

North Sonoma County HealthCare District
May 23, 2022
Special Meeting of the Board of Directors

CALL TO ORDER

- a. The Board of Directors of the North Sonoma County Healthcare District met via Zoom on May 23, 2022. Chair David Anderson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

California Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20 on March 12, 2020 relating to the convening of public meetings in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order, Board members will attend the meeting via Zoom.

- b. Board Clerk called the roll. The following Board members were present via Zoom constituting a quorum:

David Anderson, M.D., Chair
Sue Campbell, Treasurer
Erin Gore, Director
Jim Nantell, Secretary
Danielle Streb, Vice Chair

Also present via Zoom: **Staff**
Tucker Pinochi, Board Clerk
Bill Arnone, Esq.

Guests:
Jed Weissberg, MD

Absent: None

Chair David Anderson, MD called for conflicts on the agenda items listed below. There were none.

Chair David Anderson, MD opened the floor for members of the public to comment on open session, non-agendized items. There were none.

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Consent Calendar
a. May 23, 2022 Special Meeting Agenda
b. Resolution #5-22: Authorizing Teleconference Meetings

A Motion was made by Director Campbell and seconded by Director Gore to approve the Consent Calendar.

Vote: Anderson: Y Campbell: Y Gore: Y Nantell: Streb: Y The motion was approved 4-0, with one Director not voting.

2. Presentation / Discussion / Possible Action: Report from Debbie Howell RE: Status of Repayment of Loan from the District for Vaccination Program

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The Board Clerk introduced Debbie Howell, Executive Director of Alexander Valley Healthcare (AVH). Ms. Howell submitted a written report detailing the vaccination efforts undertaken by AVH using the funds loaned by the District. That document is attached.

Ms. Howell began summarizing the results of AVH's vaccination campaign, noting that the funding was authorized by the District to provide doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to members of the public within the District's service area. This effort was measured separately from AVH's vaccinations of existing patients, the costs of which were absorbed into its normal operating budget.

She reported that according to the CDC's criteria, over 80% of Cloverdale residents were fully vaccinated, with the caveat that the number of doses required to provide protection against infection and hospitalization with COVID is evolving as different variants emerge. Demand for vaccinations rose in May 2021, requiring a mid-project change in location, staffing structure, and the web platform for booking vaccination appointments with AVH.

The data presented was gathered through AVH's registration software and captured through PrepMod registrant's insurance status and other variables. Subsequently, AVH transferred the registration portal to MyTurn. While complete residential data for AVH vaccine recipients is not included in this report, the location of registrants was recorded to ensure residents of the District were counted.

Ms. Howell shared that AVH also received limited funding from Sonoma County. In conclusion, she requested the Board approve forgiveness of the loan considering the relative lack of structured funding mechanisms for mass vaccination campaigns such as AVH's. She noted that the only possible source for further contracted funding was to seek another contract with Sonoma County.

Director Anderson opened the floor for questions. He began with his own, asking Ms. Howell whether she was aware of a potential source of funding for FQHC COVID-19 Vaccination Campaigns, and if so whether she had pursued that source. Ms. Howell clarified that this reimbursement source was only possible using data that was not collected for the public vaccination campaign that the District funded with its loan.

Director Gore clarified, referring to Ms. Howell's report, that although it was sensible to characterize the District's funds as a loan, counting the funds as a liability on the balance sheet was perhaps misleading given that AVH was in receipt of the loaned funds.

Director Campbell asked whether Ms. Howell was aware of the Blue Shield State Grant received by Alliance Medical Center, and if she had applied for the same grant for AVH. Ms. Howell replied that she was aware, had applied, but that AVH was not funded by that grant. She could not explain why that was the case, given that Blue Shield is not required to provide such an explanation for denying the application.

Director Anderson commended Ms. Howell on the totality of AVH's vaccination program results, and Ms. Howell noted that final total (including AVH patients and members of the public who reside in the District) was 15,000 doses administered from January 2021 to January 2022. Ms. Howell continued, saying that they were proud of the magnitude of their effort, even if its difficulty was augmented by the ongoing industry-wide staffing difficulties.

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Director Anderson asked Ms. Howell which services provided by AVH aligned the District's strategic priorities of supporting mental healthcare and treating substance use disorder. Ms. Howell replied that yes, AVH provides substance abuse counseling, and mental and behavioral health services through departments dedicated to those two health needs. High demand, however, has forced AVH to limit those services to AVH's patients. They are currently recruiting a psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and a Marriage and Family Therapist to serve the public. Director Anderson then asked if AVH provided medically assisted treatment services, to which Ms. Howell responded affirmatively.

Director Gore asked Ms. Howell what AVH's budget deficit would be, if it receives the funds it has applied for from Sonoma County. Ms. Howell clarified the figures as presented, having separated out the costs of vaccinating AVH's patients, per the District's preference that its funds only support vaccination for District residents. She said that there were reserves from which to draw, but that forgiveness of the \$50,000 granted by the District would be helpful to ease that strain. She noted in response to Director Anderson that the FQHC's payment model made seeking reimbursement for vaccinations of non-patient District residents through his suggested sources impossible.

Director Campbell suggested that she would move for approval of forgiving the loan, given the difficulty AVH had experienced in receiving reimbursement for its work.

A Motion was made by Director Campbell and seconded by Director Nantell to approve the forgiveness of the \$50,000 loan to AVH.

Vote: Anderson: Y Campbell: Y Gore: Y Nantell: Y Streb: Y The motion was approved unanimously.

Director Anderson added after the passage of the motion that the Board had requested a plan from Alliance Medical Center to support the hiring of a drug educator using the loan that the District forgave. Ms. Howell asserted that the wave of deadly substance use disorder cases in the area made it clear to her that addressing the problem was a priority.

Director Campbell requested an update on the planned capital campaign to build a new care facility in Cloverdale. Ms. Howell shared the reasoning behind the planned expansion, namely to restore a more broad spectrum of service provision. Leases with County-level mental health providers, for example, to come to Cloverdale part time have had to be shelved in favor of housing the services its full-time patients need. She said that AVH was in the first phase of the campaign and that she will learn more as the process continues. Director Campbell asked when Ms. Howell expected to open the facility, and Ms. Howell responded that the current expectation based on funding timelines was to open in three years.

Director Nantell asked Ms. Howell about the North Sonoma County Healthcare Foundation's plans to open a new center. She said that she was aware of the plans at the Foundation, and that there was alignment between NSCHF and AVH on funding that project. The Board and Ms. Howell continued discussing details of the project, including possible tracts of land on which to place the community center.

The Directors thanked Ms. Howell for attending, and she left the meeting at 5:10 PM.

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3. Consideration of Materials Disseminated by Board Members

The Board clerk reminded the Directors that the May regular meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 26th, and that Petaluma Valley and Healdsburg District Hospitals CEO Darian Harris would be presenting his biannual report on HDH operations to the Board of Directors.

4. Adjournment

Chair David Anderson adjourned the meeting at 5:15 PM.

Submitted & Recorded by Tucker Pinochi, Board Clerk
Contact info@nschd.com for more information