trustee Jourdain asked at last month's meeting we asked about the performance evaluations that are being done and could we have the distribution of people who have the percentages of who exceeds rating, satisfactory rating and needs improvement rating and you would supply to the board the percentage of staff who had a needs improvement rating. Mr. Lazo will review this month.

At this point we went to Holyoke Soldiers' Home General Counsel Report

Holyoke Soldiers' Home General Counsel Report (include status of HSH Investigations) (Atty Yankopoulos)

Mr. Yankopoulos reported our legal posture has not had a significant change since last month. He shared all investigations are still ongoing so I cannot comment on the details and we have had no further complaints filed this last month. Mr. Yankopoulos said the details on the legislation and license plate have already been shared. Chairman Keefe asked what investigations are still open by what agencies. Mr. Yankopoulos answered inspector general, DOJ and Attorney General are still open. Ms. Boyle added the Inspector General's review is close to wrapping up, the Attorney General I don't expect anything further, and the DOJ that is ongoing and they are still gathering information. Trustee Mass asked if our engagement for counsel has been re-authorized or new engagement has been put in place and whether or not there are any outstanding bills to council. Ms. Boyle said the contract is in process and one bill is outstanding that needs to get paid.

Home's Family Advocate Committee Report (Ms. Menard/ Ms. Foley)

Ms. Menard stated that there has not been another meeting since the last board of trustees meeting the next one is scheduled for this Thursday. She shared the families and veterans are happy. She reported the families were looking for weekly activities, so they know what the veterans are doing. Ms. Menard was appreciative that artwork is going up and she shared the feedback with dietary and winter menu is very successful. Ms. Menard reported at the veteran's group there was a shower need to be addressed and was addressed right away. We continue to work on being able to use the vans for trips to Walmart and the mall and the pitch game has been added for the recreation calendar. Chairman Keefe asked how often does the bus run. Ms. Menard answered that is it case by case and the social work department has access to one of the state vehicles. Chairman Keefe asked how many vehicles do we have and how are the health of them. Mr. Lazo replied that we have two small busses with one of them wheelchair accessible, with covid and limiting the number of veterans per bus we are reconsidering how many trips out to the reservoir for the track or to the mall, Walmart. He stated right now the challenge is staffing so they are safe during the trips and we are working on it with help from the volunteer program when it is up and running. Chairman Keefe asked how often are the busses replaced and how do you get vehicles. Mr. Lazo shared that we do not have a standard replacement program, but he will look into. Trustee Lacoste believes one of the vans was a donation or earmarked by families. Mr. Lazo said one of the vans is a refit wheelchair accessible minivan and we do have larger busses that I would need to see what the program is. Ms. Foley added that the newest buss was a donated by a family. Chairman Keefe asked if Mr. Lazo could you the team investigate; Chairman Keefe is curious how a state agency that requires vehicles how are we are receiving and what is the replacement plan for vehicles that are not being donate? Mr. Lazo will research.

Home's Veterans Advocate Committee Report (Ms. Menard/Ms. Foley)

See above.

Trustees' Finance Committee Report (Trustee Jourdain)

Trustee Jourdain reported that we dispensed most ticket items earlier. He shared that we approved \$100 for bingo, \$1770 for the October entertainment, \$180 for memorial pavers, \$600 for the October Halloween, \$150 for monthly lunch for domiciliary residents. He shared there is a Finance Committee meeting coming up on October 20th at 5:30 pm and some of the agenda items are the FY22 spending plan, reviewing a request for \$1000 for the NASVH membership.

Trustees' Operations Committee Report (Trustee Collins)

Trustee Collins reported that the Operations Committee met on the September 28th and some of the old business was following up on credentialing policy with Dr. Dietzen working out details and we will be following up on that in our next meeting. Trustee Collins gave praise to Mr. Lazo for the progress they made obtaining access to the 24/7 pharmacy. He stated that Mr. Lazo discussed earlier the tabletop exercise and if he could provide the after actions so that it can be discussed a little bit more in the Operations Committee meeting

Trustee Collins shared that several new policies were reviewed and one we will go back and revisit will be the Against Medical Advice Discharge policy we had a couple of questions and hopefully will complete at the next meeting. He shared a couple of new metrics came out from observations from the surveys thru the VA and DPH, the one in particular is the recreation activities and some of those include music sensory mobility, spiritual will be reviewing on a quarterly basis. Trustee Collins said the measure metrics are holding stable and the KPI's making slow steady progress. He shared that the new dashboard has the new applications. He reviewed the Pinnacle reporting is continuing to make progress, we are watching the trends and we are moving in a positive direction. Trustee Collins said the committee structures are in place and doing great, we did review some of the audits and one was a readmit chart audit where they showed us actually the documentation what they are looking at and they are spot on and anything they are deficient on they are being tracked. Trustee Lacoste can you send the dashboard prior to the next board meeting, Trustee Collins yes.

Trustees' Bylaws Committee Report (Trustee Lacoste)

No report.

Old Business**Update on VA State Home Grant application (Mr. Lazo)**

Mr. Lazo reported that we have achieved the first two milestone, the progress with Payette and construction manager continues. Payette will give an update at the January meeting.

Update of admissions based on Refresh Program Completion (Mr. Lazo)

Chairman Keefe stated from earlier in the meeting that Mr. Lazo will be looking at some other rooms, that might be vacant at this time, to us for admissions and he is looking forward to information at the next meeting.

Update of EMR vendor contract (Mr. Engell)

Mr. Engell updated the group that we are moving forward with project management contract, RFR have been updated and undergoing legal review and should be completed shortly. Trustee Mass said he was confused that at the last meeting that the EMR was dead with the existing contract because they could not do what we needed. Mr. Engell said the process has started up again, the documents have been reviewed by our working groups and under final review by legal. Trustee Mass asked if we included more information based on what we learned from this process. Mr. Engell replied the documents are different. They learned from the process previously identified the issues and shortcomings in that process and that is incorporated in the language of the new documents so that when goes into the vendor community they will have a much clearer understanding of the needs of the Soldiers' Home. Trustee Mass asked if we should expect this go faster based on our experience and if so how much faster. Mr. Engell said some elements that will still be time consuming, each vendor review, but support of the new manager is trying to compress continuing with new timeframe, based on the original timetable to be completed March.

Update on possibility to adopt Management Advisory Council (MAC) and Front Lines Newsletter (Mr. Lazo)

Mr. Lazo reported the advisory council in conjunction with DVS we have generated a letter to VSO and service organizations for a quarterly call with the first one on November 8 (quarterly) changes that have been made to the home so far and the future of the home.

Mr. Lazo explained the Front Lines Newsletter is an electronic newsletter through Constant Contact the link to sign up went out in newsletter and this will be for anyone who signs up for updates and activities in the Home. Ms. Foley the info is posted on social media and getting responses, it is open to community, families, staff and board members.

Status of Morris & Mahoney Council contract (Ms. Boyle)

Chairman Keefe stated that Ms. Boyle has spoken about the Morris and Mahoney contract earlier in the meeting are there any last questions for her? Trustee Jourdain has a question regarding staffing contracts from the last meeting. He stated that Mr. deacon had given the board an updated to a question that I had raised relative to the agencies contracts for the Soldiers' Home and one of my concerns was in the aftermath of the COVID tragedy one of the things we learned was when COVID hits these staffing agencies are bailing on us, saying they are not going into a facility that has COVID, in the event that we have a resurgence of any of these types of issues to the extent that we are counting on this staff to show up I want to make sure that we never have that situation happen again and that we have iron clad commitments that if you are going to do business with us that you are going to be here when you say you're are going to be her and that these staffing contracts have teeth. He reported that at the last meeting there were 22 staffing contracts that were being reviewed and that we are going to look to make protections in this area and that there would be a report out or an update for the October meeting. Trustee Jourdain asked if Mr. Deacon or Ms. Boyle had an update on how that review process is going and what steps can we take in these staffing contracts to ensure that vendors who choose to do business with the Solders' Home in this area actually stand by their commitment to show up and staff our facilities when called upon. Mr. Deacon replied that he has spoken to EHS legal and they have

been working with contracts and the vaccine mandate is a huge initiative and has played into these contracts. He has sent out an email and is awaiting a response, but contracts have been under negotiations and may not be finalized yet. Ms. Boyle stated that we are reviewing the contracts and adding a number of provisions including the vaccine requirement and a few other provisions, there has been a nursing shortage in the Commonwealth and the Country, but we are working hard to prevent that from happening again.

Monthly updates to Board of Trustees on progress of Outpatient Clinic patients placed with newly assigned Primary Health Care providers (Mr. Lazo)

Mr. Lazo reported that we have 867 outpatient veterans contacted that we have been able to follow up, of that 821 have a primary care physician, 46 veterans are working with social workers to find new primary care physician, 509 we have not made contact with but are working on reaching them and 106 veterans that do not have good contact information, the letters were returned and our Outpatient Department is working on trying to reach them. He shared that we are making great progress and we are still early in the process and I am fairly confident that we are able to get to all 509 veterans.

Monthly Update to Board of Trustees on closure of Domiciliary by March 31, 2022 (Mr. Lazo)

Ms. Menard reported that there are 11 veterans in domiciliary and that 3 have qualified to come to our long-term care facility. She shared that 4 have applications in for community apartments and they do not qualify for the Mass Voucher or low-income housing. We do have 3 veterans that do have VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) vouchers and are on waitlists for programs like Gordon Mansfield and we have one that is going home with his son. Ms. Menard is actively working with the veterans to get paperwork together and one of the barriers has been the social security letter because of the office being closed. Chairman Keefe asked Mr. Lazo if we are on target to meet the March 31, 2022 close date, Mr. Lazo replied yes. Chairman Keefe asked out of the 509 the 106 with no address what is the process your team is using to track are you having internal staff or are you working with VSO? Mr. Lazo replied they are using google searches for current addresses or family members, if not successful the staff will work with VSO. Ms. Hansen suggested contacting VA to see if they have more current information. Chairman Keefe added that Mr. Segundo may be able help track them down.

Slides from NASVH Conference sent to Trustees (Mr. Lynch)

Above

Update on License Plate Program Initiative

Above

Travel of HHS/DVS, Superintendent and HSH Staff to fund attendance at Conferences (Ms. Rego)

Chairman Keefe believes there is a conference coming up in February. Secretary Poppe shared EHS is reviewing their policy on travel and the hope would be if there is some information to share next month. Ms. Rego stated they are looking at policy and will update at the next meeting.

Trustee Jourdain asked if Ms. Rego could also look at the NASVH dues and if they can be paid by state appropriation dollars traditionally these have been paid for by donor funds and I would like to find out if there is a state prohibition on using state appropriation money for those, because it has been the desire of the Finance Committee to transition that bill to state appropriations dollars as opposed to donor funds. He also stated that one of the requirement sin order to go to the conference is that you have to pay membership. Ms. Rego replied that she will look at both of those. Trustee Mass asked if the difference between DHE and DVS because the budget for the community college I serve on has had out of state travel for the president for the last three years. Ms. Rego replied she will review.

Chairman Keefe asked Trustee Mass when Greenfield Community College does they fill out an TA (Travel Authorization) form. Trustee Mass said he does not know whether or not that was being done by the previous president and now we have a new president and I don't know whether or not the out of state travel look place, but it is budgeted for and is not budgeted for it is budgeted on the basis of coming from a specific line item that is non state appropriated funded. He stated he has been looking into the issue at DHE to see what their guidance is and they have a long history of funding this with no issues, if you send me and email about that form I will follow up and get an answer. Chairman Keefe will send Trustee Mass the form

New Business

Assignment of Trustees to 3 Person Superintendent Hire Sub-Committee (Trustee Keefe)

Chairman Keefe reminded everyone that we had discussed putting together a three person subcommittee at the last meeting and we have some board members have experience with health care headhunter types of companies. I heard from Trustee Ostrander, Trustee Lacoste and Trustee Collins to serve on the subcommittee. And I will connect the subcommittee with Ms. Starr to explain the process. Chairmen Keefe asked the board members with experience with talent management acquisition firms please start lining it up and send information to the subcommittee for the search of next superintendent. Trustee Mass believes the right process is to put out RFP and solicit and have contractors come in to interview and then choose. Chairman Keefe shared that in discussion with Ms. Starr we will be using Massachusetts advertisement to mirror what is out there.

Veterans Day 2021 Program status for residents (Mr. Lazo) Funding Request

Chairman Keefe stated that we had discussed the holiday events for November and December and the Veterans Day funding for fleeces has been made. He also reminded Mr. Lazo and team that November and December are going to be here and please contact Finance Committee as you start finalizing what you think you might need for funds request to make sure that we put on the holiday celebration the veterans deserve.

Chairman Keefe asked Trustee Jourdain, the Chair for the Finance Committee, if he has additional request, Trustee Jourdain replied that the requests we have for Halloween and Veterans Day have been made but please let us know if there are any more.

Holiday Events Planned for November & December (Mr. Lazo/Ms. Menard) Funding Request

**Potential College/University Nursing Program Partnerships:
Greenfield Community College (Trustee Mass)**

Trustee Mass stated that he spoke with the President at the Greenfield Community College and he will have a personal visit to the Home. Ms. Hansen said the President from GCC was here last week and the nursing team is coming this Thursday to meet with the education team to discuss bringing their LPN students here.

UMASS and Baypath College (Trustee Collins)

Trustee Collins shared that the schools are already in their semesters and he will take it on as an item for the Operations Committee to work on the details.

Role of BOT to provide input on Superintendent & CFO/Treasurer annual Goals & Appraisal (Sec Poppe)**MASS Perform**

Chairman Keefe asked Secretary Poppe how the board of trustees would provide input to the development of the annual goals as well as input as to the annual performance appraisal for the Superintendent and the Treasurer. Secretary Poppe stated that since Mr. Lazo supervises the Treasurer, he can work with that. She shared the Mass Perform is a little different than the previous evaluations, it is a new program that sets expectations and then the supervisor sets goals according to that. She stated the overarching pieces are naturally compliance with regulations and focused on diversity inclusion training awareness and well as training in professional development. As we discussed that last meeting can input at the end of the rating period and have check in sessions. Chairman Keefe asked for confirmation that the end of rating systems is in June? Secretary Poppe said yes that is the final rating period but the whole idea is to be in exchange throughout the year. Chairman Keefe asked the annual development of goals starts when? Secretary Poppe answered that they have already started. Chairman Keefe followed up with, if everybody is on June what is the month that the goals are developed. Secretary Poppe replied end of August or the beginning of September to add to that. Trustee Mass asked if we can get a copy of what the goals that were set so we can use them in our evaluation. Secretary Poppe does not believe she can share personal documents. Trustee Mass asked how am I supposed to evaluate whether the superintendent is meeting goals that were set for him if I don't know what the goals are. Chairman Keefe asked Secretary Poppe to check with legal counsel and see if the Board can see the goals. Trustee Mass stated alternatively is for the board to establish their own goals independently of the DVS and do a separate evaluation and do a dual process. Mr. Deacon said he will work this issue with Secretary Poppe there was some hesitation of sharing of personnel documents and this is a unique situation because there is a kind of dual reporting process. Trustee Jourdain shared that any citizen of the Commonwealth should be able to know what the goals of the superintendent of the Holyoke Soldiers' Home is when it is completely paid for by Massachusetts tax money. He also stated that if the board is the hire and fire authority, they should have a right to know what the goals are. Trustee Jourdain believes this is something we want to do, we want our superintendent working on the priorities of the leader. He feels that when the board is reviewing for strengths and weaknesses it would be good to schedule

executive session under the exceptions of the open meeting law and having frank conversations at least twice a year. Chairman Keefe requested from Secretary Poppe the goals and he will get out to committee, when are the periodic check in sessions. Secretary Poppe replied that quarterly at a minimum, Chairman Keefe asked if the Operations Committee could sit in on the check in sessions and represent the board? Chairman Keefe asked if the superintendent rates the treasurer and if so, I would like to mirror the same thing and have a member of the Finance Committee sit in on those check in. Trustee Mass said he feels it is important that DVS is reporting back what their evaluation is, I want to be clear this has nothing to do with the current superintendent, he was aghast when I read the Pearlstein report that the previous superintendent was put into anger management classes and no one on the board of trustees knew about it. Trustee Lacoste said she knew that Mr. Bennett was sent to anger management and there was nothing secretive about it. Secretary Poppe if there were a serious issue regarding the superintendent's performance I would certainly be discussing with the board as well as discussing it with my manager.

Schedule of once per quarter Payette New Home Status Brief to Board of Trustees (Mr. Lazo)

January meeting Mr. Lazo will confirm.

Chairman Keefe reiterated that Payette will be briefing us in January.

Trustee Jourdain asked if it is possible to invite a few members of the coalition to the special meeting to give feedback and their perspective. Trustee Ostrander said they already have their perspective and we already have their written feedback. Trustee Jourdain said we may have questions and we may want to expand on why they feel certain things are important and it would be helpful with the information gathering. Chairman Keefe said he does not have a problem with that, John has been an open conduit for us. Chairman Keefe said he will modify the agenda for that meeting to allow for free dialogue.

Trustee Collins thanked board and staff for a great picnic and seeing the veterans having a good time.

Chairman Keefe in closing on what this facility went through he last 2 years to only have 7 individuals that have not complied with the vaccine that is huge this shows the dedication of staff and level of care at the Soldiers' Home, thank you for putting the mission first.

Executive Session: No Executive Session scheduled at this meeting.

Adjourn:

Trustee Lacoste made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Trustee Jourdain to conclude the meeting. The Roll Call vote is as follows: Sean Collins (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Gary Keefe (Yes). It was unanimously VOTED to conclude the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

Next meeting is November 9.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Denner
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees

Attachments:

BoT-Minutes-20210914-Draft

Holyoke Soldiers' Home Resolution regarding the statutory changes 10/12/2021