

**LEWIS COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL  
BOARD OF MANAGERS  
October 24, 2023**

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The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Managers of Lewis County General Hospital was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Michael Young, President. Members present:

*John Lehman  
Howard Meny, M.D.  
Marguerite Mastascusa*

*Philip McDowell  
Donald Musnicki  
Karen Rennie*

*Susan Ross  
Cheryl Steckly  
Michael Young*

**Others**

**Present**

*Gerald R. Cayer, Chief Executive Officer  
Kerry Herbine, Chief Operating Officer  
Jeff Hellinger, CFO  
Sean Harney, M.D., CMO, Employed Provider Clinics  
Robert Fargo, Director of Facilities Management  
Michelle Kelley, Administrative Assistant to CEO  
Jessica Skiff, Director of Human Services  
Debra Wurz, Nursing Home Administrator  
Christina Flint, Community Services Coordinator  
Rob Uttendorfsky, Director of Information Systems  
Dr. Steven Lyndaker, Medical Director {entered at 4:40 p.m.}  
Scott Sauter, Network Administrator  
Ryan Piche, County Manager {entered at 4:38 p.m.}  
Gale Grunert & MaryJane Zehr  
Dr. Tuttle-Malone & Dr. Manoj Vora*

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- VISION, MISSION & VALUE STATEMENTS:** The health system's Vision, Mission and Value Statements were read with the group at the start of the meeting by board member, Mr. Donald Musnicki.

**EXCUSE ABSENT MEMBERS**

#111. Motion by Mrs. Ross, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, the board excused Mrs. Jennifer Jones and Mr. Richard Chartrand from the meeting. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9 no 0.*

**PROCLAMATIONS**

Mr. Cayer shared with the group the following Proclamations in honor of Mrs. Gale Grunert, and Ms. MaryJane Zehr, who retired from the health system on October 9, 2023, and will retire December 10, 2023, respectively.

*"Whereas Mrs. Grunert was a dedicated employee at Lewis County Health System with 35 years of service at the time of her retirement on October 9, 2023. She began her career in May of 1988 as a staff RN on East Wing. Mrs. Grunert also worked as a Nursing Supervisor, the Director of Quality, the Interim Director of Nursing, and most recently as the Clinical Resource Manager.*

*Whereas Mrs. Grunert recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Nursing Excellence and was recognized for her dedication to the nursing profession at the Nursing Excellence Ceremony held in September 2023. Recognitions throughout her career include being the Employee of the Month in April of 2007 by her peers, receiving the IPRO Quality Award in 2018, and being chosen as the Interim Director of Nursing.*

*Whereas Mrs. Grunert has also served on many committees throughout her career and has been a mentor to leaders and staff throughout the organization. Her knowledge, gentle soul, kindness, and many contributions to the nursing profession and the community served by the health system will be greatly missed.*

*We wish Mrs. Grunert a happy and healthy retirement and great joy as she enjoys time with her family, babysitting her grandchildren, volunteering, and serving in the women's ministry."*

*“Whereas Ms. Zehr is a dedicated employee at the Lewis County Health System with 34 years of service at the time of her retirement on December 10, 2023. She began her career 50 years ago as a Cleaner at the original Beaver River Health Center. The County eventually sold the building to a private physician, and she continued to work for him until the Health System took responsibility for the practice at its former location on NYS Route 126, Beaver Falls; she has since worked at the new location on Main Street in Beaver Falls.*

*Whereas Ms. Zehr also worked as a Nursing Assistant at the Residential Health Care Facility in the 1980s.*

*Whereas Ms. Zehr was committed to the health system's vision, mission, and values, focusing on the joy she received from the people she worked with over the years and the patients who benefited from accessing a clean and modern primary care office.*

*We wish Ms. Zehr a happy and healthy retirement and great joy as she works for her church and does some home care for community members.”*

Dr. Tuttle-Malone also attended tonight's board meeting to support and acknowledge Ms. Zehr's retirement from the Beaver River Health Center as they worked together over the last 29 years and Dr. Tuttle-Malone reported Ms. Zehr always went above and beyond in her role. Dr. Tuttle-Malone shared Ms. Zehr is the epitome of the health system's tag line, “We treat you like family”.

- CONFLICT INQUIRY:** No known conflicts were identified on tonight's agenda for any board member.
- PUBLIC COMMENT:** Anyone wishing to send a public comment may do so by sending an email to [info@lcgh.net](mailto:info@lcgh.net). There were no emails received.
- STRATEGIC FOCUS TOPICS:**
  - ✓ Environment of Care: Mr. Robert Fargo, Director of Facilities Management, provided a brief overview on the following topics via a PowerPoint presentation:
    - Environment of Care Committee
    - Environment of Care Assessments
    - Facilities Department Work Order Program
  - ✓ IT Status: Mr. Robert Uttendorfsky, Director of Information Systems, briefed the Board on the following:
    - Several projects are currently underway throughout the facility. For example, Home Health system implementation EVV Software and Nursing Home assessment update. Mr. Uttendorfsky noted the department managers have done a great job leading their respective department projects involving IT.
    - Currently, the IT dept. is working on the Phreesia implementation which will allow patients to schedule appointments, pay their co-pays prior to arrival, and receive text reminders.
    - Radiology is currently in the process of updating their Fuji Pac system.
    - Cyber security continues to be on our radar daily. We continue to educate staff and remain on high surveillance with our systems. Today, he shared a text message that was received by several employees that appeared to come from the CEO.
    - Surrounding hospitals in the North Country are currently dealing with active attacks.

**□ OPERATIONAL UPDATES:**

- ◆ Patient Safety/Quality: Mrs. Sue Ross, Chair of the Quality Council Committee, and Mr. Kerry Herbine, COO, provided a brief update:
  - ✓ The Acute Care QAPI (Full Team) Committee met on October 11, 2023.
  - ✓ The LTC QAPI (Full Team) Committee met on October 17, 2023.
  - ✓ The Quality Council Committee met on October 23, 2023.
    - Copies of the above minutes will be available on the board portal.
  - ✓ Mrs. Ross also shared Mrs. Lyndsey Allen, MSN, RN, Director of Quality, has been awarded a Healthcare Association of New York State (HANYS) 2023 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Development Scholarship. The certification program assists leaders focused on creating a culture of diversity and inclusiveness within their organization.
  - ✓ The Health System has received full accreditation from the Joint Commission from the survey held back in the summer.
  
- ◆ Finance: Mr. Phil McDowell, Chair of the Finance Committee, introduced the finance update by Mr. Jeff Hellinger, CFO. The group discussed the following topics:
  - Chair, Mr. McDowell, reported contractual allowances and bad debt are a combination of actual results and estimates. He also noted that our IGT funds are monies received to subsidize the lower Medicaid rates. Currently, 80% of the Nursing Home residents and 20% of hospital patients receive Medicaid, respectively.
  - The chair, Mr. McDowell, also noted that profit & loss statements will be very complicated for the Finance Department to complete as a CAH we receive a flat rate for services, and it is difficult to break down between the various departments.
  - There was a gain of \$228,080 versus a budgeted loss of \$125,572 for the month of September. The YTD gain is \$301,697 versus a budgeted gain of \$105,825.
  - Overall net patient revenue was less than the budget due to more contractual allowances.
  - Inpatient revenue was higher in ICU (~\$49k) and CATScan (~\$51). The department that had lower revenue was Drugs Sold – IV (~\$56k).
  - Outpatient gross revenue was higher in ER (~\$175k), OR (~\$221k), Drugs Sold – IV (~\$132k), Lab – Chemistry (~\$423k), Lab- Hematology (~\$55k), Radiology (~\$111k), and CATScan (~\$484k). The departments that had lower revenue were Observation (~\$62k) and Nuclear Medicine (~\$67k).
  - IGT was over budget due to the recognition of \$1.2M from the Hospital 2022 reconciliation payment.
  - Salaries were under budget due to fewer members than budgeted.
  - Purchased services were over budget due to the traveling nursing staff totaling ~\$209k. Mr. Hellinger shared we currently have 22 travelers total in the facility.
  - Mr. Hellinger also provided a brief overview of the FY2024 Budget, a copy of which was included in the Board packet:
    - ✓ The budget reflects the following volume increases:
      - Acute Admissions: 17.5%
      - SNF Days: – .2%
      - OP Registrations 2.1%
      - Employed Provider Practices: 29.7%
    - ✓ No charge increases for 2024.
    - ✓ Includes a 3.75% wage increase for union employees per the new CSEA contract, 4.0% to exempt employees and 0-4% increase for providers.
    - ✓ The employee health insurance contribution level of 25% of the premium remains the same.
    - ✓ The budget will reflect 560 FTE's which is an increase from the FY 2023 Budget.
    - ✓ Chair, Mr. McDowell, noted that the following three (3) positions are currently in the FY 24 budget with the understanding that we will look at alternatives before hiring them: Grant Writer, CIO, and Recruiter.

- ✓ Includes the 2025 Retirement fund payment in Q4 to receive a prepayment discount.
- ✓ A breakeven FY 2024 budget will be submitted to the County of Lewis for inclusion in the County budget as requested by the Board of Legislators.

#112. Motion by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Steckly, to approve the 2024 Budget, as proposed, to the Board of Legislators for inclusion in the 2024 County Budget. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9 no 0.*

◆ Capital Improvement Oversight Committee Report:

- Chair, Mr. Donald Musnicki, presented a copy of the Capital Improvement Oversight Committee Monthly Report to the board members prepared by Project Manager, Michael Nuffer, from C&S Companies. A copy of this report was also shared with the Capital Improvement Oversight Committee at their monthly meeting on Monday, October 23, 2023, which was discussed in detail.
- We continue to work through the development of the final punch list for the surgical pavilion, and we are currently in Phase 3 of the Med Surg renovations on the State Street side. Phases 4, 5 and 6 will begin after the transition of the OR to the new surgical pavilion, then the existing surgical space will be renovated into additional patient rooms. At this point, approximately 15% of the project is left to be completed.
- The Department of Health was on site last Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, for a final inspection of the surgical pavilion, which is nearing completion. Mr. Musnicki shared with winter approaching, the push is on to complete the blacktop paving which is scheduled to be completed by next week.
- The project continues to be over budget by approximately \$1.5 million.
- The electrical switches which were backordered have arrived and have been installed. The generator is scheduled to arrive February 24, 2024.
- Mr. Musnicki shared with the group the GC continues to struggle with manpower, and added that Mr. Nuffer and Mr. Fargo are trying to rectify this situation. The general contractor will be finishing the blocking by the end of week for the roof flashing to be installed.

◆ Human Resources: Board President, Mr. Young, shared the following updates from the October 13, 2023, HR Committee Meeting in the absence of Chair, Mrs. Jennifer Jones:

- New Hires, Resignations, Retirements & Terminations: The organizations' new hires, resignations, retirements, and terminations were included in Board packets.

#113. Motion by Mrs. Mastascusa, seconded by Mr. Lehman, the Board approved the creation of 1 FT Occupational Therapist CHHA position card with a salary not to exceed \$89,000 annually. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9, no 0.*

#114. Motion by Mr. Lehman, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, the Board approved the following:

- Creation of 2 FT Nurse Practitioner position cards with a salary not to exceed \$130,000 annually.
- Abolishment of 2 FT Physician Assistant position cards.

Approved

*VOTE: yes 9 no 0.*

#115. Motion by Mr. McDowell, seconded by Mrs. Rennie, the Board approved the creation of 6 FT RHCF Registered Nurse position cards with a salary range of \$35.97 – \$44.96 per hour. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9 no 0.*

☐ **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT:** Mr. Cayer provided a brief overview on the following topics:

- ◆ FY 2024 Budget Reflections: Mr. Cayer shared the health system is a department of the County. He noted that the health system and the County's Solid Waste are the only two enterprise funds of the County. The County's budget is ~\$62M and is based on real property and sales tax and our budget is ~\$92M and is based on projected volumes. He added that he appreciated Mr. McDowell's assistance, as well as his colleagues in navigating the FY 24 budget. Mr. Cayer shared the following three (3) new positions have been included in the FY 24 budget; however, there may be other options to be reviewed by the Finance Committee in lieu of adding additional FTE's:
  - ✓ Recruiter
  - ✓ CIO
  - ✓ Grant Writer
- ◆ Community Letter: Mr. Cayer shared with the board a letter he received from a community member regarding their family member's positive experience with the Rainbow Community.
- ◆ 2024 Board Calendars: The first draft of the 2024 board calendars were presented to the Board members. Mr. Cayer requested the Board members reach out to Mrs. Michelle Kelley if they have any comments and/or edits they would recommend. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading will occur at the November board meeting.
- ◆ County Loan Repayment to LCHS: Mr. Cayer reported both he and Jeff Hellinger, CFO, previously presented to the Lewis County Board of Legislators at their September Health & Human Resources Committee and met again with the Committee in October. He added we continue to respectfully request that the Board of Legislators consider repayment of the 2018 Funds Transfer made by Lewis County Health System to Lewis County in the amount of \$5,497,355. A meeting with County officials, Mr. Cayer, Mr. Hellinger and Board President, Mr. Young, is scheduled for October 25, 2023, to continue the discussion.
- ◆ Article: Mr. Cayer shared with the board an article from the Times Union Editorial Board titled "Editorial: Maternal care deserts grow" and dated October 15, 2023.

☐ **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

- ◆ Strategic Topics for November 2023:
  - ✓ Hospital Foundation {J. Rhubart}
- ◆ 2024 Nominating Committee: Board President, Mr. Young, appointed the following members to this Committee:
  - ✓ Cheryl Steckly, Chairman
  - ✓ Dick Chartrand
  - ✓ Marguerite Mastascusa

Mrs. Steckly, Chair of the 2024 Nominating Committee, requested all board members who are currently in good standing who may be interested in serving as President, Vice-President, and Secretary for a term of one year make it known to her in writing his or her willingness to serve as a Board officer by Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. She further added that any eligible Board member may offer himself or herself for office at the annual meeting, which will take place on December 27, 2023, notwithstanding whether he or she is endorsed by the Nominating Committee or whether he or she submits a statement of interest. An email directly to Mrs. Steckly or to the administrative office would suffice.

- ◆ Board Members Terms: Mrs. Karen Rennie's term ends December 31, 2023, and she has indicated an interest in renewing her term; Mrs. Cheryl Steckly has informed us she will resign on December 31, 2023. Board President, Mr. Young, noted there is an individual that may be interested in completing Mrs. Steckly's term to December 31, 2027, which he will discuss with Mr. Cayer and the Board of Legislators.

- ◆ The LCGH Auxiliary forwarded to Board President, Mr. Young, a copy of their Annual Report for October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023, which reported a balance of \$153,356.16. He noted the Auxiliary contributed \$10k to the Hospital Foundation Capital Project Fund and distributed \$12,400 in scholarships.
- ◆ General: The Board received a copy of the October 2023 News In General.
- ◆ News Notes: The Board received a copy of the News Notes from the media for the month of September.

**CONSENT ITEMS:**

#116. Motion by Mrs. Mastascusa, seconded by Dr. Meny, the Board approved the September 27, 2023, Board of Managers' meetings and acknowledge receipt of the following minutes (all minutes were previously distributed with the board packets):

- 09/25/2023 Capital Improvement Oversight Committee Minutes
- 10/13/2023 Human Resources Committee Minutes
- 10/16/2023 Finance Committee Minutes

Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9, no 0.*

☐ **MEDICAL STAFF:** Dr. Steven Lyndaker, Medical Director, provided the following update.

- ◆ Rachel Zehr, M.D., General Surgeon, will be speaking to the Medical Staff regarding breast health at the annual Brooks Lecture scheduled for this fall.
- ◆ Volumes and referrals continue to be on the rise along with quality of care and we should see this continue and accelerate.

#117. Motion by Mr. Musnicki, seconded by Dr. Meny, to enter executive session at 5:38 p.m. for credentialing matters. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9, no 0.*

#118. Motion by Mr. Musnicki, seconded by Mrs. Ross, to return to regular session at 5:46 p.m. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9, no 0.*

**□ Credentialing/Recredentialing:**

#119. Motion by Mr. Lehman, seconded by Mrs. Steckly, to approve the following:

**Reappointments:**

- Nathaniel Meuser-Herr, M.D. – Reappointment to the Courtesy Staff, Pediatric Service, with privileges as requested.

**Delegated Reappointments:**

- Joan Dolinak, M.D. – Reappointment to the Consulting Staff, Surgery Service, with Tele-Medicine privileges as requested.
- Fadar Otite, M.D. – Reappointment to the Consulting Staff, Internal Medicine Service, with Tele-Medicine privileges as requested.

**Appointments:**

- Mohsena Amin, M.D. – Appointment to the Associate Staff, Internal Medicine Service, with Infectious Disease privileges as requested.

**Delegated Appointments:**

- Daniel DelPrado, M.D. – Appointment to the Associate Staff, Radiology Service, with privileges as requested.
- Steven Karidas, M.D. – Appointment to the Associate Staff, Radiology Service, with privileges as requested.
- Aravind Reddy, M.D. – Appointment to the Associate Staff, Internal Medicine Service, with Tele-Medicine privileges as requested.

**Advancements:**

- None

**Delegated Advancements:**

- None

Approved.

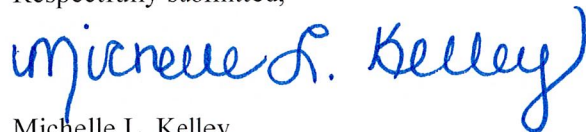
*VOTE: yes 9, no 0.*

**□ Adjourn:**

#120. Motion by Mr. Musnicki, seconded by Dr. Meny, to adjourn at 5:50 p.m. Approved.

*VOTE: yes 9, no 0.*

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle L. Kelley,  
Administrative Assistant to CEO

*Countersigned:*

Philip McDowell,  
Secretary Board of Managers