

**Highlands County Hospital District  
Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting – February 22, 2024**

The Highlands County Hospital District Board of Commissioners met at 1:30pm on Thursday, February 22, 2024, at the Highlands County Commissioner's Board Room. Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Highlands News Sun on February 11, 2024. The notice is filed in the Board's meeting file.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Dean Gerber, Dusty Johnson, Jeff Roth, Katie Wilson

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Victor Divietro

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bert Harris – Swaine, Harris & Wohl, PA; Gail Escobar- Clerk; Ingra Gardner – Community Programs Director; Leah Sauls – Development Services Director; Commissioner Kevin Roberts; Joe Gleason – HCA Florida Highlands CEO; Tessa Hickey – Dept of Health; Bill Stephenson – Samaritan's Touch Care Center

**I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** at 1:30 pm by Chairman Gerber.

**II. INVOCATON AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Roth led the pledge and gave the invocation.

**III. CALL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Mr. Johnson made a motion seconded by Ms. Wilson to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 16, 2023 and special meeting of December 7, 2023 as presented. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

**V. ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT**

a. Mark Cox of Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co., presented the accountant's report which reflected investments updated through January, 2024, cashflow through December 31, 2023, financial statements for the third quarter, and check register for the first quarter. Copies of investment statements accounts were also provided.

**VI. APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF INVOICES**

**MOTION:** Mr. Johnson made a motion seconded by Ms. Wilson to approve payment of invoices as presented by the Clerk for Highlands News Sun – 155.76; Swaine, Harris, & Wohl – 4,740.00; Wicks, Brown, Williams & Co. – 1,500.00 for a total of \$6,395.76. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

## **VII. HRMC REPORT**

Joe Gleason, CEO, 2023 said that over-all 2023 was a very good year. Along with their lease payment, they also paid \$800,000 in taxes and over 40 million in charity care for unfunded and indigent patients. They hired a new CFO, Henry Capote, who is new to HCA who began in December and has now moved to the area. In 2022 the CCTA program was launched which is a test that takes images of the vessels of the heart and is used as a precursor to a heart cath. Over 400 were performed in 2023 preventing unnecessary heart catheterizations. They sponsored over 90 children with Healthy Families at Christmas, participated in Tanglewood's Health Fair, and volunteered with Ridge Area Arc and the United Way. Encouraged everyone to follow HCA Highlands on the different social media platforms.

## **VIII. ELECTION OF 2024 BOARD OFFICERS**

**MOTION:** Mr. Johnson made a motion seconded by Mr. Roth to retain the current board positions. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

Positions are Chairman – Dean Gerber, Vice-Chairperson – Katie Wilson, Clerk – Gail Escobar

## **IX. APPROVAL OF HEALTH SERVICES GRANT TIMELINE 2024-2025**

The Board reviewed the grant timeline dates presented by the Clerk. Chairman Dean reminded the Board that the May meeting was pushed back a week to May 30, 2024.

**MOTION:** Ms. Wilson made a motion seconded by Mr. Johnson to approve the dates as presented. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

- March 8, 2024            Electronic distribution of grant application
- April 8, 2024            Submission of Applications with District Clerk
- Schedule if needed      Grant Review
- May 1, 2024              Submission of supplemental information (if needed)
- May 30, 2024            Regular meeting at 1:30pm – determine surplus funds and make grant recommendations

## **X. DISCUSSION OF THE HOSPITAL LEASE**

The Chairman requested that this item be placed on the agenda for a discussion. Mr. Harris stated that there many parallels whether the District leases or sells the property. Some sales are conducted with a lease option and he recommends that this Board pursues both to give the County the broadest approach of dealing with the hospital. This will provide more options in how to address the financing of a sale.

## **XI. LEGAL COUNSEL**

No additional legal business.

## **XII. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **AUDITOR SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The Auditor Selection Committee met today at 11 am and recommended Clifton Larson Allen, LLC (CLA) as the auditor selected from the RFP process.

**MOTION:** Mr. Johnson made a motion seconded by Ms. Wilson to authorize the Chairman to negotiate the contract with CLA and designate them as the primary. Upon roll call, all Members voted aye. The motion carried.

The special meeting on March 26, 2024 will allow for the approval of the contract with CLA and the discussion of the sale of the hospital.

### **SALE OF THE HOSPITAL**

Commissioner Kevin Roberts addressed the Board as to the sale of the hospital. The sale of the hospital has been a priority of the County Commission for several years, and at the February 20, 2024 Commission board meeting, the members decided by consensus to move forward with the process of selling the hospital and have the value of the hospital determined. The Commission also agreed by consensus to ask the Hospital District to cover the cost of the appraisal up to \$50,000.

Leah Saul stated that the cost estimation is based on staff having previously obtain pricing, but there would not be a need to establish a cap if the RFP process is utilized.

Leah Sauls gave a review of the progression of the decision to sale by the Commission:

2019 – priority was established by County Commissioners

2020 – No activity due to COVID year

2021 – discussion again with the decision to attempt to change the way statute was written and how proceeds could be spent; endeavor did not result in a change to statute

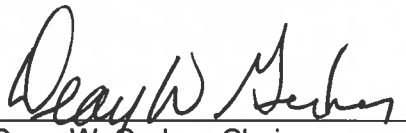
2024 – current BOCC had never given direction to move forward with the sale without the changes to the statute; item was presented on 2/20/24 along with direction as how to handle the appraisal process

Hospital District Board decided it best to set a special meeting to consider the sale of the hospital based on the consensus of the County Commission for the District to pay the cost of an appraisal. Mr. Harris will provide the options for handling the appraisal process at that meeting.

The special meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 1:30pm and will be noticed as required by law.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Gerber adjourned the meeting at 2:07 pm. There will be a special meeting on March 26, 2024 with the next regular meeting set for Thursday, May 30, 2024.

  
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Dean W. Gerber, Chairman

  
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Gail Escobar, Clerk