

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman Regional Hospital Date: 6-1-2022
Observer Reporting: Judy Stone Length of Meeting: 2 hours
Board Members Present: All present - hybrid
Board Members Absent: _____
Others Present: Matt Forge, CEO replacement when Scott Adams retires this year; many department heads, 2 doctors, attorney for Commission, one reporter, a few other unidentified people.

Business Pertaining to League Positions or Topics of Interest:

An interesting discussion concerning **changes in the Open Public Meetings Act** was led by Mr. Rembert, Attorney for the Commission. He stated that electronic only methods of meeting, e.g. videos, zoom, were a violation of the Act prior to the pandemic. These restrictions were lifted during the pandemic and Governor Inslee just extended the allowance for a few more months. Also, the meetings must provide the opportunity for public comments at each meeting. It was not decided at this meeting how to do that.

Steve Febus, Chief Financial Officer, gave a detailed presentation on the hospital's Master Facilities Planning Financial Review. It included building and parking additions as well as reorganization of many departments. He explained the many options for raising money for this ongoing very expensive project.

The hospital's charity care policy will expand who may qualify for free or discounted care under a new law, Substitute House Bill 1616.

Here are excerpts from a document provided as an administrative update:

Before the COVID-19 pandemic began, hospital closures were increasing in rural communities across the nation. Over the past two years, temporary federal relief has helped stabilize facilities and the pace of closures slowed. Rural hospitals continue to struggle financially and to recruit and retain healthcare employees. We will be facing increased cost escalation, increased pressure on reimbursement as payers reduce payments and requests for support to sustain local practices.

Process & Protocol: *It was difficult to understand all the spoken comments. I have not been receiving meeting minutes – I will ask for them.*