

Health District
OF NORTHERN LARIMER COUNTY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING and BUDGET HEARING
December 11, 2020

Health District Office Building
120 Bristlecone Drive, Fort Collins
Remote Meeting

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael D. Liggett, Esq., Board President
Joseph Prows, MD MPH, Board Treasurer
Celeste Kling, J.D., Board Secretary
Molly Gutilla, MS DrPH, Board Vice President
Faraz Naqvi, MD, Liaison to UCH-North/PVHS Board

Staff Present:
Carol Plock, Executive Director
Karen Spink, Assistant Director
Lin Wilder, Special Project Coord.
Dana Turner, Dental Director
James Stewart, Medical Director
Lorraine Haywood, Finance Director
Chris Sheafor, Support Services Director
Richard Cox, Communications Director
Kristen Cochran-Ward, MH Director
Brian Ferrans, CIT Director

Staff Present:
Laura Mai, Asst. Finance Director
Alyson Williams, Policy Coordinator
Jessica Shannon, RD Coordinator
Anita Benavidez, Executive Assistant

Others Present:
Erin Hottenstein
Karin Bierstin

CALL TO ORDER; APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Director Michael Liggett called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Items added to the agenda include a decision on Resolution 2020-10 and a decision related to the IRQ site.

MOTION: *To approve the agenda as modified*
Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BOARD ACTION

Purchase of 425 W. Mulberry: Approval (or Status)

Staff is near the end of the due diligence work, including appraisal, inspection, and analysis of the title. The property inspection brought up some items that need to be immediately addressed, and staff requested a reduction in purchase price. It is the staff's recommendation that the Health District move forward on the purchase at the reduced price of \$2,749,550.

MOTION: To approve Resolution 2020-11 authorizing the purchase of the real property located at 425 West Mulberry Street, Fort Collins, Colorado for the price of \$2,749,550, AND giving the Executive Director, Carol Plock, the authority to execute all required documents to consummate the purchase of the Property.

Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

2021 Budget Approval

Changes since the draft budget

The majority of the changes since the draft budget are related to operating cost changes (both revenue and expenditures) due to the purchase of the 425 West Mulberry building. Revenue increases due to lease income from tenants of the building, but operational expenses also increase in the areas of utilities, first year improvements, etc. The final valuations from the County, which impact anticipated tax revenue, were received, with only a \$1,300 anticipated decrease in tax revenue from what was previously estimated. Other changes in the operational budget include minor adjustments and corrections on employee wages, and Mental Health Connections expenditures will drop as they will no longer need to pay rent for their offices.

On the Reserves side of the budget, there were adaptations that lowered expenditures in the Special Projects Reserves in order to retain adequate reserve funding for the future. Due to likely increased expenses for the COVID-19 Isolation, Recovery, and Quarantine services for those experiencing homelessness, other line items were reduced. Capital expenditure changes are largely due to the Mulberry building purchase. There was also a corrected “2021 Program Revenues and Expenditures” page in the budget.

MOTION: To approve the 2021 Health District of Northern Larimer County Budget as presented.

Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

Board Discussion/Decision

Approvals

MOTION: To approve the following resolutions: 2020-07 to Adopt the Budget; 2020-08 to Set Mill Levies; 2020-09 to Appropriate Sums of Money; and 2020-10 to spend Revenues to Reserve accounts.

Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

PRESENTATIONS & DISCUSSION

COVID-19

Current Status

Dr. Stewart gave an update on the COVID-19 metrics both nationally and statewide, noting that the US is currently seeing staggering record-breaking numbers, including higher case and death rates than ever. The 7-day average death rate is currently over 2,300, but is reaching 3,000 on some days. In Colorado, there was a rapid growth in cases in November, but it looks like the trend is slow down and cases may be plateauing. Data from CovidActNow indicates that Colorado is in an active/imminent outbreak, with a 12.4% positive test rate. ICU utilization for the state is at 62%, while Larimer County’s utilization site at a high of 87%. The infection rate is trending down, sitting at about 1, but the state is holding steady at severe risk (Red). Larimer County has seen 166 positive cases in the past 24 hours, and now has 92 deaths, with 91% of those 65+. The elderly population is extremely vulnerable.

The FDA committee voted yesterday to recommend Early Use Authorization for Pfizer's vaccine. The Moderna vaccine is expected to be approved next week. Vaccine will be free, and it will be distributed in three phases, with highest risk health care workers and long-term care facility staff and residents in the first distribution. Experts don't expect distribution to the general public until Summer 2021. In the state priority list, some dental offices will be in Phase 1B; we do not know when staff that are working in the IRQ can be vaccinated. The 1A group will receive their vaccinations through the health systems, while the long-term care facilities will get theirs through national pharmacies.

COVID and the Health District: New Isolation/Recovery and Quarantine (IRQ) site

In the first days of December, one of the local shelters for people experiencing homelessness received results of COVID testing that indicated a very significant growth in positive cases - 54 people had tested positive – far higher than we had ever seen. This amount exceeded the available capacity in the Myrtle Isolation/Recovery and Quarantine (IRQ) site, with new intakes at 43. Including the positive cases from all the shelters and Harvest Farms, there are currently over 108 positives among this population. One of the challenges has been how long it has taken for the shelters to get test results returned; that is now improving.

Staff members had to spring into action, working with the organizations that serve the homeless and with Larimer County. Within a day, staff partnered with the Rescue Mission to open up the space at their Jefferson site (which had been emptied when they opened up the Blue Spruce temporary shelter) to handle the overflow. However, capacity there was also limited, and the layout makes preventing spread very difficult.

Larimer County located a hotel in Loveland that agreed to rent their facility for use as an IRQ on the condition that all rooms were booked for at least sixty days. Several community health leaders toured the hotel and activity moved full speed ahead on Monday. The final decision to move forward was made today. Staff has been busy working agreements with the hotel, County, and Health District; an amendment to the County IGA; and updated guest agreements. The IRQ will move there for 60 days, but retain the Myrtle site for overflow if needed, and return after the 60 days has ended. Larimer County will cover the cost of the rooms and warranty any damage; the Health District will provide organization, food, security, transportation, supplies, and staffing.

The total potential cost for the “surge IRQ” to February 15 is estimated at a max of \$269,740. There is approximately \$85K in grant funding that can be allocated to this cost, and another joint application with Homeward Alliance and Rescue Mission for a grant of \$100K, although we won’t know until later whether that has been granted. Homeward Alliance has committed up to \$60K through fund raising, of which \$30K would come from the \$100K grant if it is approved. Move-in will take place on Tuesday. Ms. Plock expressed her gratitude for Brian Ferrans, Dr. James Stewart, MJ Jorgensen, Lorraine Haywood, Lin Wilder, and Chris Sheafor, who have all gone to great extremes to make this happen. Board President Michael Liggett approved this moving forward in the interim between board meetings but staff is requesting Board ratification of the decision.

MOTION: *To ratify the decision made by Board President Michael Liggett for the Health District to go forward with the surge IRQ, with the involvement and expenditures indicated in the memo included in the board packet, from about December 15, 2020 to February 15, 2021.*
Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

POLICY

Colorado 2020 Special Session

The Colorado Special Session ran from November 30 to December 2. Actions as a result of that session include \$60M in housing assistance; fiscal measures/small business grants up to \$100M to the disaster emergency fund; food pantry grant program extended up to \$5M; \$5M to Energy Outreach Colorado; and \$20M in grants for child care & education.

Beyond the 10 bills that passed, 23 other bills and 2 COVID-related resolutions failed.

Preview 2021 Session

The 2021 Session is set to start January 13 with 20 Democrats and 15 Republicans in the Senate and 41 Democrats and 24 Republicans in the House. The session may pause depending on the status of COVID, reconvening later in the year. The next revenue forecast is due December 18.

Likely topics will include balancing the budget; the public option for health insurance; increasing consumer protection from health care ministries, which do not offer full insurance; multiple behavioral health proposals; and several possible prescription drug proposals. Behavioral health proposals may include: conforming with the 988 Federal number for suicide prevention; insurance coverage for an annual mental health wellness exam; a supervised youth site for harm reduction measures; and public safety measures/co-responder models similar to the Star program in Denver. Prescription drug proposals could include a Prescription Affordability Board; utilization of an international crisis index; a revised transparency bill; and state employee benefits changes that could trickle down to the commercial market. There may also be proposals that would impact special districts in the areas of open records and public meetings.

National Issues

The a stimulus package looked possible, hope is now dwindling again with the House out of session until next Tuesday and little progress. With the new administration starting January 20th, a lot of rulemaking is anticipated.

UPDATES & REPORTS

Executive Director Updates

With the extreme rise in COVID cases, it has been hard for the County to keep up with contact tracing, and they asked for some assistance. Four of our staff are helping part-time on contact tracing and case investigation. With a new state law taking effect January 2021 that requires sick leave for all workers and a public health emergency clause, we will need to amend our policy paid time off policy. We expect to include a statement to allow for other temporary leave policies if the federal EFMLA is not extended.

We are in the midst of Open Enrollment for the health insurance marketplace, and are experiencing steady demand for our assistance, complicated by challenging technical issues due to changes in the state system. There is an uptick in calls and staff is prepared for the demand leading into December 15 for January 1st effectivity. Four people were hired to assist with the demand and all came up to speed extremely fast. The team is working primarily from home but making accommodations for those needing an in-person visit. Dental continues to be very busy. Challenges include staff needing to be out due to quarantine or symptoms, resulting in constantly shuffling appointments; a second unrelated 2-person outbreak; and some reduction in PPE availability.

Liaison to PVHS/UCHealth North Report

UCHealth's hospitalization trends are looking a little better, going from 460 hospitalized to 384. The positivity rate has dropped from 21% to 19%. UCH will be getting some vaccine late next week. Doses will be prioritized for those working directly with COVID patients, followed by those with indirect contact. They are having positive results with IV steroids and monoclonal antibody treatment. They are still holding steady financially, but more margin erosion from COVID is expected. A current challenge is that although there was strong support from the community during the beginning of the pandemic, the community seems to be more apathetic now, despite staff still needing to work very hard to meet the need. The good news is that past experience has made them better prepared for the surge. Whereas PPE used to be the biggest challenge, now PPE levels are good, but staffing shortages are the biggest issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT (2nd opportunity)

Erin Hottenstein expressed her gratitude to the Health District for their response to COVID-19 and making additional space available for those experiencing homelessness. Karin Bierstin, representing the League of Women Voters, offered their assistance in any way they can.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of the September 2020 Financials

MOTION: **To approve the Consent Agenda as Presented**
Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- January 26, 2021, 4:00 pm, Board of Directors Regular Meeting
- February 9, 4:00 pm, Board of Directors Special Meeting
- February 23, 4:00 pm, Board of Directors Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

MOTION: **To Adjourn the Meeting**
Moved/Seconded/Carried Unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.