

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman Regional Hospital Board of Commissioners

Date: 3/3/2024

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

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; Nancy Panko, MD, Chief Medical Officer; Steve Hall, MD, Director of Residency program; Rob Rembert, Attorney; Linda Infranco, Foundation Executive Director; Ned Warnock, Design West; Alison Weigley, Director of External Relations.

-Board Education: Regional WSHA lunch – Matt attended and noted this was a good opportunity to talk about strategic planning. AI and collaboration will be key. PRH was asked to be part of the board. Lots of changes coming as the governor, insurance commissioner and attorney general will all be new after the 2024 election.

-Legislative session update 1) Passed a new law aimed at ways to grow staff. EMTs and medical assistants (in the future) will be able to work in house as aides to help with staffing. Special certification will be required. 2) New staffing legislation laws for critical access hospitals - new matrices in the works. This will be critical for PRH as now have to staff all the clinics. 3) Possible funding for rural OB care. 4) Public guardianship law (for discharge planning) passed. This is important as Whitman County does not have a public guardianship program. If there is no decision maker, the patient has had to remain in the hospital until resolved.

-Administrative update: 1) PRH is a training site for the LCSC Nursing program. In return they provide a number of free credit hours. PRH staff may apply for these hours. 2) Steve discussed the 80% turnover in billing staff. Redistribution of workload/new EMR system contributed. Recent cyber attack required refiling 70,000+ billing claims. Have been hiring nationwide resulting in several remote workers. Will probably take another year to get the staff at the level needed. 3) FELT (Financial Educational Leadership Training) continues to be available online. This is designed to close any leadership development gaps as it relates to department finances.

-Action /Discussion: 1) Ned Warnock from Design West discussed the expansion update. Completion likely to take 2 ½ - 3 years. Will occur in 5 stages starting with the lab. Had the first GC/CM (General contractor/construction management) meeting yesterday. 2) Reliability Management. Carrie Coen discussed the dashboard and the information it provides. Next month will be the quarterly report which will provide extensive information on how PRH is doing with these metrics. 3) Financial report. Steve Febus gave an updated AR report. The 2023 audit will be done in the next couple days. The agreement with WSU athletic department should be ready to go in July. The current sports psychologist will transition to PRH. Dr. Tingstad noted that the Division 1 standard is three behavioral health providers/school. 4) Residency program. Dr. Hall reported about the new class of residents. All three are female. The first class is all male. They are very excited to have matched here.