
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Regular Meeting February 18, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Eagle County Health Service District occurred on February 18, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.; at 1055 Edwards Village Blvd., Edwards, Eagle County, Colorado, in accordance with the applicable statutes of the State of Colorado.

The following Directors were present and acting:

Attending Remotely:

Jeff Babb
Janet Bartnik
Mark Bergman
Dan Smith
Dr. John “Chip” Woodland

Also in attendance:

ECHSD Staff:
Jim Bradford, CEO/COO
Amy Gnojek, CEO/CFO
Steve Vardaman, Operations Manager
Ryan Bush, Operations Specialist
Will Dunn, Senior Manager of Clinical Services
Kevin Creek, Community Health Specialist
Katie Coakley, Communications Coordinator/PIO
Veronica Ross, Finance Manager
Scott Lindquist, IT Manager
Jennifer Cooley Follett, Accounting Clerk
Kate Byers-Contractor, Interim HR
Sarah Braucht, Office Coordinator
Chris Marsh, Fleet Coordinator & Paramedic
David Miller, Community Paramedic

Public:

None

**Call to
Order**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of Eagle County Health Service District was called to order by Director Babb on February 18, 2021 at 08:00 a.m. noting a quorum was present.

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Consent Agenda

A motion made by Ms. Bartnik to approve the January 21, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes and the Monthly Expenditures. Mr. Bergman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the January 21, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes and Monthly Expenditures.

OLD BUSINESS:

ET3 Update -

Ms. Gnojek stated that the District is delaying the launch of the ET3 program until March 2nd. Staff did not want to rush the rollout of the program and needed a little bit more time to work on protocols and training. The District is not yet ready for the alternate destination portion of ET3, but is proceeding with the telehealth and treatment in place options. Medicare is the primary payer of the program and the District is in conversations with Medicaid to cover expenses. Anthem is interested in covering care provided by in-network providers. An article on ET3 was published by the Vail Daily over the weekend as an education tool, but clear to not be a marketing piece. Mr. Creek stated that local urgent care organizations liked the alternate destination portion of ET3 and they hope it will create health care savings for patients to be taken to urgent care instead of the emergency department. For Mr. Creek, ET3 has been a labor of love over the past five months and he is excited for it finally to get off the ground. He thanked Mr. Dunn for his assistance in providing the protocols for the program. Mr. Babb appreciated the thoughtful rollout of the program.

NEW BUSINESS:

Leadership Retreat Outcomes -

Ms. Gnojek and Mr. Bradford hosted a leadership retreat last week where they met with other members of the management staff and specialists to create a vision for the management culture. The team came up with internal goals, timelines for the goals, what they want to measure, and why it is important by using key performance indicators (KPI). The team hopes to streamline processes through continuous quality improvement (CQI) and quality assurance (QA). The management team is aiming to put the QA committee back together for a more bottom up approach driven by staff. The team is also working to make the employee review process more meaningful. Leadership tenants were established as guiding principles and values of the management team.

Veterans Administration Receivables -

Mrs. Gnojek stated that the District transitioned to an outsourced billing company in May of 2020 and there are a handful of in-house legacy accounts still to manage, totaling around \$140,000 of receivables. Of that amount, about \$40,000 is owed by the Veterans

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Administration (VA) where there is a lot of red tape and it is a lengthy process to get paid. Additionally, the VA typically only pays about 60% of the amount owed and it is a very paper heavy process. Chasing after money owed by the VA is taking up a lot of staff time with little hope of actually ever receiving the payment on the accounts. Ms. Gnojek is asking the Board to write off the balance owed by the VA and if payments eventually come in, then the write off will be reversed.

Mr. Smith stated that new veterans go through TriCare insurance and that the older veterans are usually the ones who will still receive care through the VA. Ms. Gnojek stated that the District has received acknowledgement from the VA that they have received our claims and that they are in process, however it is not worth staff's time to actively chase money owed by the VA. Mr. Bergman asked if there was an option for the new billing company to take over the existing receivables. Ms. Gnojek answered that it was an option when the District started with them, but that it was very expensive. Ms. Bartnik asked if writing off the VA expenses is simply an accounting exercise so as not to waste employee time. Ms. Gnojek responded that it will be a net payment reduction and it will balance out if payment is received.

A motion made by Mr. Bergman to write off the Veterans Administration receivables. Ms. Bartnik seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED to write off the Veterans Administration receivables.

UPDATES:

Board Retreat -

Mr. Babb apologized for the short notice to postpone the Board retreat, however he wants it to be meaningful and productive. He received good feedback from the Board regarding the retreat and proposed it take place after ski season ends. Mr. Bergman suggested holding the retreat on a non-Board meeting day. He also asked if the retreat needs to have a publicly posted agenda. Ms. Gnojek responded that it does need to be posted and the retreat must be open to the public, though the public rarely attends regular Board meetings as it is. Mr. Smith noted that it is hard to have good conversation in an online meeting and preferred a face to face meeting. Hopefully, by pushing the meeting back to April, the covid climate will be better. Ms. Bartnik suggested holding the retreat in the Edwards ambulance bay with the doors open for better airflow. Ms. Gnojek stated that the District is installing Google Meet equipment in the Edwards classroom to better facilitate hybrid online and in person meetings. There are a lot of staff who live out of the county who would like to attend the meeting virtually. Ms. Bartnik stated that Mountain Recreation has recently acquired for public use an owl conference camera and microphone that will automatically point at the speaker in a room. Ms. Gnojek suggested having a facilitator lead the retreat. The Board decided to hold the Board retreat on Thursday April 22, 2021 between 8:00am and 12:00pm at the Edwards ambulance station.

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Executive/Finance Report –

Ms. Gnojek is working through getting the year end financials closed out. She will send the revised 2020 financials out to the Board members as soon as they are available, however there are no expenditures that are unusual. She acknowledged the significant amount of effort put into applying for two large grants this past month. If awarded the State of Colorado EMTS Grant for approximately \$160,000, the District plans to purchase a new ambulance and outfit it with safety equipment. It is the District's first time applying for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). If awarded the \$350,000 asked for with this grant, the District is intending to grow the wildland program and purchase a dedicated vehicle, as well as personal protective gear for 16 crew. Technical writing advice for the grant was provided by Mr. Bradford's wife, Caroline. The District was awarded a small grant for \$5,000 from the Colorado Electrical Institute in conjunction with Holy Cross Energy and a photo opportunity presentation of funds is taking place this afternoon. Additionally, the District was awarded a \$338,000 Colorado Cares Grant for covid related expenditures and reimbursements.

The community paramedic (CP) program has been bombarded with referrals in the past few months and there is no indication that they will be slowing down. Management has decided to add additional community paramedic shifts to the schedule to be filled by paramedics who have been licensed as a CP. The District is looking for ways to help make it a financially sustainable program. Ms. Gnojek and Mr. Bradford discussed how to be compensated for care performed, how to grow the program, and how to meet the needs of the community. It was asked if the District is able to bill insurance for community paramedic care. Ms. Gnojek answered that it is not billable unless the District used Anthem as an in network provider, however then all other care would be billed at a significantly reduced rate. Mr. Bradford stated that with the covid pandemic, in-home care call volume has increased drastically and highlights the need being met by community paramedics. Vail Health and Colorado Mountain Medical are referring patient encounters to the CP program and it might be a possible endeavor to ask them to contribute funds to the program. The District budgets \$900,000 per year for community paramedics with about \$480,000 of funding coming from grants and behavioral health programs. Ms. Bartnik stated that the District is a public taxpayer funded organization to provide health services to our community, so it is expected to build the CP program into the finance structure. Mr. Bergman asked if there is a lobbying or advocacy group for the community paramedic program. Ms. Gnojek responded that though not a formal organization, there is an active group in Colorado and across the US that promotes the CP program. There are about 20 CP programs in Colorado and 1500-2000 throughout the US. Funding is a problem that all CP programs are facing since the care is not funded by a hospital, however it has been suggested to have a bundled payment or fee per visit. Insurance companies may eventually come on board with paying for CP visits, but it has been a struggle thus far. Mr. Miller, one of the District's community paramedics, stated that they are filling a large need in our area for both clinical and social work.

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Executive/Operations Report –

Mr. Bradford stated that Eagle County is downgrading today to level yellow on the covid dial with 270 cases per 100,000 the past week, being under the yellow level threshold of 350/100,000. Additionally, the county is under the 5% positivity rate and the incident rate of people aged 70+ is significantly down. The District’s call volume is still down compared to last year, but we are also slightly lighter staffed. This past President’s Day weekend was very busy and hopefully call volume starts to rebound. Interfacility transfers are taking much longer than anticipated and the District is looking at ways to mitigate this issue. Management is taking a look at staffing sustainability and how to better manage the staff mix during busy times to be more efficient.

Staff Reports -

There were no comments on the Staff Reports.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-

The Board convened into Executive Session at 9:13am for 24-6-402(4)(e), C.R.S., Determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations and instructing negotiators and 24-6-402(4)(g), C.R.S., Consideration of any documents protected by the mandatory nondisclosure provisions of the Open Records Act.

The Board reconvened at 9:25 a.m.

Adjournment –

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Woodland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bartnik seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLVED to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 18, 2021 at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Secretary for the Meeting
Sarah Braucht

Approved: Board of Directors

