

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman Regional Hospital Board of Commissioners

Date: 2/7/2024

Observer Reporting: Lennis Boyer Watts Length of Meeting: 2 hours 20 min

Board Members Present: Jeff Elbracht, President; Tricia Grantham, Vice-President; Sandra O’Keefe, Secretary; Joe Pitzer, Karen Karpman, PJ Sanchez, Cheryl Oliver

Board Members Absent:

none

Others Present (e.g., staff, other agency representatives, media): Matt Forge, CEO; Steve Febus, CFO; Jeannie Eylar, CCO; Bernadette Berney, CHRO; Carrie Coen, CRO; Edwin Tingstad, MD, CMO; Karly Port, CPSO; Nancy Panko, MD, Chief Medical Officer; Rob Rembert, Attorney; Pete Mikkelson, MD; Linda Infranco, Foundation Executive Director; Wayne Druffel, Foundation VP; Ned Warnock, Design West; Alison Weigley, Director of External Relations.

-Board Education

1) Patient Financial Services Department. Director Tabia Sellers was introduced by Steve Febus. She comes to PRH with 20 years of experience in hospital billing and insurance reimbursement. She started at a difficult time with the change to EPIC and a staff lacking in the appropriate skills. Her presentation detailed the process of improving reimbursements; currently in the process of hiring for several positions and recently added a clinical appeals nurse (from in house), working on system building.

2) Recap of Hospital Advocacy Day hosted by WSHA at the state capitol earlier this month. This is a chance to interact with lawmakers and advocate for the top issues hospitals and health systems face. Commissioners Sandy, Tricia & Joe spoke with District 9 State Legislators about bills re: discharge for complex cases, need for a public guardianship program (Whitman Co. has none), certifying EMS professionals & volunteers to work in Emergency Depts. when there’s a staffing shortage & increased funding for hospitals with low birth & delivery rates. Several have had to close their depts. which negatively impacts access. Joe spoke with 211 information system reps. & members of the Adult Family Home Council which also experiences difficult discharge situations. Childcare crisis discussed. No legislation in the works currently. Cheryl noted that WSU is forming a task force and is considering expanding their daycare.

-Action Discussion

1) Monthly Data Dashboard presented (Carrie) Patient satisfaction data presented. 90% of patients give us a rating of 9 or 10. Acute Stroke Ready Facility – recent recertification. Surveyor was very complimentary. PRH meets all but one metric. Can connect within 3 minutes to the stroke team at Sacred Heart. The minutes to medication and transfer are both decreasing. Can watch a YouTube “LifeFlight and PRH”.

2) Financial Update /Quarterly Update (Steve). Total margin is currently 1%. Hope to be at 4%. Cash days on hand -137.AR – 73. This is primarily due to staff loss in the Pt. Financial Services Dept. Similar hospitals are at 32. Working on getting there. Lots happening – detailed clinic expansions. Urology, Inland ortho, reopening of the Palouse clinic, FP residency. Staffing challenges as noted – 75% of staff in the financial office have turned over. New hires – 4/4 are fully remote. Focus is on experience. Growth- up 25% due to increase in surgical minutes, addition of the clinics, EPIC has made detailing visits / increased charges.

3) Foundation update (Linda). Successes – GALA raised \$151,000. 276 guests in attendance. Raised 4.4 million dollars in 2023. Hosted resident match day. Focus on community engagement – Kiwanas, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Cougs First. Launched the Corporate Partners Program to engage both locally and regionally. Currently spending 15 cents to raise 1 dollar.

4) Expansion update (Ned). Now in the schematic design phase. This will run through March. Narrowing the GC/CM pool. Now at 3 which Ned thinks are all “great”. Toured the Deaconess ED – focusing on mental health areas/hold rooms. Very impressed with their system. Currently looking at flow, adjacency. Will be having a mockup of room size and will move equipment around to see how proposed spaces work. Planning to have 3 rooms targeted for mental health holds.

5) Other facilities updates. (Matt) Anticipating a June opening date for the bank building. ENT – have recruited a 0.5 FTE who will start in the near future. Another ENT is interested in starting in a year. Hoping to have an integrated behavioral health space in the future. Additional space for parking possibly in the works.

6) Physician recruitment (Karly). Reviewed the process. Working on streamlining to have consistency across the organization. Aiming to be strategic rather than reactionary. Trying to have an organized experience for the candidates. Hoping this will lead to improved retention.

Public Meetings of interest to League: Were there any public meetings announced that you think League members may be interested in attending and/or becoming involved with?

Process & Protocol: Observations about participants and procedures during the meeting. e.g., Did the members appear to have done their “homework”? Were members courteous to each other and the public? Was access to materials for agenda items available to you?

Reminders ☺ A LWV Observer is impartial, silent, and respectful. It is, however, acceptable to ask questions for clarification following the meeting.

Remember to wear your awesome ID Badge!

Please attach any materials, or links to such, received at the meeting that you feel are important to your report.

New>>>> **Please submit your report to the LWVP email: lwvpull@yahoo.com within one week of the meeting.
(04/04/2023)