

**Granite County Hospital District
Board of Directors
Special Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
March 12, 2020**

Present:

- Mrs. Kristi Mainwaring
- Mr. Jim Waldbillig
- Mrs. Genevieve Kulaski
- Chad Green

A quorum of the Board was present.

The meeting was called to order by Kristi Mainwaring on March 12, 2020 at 6:00 pm. The meeting was held in the Granite County Medical Center Conference Facility in Philipsburg, MT.

Interview of CEO/DON Candidate

Kristi Mainwaring welcomed the public on behalf of the Granite County Hospital Board and thanked them for participating in the process of hiring the CEO/DON for GCMC. This position had opened when the St. Patrick Hospital contract with Maria Stoppler was canceled. Kristi Mainwaring explained, per hospital policy, this position was first posted internally and then posted externally. The board interviewed the internal and external candidates which include the current CEO/DON who is an external candidate.

She further stated the board believed they had done their due diligence and narrowed the selection from nine to two candidates. However, late in the process the outside candidate decided she was unable to move forward at this time so the original intention of holding two interviews tonight was changed. Tonight the board would be interviewing Maria Stoppler in a public-forum setting using the questions submitted by the public and current hospital employees. She asked the public to refrain from speaking during the interview process and to hold any questions until the end when there would be an open discussion.

Kristi Mainwaring asked Chad Green to perform the interview process as her voice was failing. She thanked Maria Stoppler for being present and then deferred to Chad Green. He explained some questions had been combined but all the questions submitted were being asked tonight. These questions are highlighted below.

Describe your leadership style.

Maria Stoppler responded her leadership style is to put the right person in the right position and then give them all the tools and resources available so they can be successful in their job. She explained she doesn't believe in micro-managing the various departments, but whenever asked she would assist in providing the right tools and resources to make the departments and the facility successful. She explained she was deeply committed to the health and well being of the community and the patients, and she would step up as needed. She further explained she believed the staff should know she was as committed as she expected them to be.

How would you define a successful administrator?

Maria stated a successful administrator should be firm, fair and consistent. They should treat everyone with respect, have a vision and a strategy, keep the staff engaged and aware of the vision and goals and maintain a relationship with the community and the patients in order to develop strong partnerships so that together they could accomplish the tasks before them. Because overall resources were limited, cohesion and the ability to think outside the box by getting input from others were important. Communication, an awareness of changing industry standards and sensitivity to the health-care needs of the community were necessary. An administrator also needed to truly care about the people they had the privilege of caring for.

What does your commitment to Granite County look like for the future?

Maria explained her commitment to Granite County was deeply ingrained. She had been in Granite County for twenty-six years so this community was home and she viewed it as family. She has worked on addressing behavioral and mental health issues within the community by working with Kayla Sanders on obtaining a \$300,000 grant from HRSA. If awarded, it would be a three-year grant culminating in \$300,000 toward behavioral and mental health. She expressed a desire to reach the school-age sector and give them the assistance needed to confront behavioral and mental health issues in a neutral environment, as well as offering assistance with other health issues like weight loss and diabetes management.

Do you have any creative ideas with hiring and retention in the future, and to reduce the number of travelers being utilized with the limited resources available to us in Granite County?

Maria explained the use of travelers was a national problem but her strategy was to use them as little as possible and when utilizing this service to ask for a three to six month commitment so the traveler would be invested in the patients, aware of GCMC's policies and more effective and consistent in providing care.

In terms of recruiting new staff, Maria explained Yolonda Schulz was offering a two-week CNA training class and H & R offered stipends to prospective CNA's to help with traveling expenses. GCMC also offered open-house opportunities to nursing students and Maria attended career fairs. Using the REACH program, high-school students were introduced to career opportunities in health care. In addition, she has reached out in the past to Carroll College in Helena to offer nursing students a rotation in rural healthcare.

Describe what professional teamwork looks like to you and what are the benefits?

Maria stated teamwork began with respect for one another with the goal of putting the patient first and she praised the various departments for stepping up to meet the needs of the patients.

How might changing the clinic from a Rural Health Clinic to a Patient-Centered Medical Home or a FQHC impact reimbursement?

Maria explained that neither of these should be considered because the majority of people utilizing GCMC's services were Medicare beneficiaries and reimbursement would be greatly reduced if either of these programs was instituted in place of a rural health clinic.

How is billing for services between the clinic and the ER different for services such as splinting and suturing?

Maria explained services in the ER are reimbursed at a higher rate than in the clinic and the supplies or materials used in casting or splinting are not reimbursed in the clinic but they are in the ER.

What are some ways you may be able to come up with cost-saving ideas and do you think staff could be a resource to develop and implement some of these ideas?

Maria replied some of the cost-saving ideas utilized recently involved staff contracts. The previous medical director, Dr. Jones, was employed full time by contract with St. Patrick Hospital; however, after reassessing the needs of GCMC, the mid-level providers have agreed to take on additional responsibilities thus reducing expenses. In addition, Dr. Reiter now comes on-site one day per month to meet with all the patients. Additional review of charts can be done through the EHR from his home. This resulted in a 70 percent savings between the two contracts.

Additionally, Maria researched and identified a new group purchasing organization, Intalere who offers better pricing for facility purchases resulting in a 20 percent savings in office supplies alone.

Maria also instituted a change in GCMC's workman's compensation carrier, resulting in a \$37,000 savings and she streamlined Central Supply by reducing the number of supplies stocked and removing duplications.

Maria uses the monthly department head meetings as a way of getting staff involved in cost-savings as well.

What are some ways you may be able to improve services and quality at our facilities without increasing costs, and how would you go about it?

Maria explained quality improvement is an ongoing process as new issues come up and solutions are sought. In addition she utilizes community assessment surveys to identify the need for new services. The last assessment was done the end of 2014/2015. The community desired specialized providers be brought into the clinic. This was done but the utilization of specialty services wasn't great enough to justify these services.

In addition, Maria saw a need for CT Scanning. She worked to obtain a grant through the Helmsley Charitable Trust and an anonymous grant was received from a Montana foundation. Another \$120,000 came in through community donations.

Currently we do not have a County health nurse to provide services such as immunizations for the public, especially children. The state has a free immunization program that would provide these services through a rural health clinic at no cost to them or the facility. What are your thoughts on implementing a program such as this?

Maria said this was a program to be explored, but there may be a conflict between the VFC program and the rural health clinic as rural clinics cannot be reimbursed for a service that is done by a county health nurse; but she would reexamine the regulations regarding this program.

With shortages of EMTs in this county to work on a volunteer ambulance, are there ways the hospital may be able to work with the ambulance services and the county to help provide EMS and transportation services between the hospital and the people of Granite County?

Maria explained GCMC was not currently licensed to provide this service. Licensing was a lengthy process and GCMC would be required to provide EMT staff as well. With the current staffing challenges in the facility, she felt taking on additional responsibilities was unfeasible at this time. Also the cost of hiring full-time EMT's was of concern although she is currently exploring some cost-sharing options.

What are some ways you may work to improve marketing and communication with the citizens about the services provided by GCMC and encourage them to use us as their primary facility?

Maria has been working with the marketing committee to rebuild the GCMC web site to make it more user-friendly. Future goals include adding recruitment and bill-paying options as well as appointment scheduling via the web site. The designer of the new website will also offer social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

I'm sure you are aware of the lack of housing in Granite County. Do you have a strategy to deal with this problem?

Maria said this was a problem experienced by every local business. Her strategy would be to work with local partners to address this need. Current trends for vacation rentals within the community also offer an option for off-season rentals for travelers and short-term staffers. She also works with local people who offer their home or rooms as a short-term rental to travelers and short-term staffers.

Chad Green then opened the discussion to the attending public.

Open Comment

Scott Sylvester asked if the board intended to interview any additional candidates. Chad Green explained nine interviews were conducted by the board and this meeting was an opportunity to put the two strongest candidates before the public. Since the other final candidate declined no further action would be taken by the board and the board would be making a decision shortly on offering the job to Maria Stoppler.

Kristi Mainwaring volunteered the board was pleased to obtain such great candidates as applicants for the position and Maria had passed through that process as well. She was pleased by the number of candidates and each had contributed greatly to the process.

John Skousen asked if the board had taken into account the active involvement needed by the CEO/DON within the community or if the board strictly looked at the job requirements for the CEO/DON position.

Kristi Mainwaring replied the job description includes the importance of interaction between the CEO and the community and that was one of the critical questions brought to each candidate. The board sought to find candidates with proven track records of community involvement.

Ken Burd stated that the housing problem and the ambulance issues were not an administrator problem but a community issue and the community was responsible to address these issues.

Chad Green clarified the board agreed. The questions addressed at this meeting were those brought by the community and he felt it was good to bring the issue before the public to aid with clarification of who was responsible for some of these issues.

Alan Miller asked if the board was aware of the need to balance the budget and how were they going to aid in this effort.

Kristi Mainwaring explained the board was always looking for new opportunities to bring revenue to GCMC and asked the public to make suggestions for future services and to use the new services, such as CT scanning, when they became available.

Chad Green added several board members sat on several hospital committees and they would be able to meet with Maria and offer suggestions as well as provide specific goals.

Gary Sundstrom asked when the last CEO job performance review was carried out. Jim Waldbillig said two were done when he was chairman and they were positive reviews and available to the public for review.

A question was asked about why the board considered other candidates for the CEO/DON position.

Chad Green explained the CEO/DON was a previously contracted position and now Maria and the Chief Medical Officer would be employees of GCMC and under direct supervision of the board.

Stephanie Burd asked for an explanation of why the mill levy was important and why without it a balanced budget was probably not feasible. Ken Burd's explanation included the 1997 cost reimbursement legislation that decreased cost reimbursement for critical access hospitals from 100/101 percent to 70-80 percent, an aging facility, declining utilization and a need to increase services and the community population utilizing those services. He also mentioned without medical services, communities died and CMS set the rate for services and reimbursement varied from year to year.

There were no further questions and Chad Green thanked everyone for attending and for being involved in the process.

Kristi Mainwaring asked for a motion to move forward with a job offer. Jim Waldbillig made a motion to offer the job of CEO/DON to Maria Stoppler and Genevieve Kulaski seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Kristi Mainwaring to adjourn. This was seconded by Chad Green. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7 PM.

These minutes have been reviewed and approved by motion of the board:

John Barbara (Chairman of GCHD Board of Trustees)

Date