

Board of Trustees
Meeting held via Zoom video/phone
14 April 2021
1300 hours

Present:

Colonel Joseph Krawczyk, President
 Colonel Gary DeGasta, Vice President
 Michael Klopchin, Secretary
 Kent Butterfield
 Arthur Charron

Thomas Costello
 CPT Brenda Cruickshank
 Charly Dickerson
 BMCS Michael diMonda
 LTC David Fabricius

Dr. Jacqueline Kelly
 CAPT Peter Niles
 Jamie Percey
 Joyce Scribner
 Robert E. Burke, Director, Vermont Office
 of Veterans Affairs

Excused: Jennifer Carmichael

Robert Hooper

Guests: Asa Morin, COO
 Melinda Crawl, Marketing
 Shannyn MacVicar, Cardinal Unit Mgr
 Cynthia Murray, Educator
 Lisa Sloan – DAV

Jean Cody, QA Nurse
 Jon Endres, Environmental
 Steve McClafferty, Finance
 Sharon Sausville, Scheduler
 Robyn Boland, Executive Assistant

Christina Cosgrove, Social Services
 Dr. Peter King, Provider
 Marianne Burnham, Nursing
 Robert Bardsley

The meeting was called to order by President Krawczyk at 1300.

Roll call was taken by Secretary Klopchin and a quorum was announced.

Motion made by Dr. Jacqueline Kelly to accept the 10 February 2021 minutes as written, second by Mr. Arthur Charron. Motion carried.

Motion made by Mr. Jamie Percey to accept the 22 February 2021 Executive Session minutes as written, second by Mrs. Joyce Scribner. Motion carried.

Motion made by BMCS diMonda to accept the 12 March 2021 Special Meeting minutes as written, second by Mr. Jamie Percey. Motion carried.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PRESIDENT WELCOME	President welcomed the Board and the three new Board members: Thomas Costello, LTC David Fabricius and CAPT Peter Niles to the Board of Trustees. Also welcomed Lisa Sloan of the DAV.	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
HOME REPORTS CEO	Congratulations to in-house promotions: Asa Morin now the COO, Paul Yerke now the Food Service Supervisor, and we now have Stacey Whitten from the VA as our full-time Advance Practice Nurse. Hopeful the Ombudsman Committee Chair vacancy will be filled soon as the yellow forms for	INFO

residents to fill out had to be removed from the bins as there was not point of contact available.

Updates to the two VA Grant projects: VA Construction Grant for the Security and Access Control Project is just under 2 million dollars and is funded 65% by the VA, 35% by the State of Vermont. Going out to bid and hope to get started soon. Includes replacing exterior doors, card access, interior doors need to be compliant with fire code, outdoor lighting and emergency call box in the employee parking lot. The second project is brand new. Working with BGS (Buildings and General Services) and it is part of the CARES Act money (recovery money from the federal government). The Veterans Administration allowed state veteran homes to apply for COVID Construction Grant money which will fund a project 100% that directly helps mitigate future pandemics, so no state funds are needed. This 11-million-dollar project will entail a complete renovation to A wing.

The Financial Director will explain the write-off authorization request later in his presentation. Trying to write-off bad debt quarterly as was suggested in a previous audit to show paying attention to it.

The lease has been updated with John Miner (Commandant House). No new update on the Bennington Farmer's Market. Working on a contract with a farmer who wants to hay the field and in return supply hay for the deer herd. Lease for the Chamber of Commerce needs to be reviewed and updated. The Chamber owns the building, we own the land. The National Guard continues to use about an acre of land. Will investigate updating the paperwork and to also ensure environmental concerns are addressed. Normally in a Certificate of Liability there is a clause they must return the property back to the original state and the cost is incurred by the lessee, not us. Mount Anthony High School continues to use the sport fields and we have a renewing contract with them.

Nursing Home Week starts on Mother's Day. Have some activities planned, gift for the staff from the Board, and looking for creative ideas for food for the staff.

Pinnacle interviews 1/12 of our residents or family members each month and asks how we are doing in terms of care and services and then compare us to other nursing homes in the country. Each February they provide a list of the categories we are Best in Class in. This year there are 10 out of 16. The past several months, 100% of those interviewed said they would recommend our facility to someone else. This shows how hard the staff works.

New guidelines allow outdoor visits regardless of outbreak status. The CEO reviewed the new indoor visit guidelines for fully vaccinated residents and if not fully vaccinated. Visitors from out of state must follow the State travel guidelines. CEO was doing daily Zoom meetings with the families, but now

just having them twice weekly, the day after PCR testing. With the CEO being President of NASVH (National Association of State Veterans Homes) she is aware of what is going on all the 151 state veteran homes and VVH is doing very well. Staff has done an incredible job. Working on getting some more structurally sound outside visit areas and activities to do outside. Since March 8 of 2020, have had 20 employee cases of covid and 6 resident cases. The two residents that passed away were not fully vaccinated. The four residents that were fully vaccinated had no symptoms and did well.

Progress has been made on staff vaccination rates: 40% of direct care staff are vaccinated and 62% of entire staff. We had one Town Hall meeting with Dr. Levine. Will be doing more soon and will be available for all three shifts.

CEO provided a graph that shows the average monthly census. We are now able to have new admissions, but only to units that do not have a positive case. We are averaging two a week currently. Showed a graph of the fiscal impact of the low census. The biggest impacts are agency staff and covid-related expenses. CEO reviewed the budget process and that there will be a budget adjustment to settle the cost report true-up and then ask for any additional funding needed. Twenty percent of our operating funds need to come from the state. The Agency of Human Services is applying to renew the Medicaid waiver (runs out in December) and they do not anticipate any issues. The waiver gives us a higher per day Medicaid rate because we are a state agency.

The CEO thanked the staff for their continued hard work and dedication, dealing with this outbreak past couple months, and dealing with the on-going and continual changes in rules and regulations. They advocate for the residents. We have a lot to be thankful for with our staff.

Anticipate CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) survey at any time. We did have a self-report and had no findings. The VA is doing virtual surveys.

The Director of Nursing was unable to attend the meeting today. The CEO stated staffing is still a challenge and the hiring process has been slow.

Announced Stacey Whitten now part of the staff and brings a lot of experience and a strong element of continuity to VVH. With a small medical staff, it is easier to communicate with each other.

Proud of the staff with the hard work they are doing, wearing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), being screened and tested, and providing support to the residents when they couldn't have family visits.

Dealing with the fourth surge and variants. We developed a Respiratory Care Unit which was critical

**DR. PETER KING
MEDICAL DIRECTOR**

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<p>MELINDA CROWL ADMISSION/MARKETING</p>	<p>with treating the residents with covid and prevented secondary spread. Also developed an OSHA compliant Respiratory Protection Program to use N95 masks and have annual fit testing for them. The PPE Committee now meets once a week to ensure good supplies and inventory. All but four residents are vaccinated. Working hard with providing information on vaccinations. Only had two cases of the flu.</p> <p>Current census is 88 and 5 on the Domiciliary. Working with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube updates. Also, many updates to the VVH website with covid information, family meetings, community updates and the employee Board of Trustee member election. Advertising in Rutland Herald and special editions. Trying to make it more interesting and easier for residents to watch Touchtown. Created welcome packets to give to families when we started indoor visits. Working with Resident Council to purchase VVH branded gear to sell. Working with a WWII veteran and with Seven Days for a Memorial Day article telling his story serving during the surrender of Japan. Held first virtual meeting room at the Vermont Geriatric Symposium. Preparing for some in-person events to hopefully be held this year.</p>	<p>INFO</p>
<p>STEVE MCCLAFFERTY FINANCE</p>	<p>Requesting two approvals. The first is to write off \$478,973 of accounts payable uncollectible. Most due to no estate for the resident, lapse in coverage in Medicaid, and several Medicares that were out of network and didn't follow the correct protocols to get prior approval. Vermont Medicaid use to allow one year to bill, but now due to covid it is reduced to six months. Family members feel that it should be free to stay at VVH or some state they sent materials to Medicaid and feel VVH lost it even though we are out of the loop. During the pandemic we discontinued 30-day discharge letters, however plan to reinstitute it. It was decided to delay the write off until the June meeting.</p> <p>The second request for a motion is to change the signers on the two checking accounts at the local bank. One is for the Donation Account and the other is the Members Trust Account. Recommended signers: Melissa Jackson, Asa Morin, Melinda Crowl, Silvia Boulger, and himself. Members Trust is monies residents have in our own bank within the Home. The monies are deposited at a local bank and then the finance department writes a check for them. There needs to be two signatures on checks. The Donation Account is monies given to the Mobility Trail, Members Assistance, Activities, wing funds, and Christmas fund. The main portion of that is deposited to a state account and can only have a certain amount at the bank locally and every month need to replenish it. A motion to approve Melissa Jackson, Asa Morin, Melinda Crowl, Silvia Boulger and Steve McClafferty as signers made by Mr. Jamie Percey, second by CPT Cruickshank, the motion carried. President Krawczyk requested to have the names of those authorized to be listed on the next Donation report.</p>	<p>INFO</p> <p>CLOSED</p>

**JON ENDRES
ENVIRONMENTAL**

Have nearly 100% funding to rebuild American Way unit (1984) and East Wing (1967). To meet the VA standards, will entail moving interior (bearing) walls, move plumbing, digging up floors, etc., and only thing left would be the roof and some exterior walls as was designed as a two-story structure so all interior walls are bearing walls (can't move them). The new proposal would be for two pods (individual nursing home units) that could be isolated. There would be a new laundry facility, new maintenance facility, central supply and storage for medical supplies, and some offices to bring everything up to modern standards. Hope to have an architect on board by the end of September of this year, design will take about a year and then a year for construction after that. Referring to the list attached with the Environmental report, this proposal would eliminate 6-7 projects on that list. Brandon and Cardinal were constructed in 1974 but was designed as a single story building so have metal stud partition walls with basement underneath and would be relatively simple as compared to what needs to get done on American. Doing both A wing and B wing projects would eliminate about 10 projects on the list. May need to reduce the census slightly during construction, but the overall bed count (130) at the end of construction will remain the same but will have more private rooms (with each room having a private bathroom).

Will need to replace the boiler plant system. Would like to get into a biomass system that is not oil-based. The State has assisted with an RFP for a feasibility study for a firm to evaluate our current heat load requirements and determine the best system to install. The RFP is scheduled to go out any day.

The nurse call system barely functions. There are 2 systems but are not compatible. Both are obsolete and difficult to find parts. The renovation would take care of about 75% of the nurse call system but it would probably need to be done independently of it.

The emergency generators need replacing as have routinely failed inspections past couple years. Both currently inspected, safe and functional. Looking to replace both old generators with one new one. Will also be transferring a lot of our loads from overloaded panels to a new transfer switch and new panel in the facility. That will bring all the electrical up to date and up to code. Have found the issues we were having with the geothermal system was that the controllers were burning out due to low voltage which is caused by overloaded panels.

Hope to get an RFP out soon on the Mobility Trail which will be done with donated funds. Received two bids for the putting green, but the bids came back real high. Wrote a new RFP with changed specifications. Hope to send that out soon and do construction this summer.

The Crispe Room will need interior and exterior renovation in about 5-8 years.

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	<p>The custodial and housekeeping department have been doing a phenomenal job keeping VVH clean and keeping up with all the requirements of the health department with covid specific concerns. Staffing is down 25-30% in that department yet they continue to do a great job. The maintenance department has been down one staff member for past 6 months but is hiring an employee that worked here 5-6 years ago.</p> <p>The first week of June will meet with the state veterinarian and a fallow deer farmer to cull the herd from 26 down to about 10, depending upon that discussion. Will have a contractor come into the deer yard to build a fence to act as containment to be able to run the deer through the shoots to get them vaccinated and tagged. Will get it seeded while they are in containment. The herd is healthy.</p>	
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
COMMITTEE REPORT CHARLY DICKERSON	<p>There is one Board member, Jamie Percey, that is an employee of the Home and his term expired last January. The election was delayed due to covid. Under statute, you serve until a successor is appointed. The election process is currently under way and April 28 is Election Day. Some changes had to be made to the process due to covid outbreak restrictions. Will now have three locations outside for voting. BMCS diMonda will cover the 5:00 am shift and Mr. Charly Dickerson will cover after that. The candidates are Jamie Percey (the current incumbent) and Sharon Sausville. Both have been vetted. The criteria to be on the ballot are must be a classified employee and have at least 5 years of service to the Home. Both obtained the required (15) signatures. Whoever is elected, their term will expire in January of 2023.</p>	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PRESIDENT COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING	<p>Have spent the last year developing the Strategic Plan that we hired consultants BerryDunn to assist with it. The Board voted at the last meeting to accept the Plan. It is a living document. In doing so, found need to re-look at committee structure. Feel there are too many committees when looking at the current committee structure. About a month ago the Executive Committee met to develop a new structure that consists of 7 committees. Discussion then moved to the Mapping of Committee Structure to Strategic Initiatives that was provided to the Executive Committee in their meeting with BerryDunn earlier in the day. It shows the proposed committees with the 9 goals from the Strategic Plan assigned appropriately. In parenthesis after each goal listed under the committees, are the page numbers from the Strategic Plan that the goals can be found on that gives a guide or actions step for it.</p> <p>Currently the by-laws have 8 standing committees and there is a description of what the committee does. There will have to be some slight modifications if committee structure is changed.</p> <p>President Krawczyk requested each Board member to email him (or call) a list of 3 committees that</p>	INFO

	each is interested in serving on. Deadline is April 30 th . Then the Executive Committee will review the submissions and put names to the committees and present that to the Board in June. Requested the secretary to the Board to send an email to the Board members explaining this request along with his contact information.	
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PUBLIC COMMENTS	Lisa Sloan of the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) thanked everyone for the great job done during covid, very grateful and proud of job everyone has been doing.	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PRESIDENT EDUCATION and TRAINING	<p>President Krawczyk announced that the annual Education and Training session will be held possibly October 19 and 20. Format will be similar as in the past with arrival on Tuesday afternoon and a short meeting, dinner Tuesday night and then full meeting on Wednesday. The focus of the agenda will be feasibility studies with BerryDunn being the moderator of the meeting. This will all depend upon covid restrictions for gathering and distancing. Alternative will be to hold the training via zoom. The feasibility studies are probably the most important thing we need to identify to go forward with the Strategic Plan. Requested CPT Cruickshank to assist with the planning and to make sure there is a clause in the contract to cancel depending upon what the covid situation is at that time. The Education and Training Committee will start planning the agenda. May try to have a speaker for Tuesday night's dinner.</p> <p>President Krawczyk asked each Board member if they had any questions or comments. The new Board members each expressed their appreciation and privilege serving on the Board.</p>	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
ADJOURNMENT	With no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by BMCS diMonda, seconded by Mr. Jamie Percey. Motion carried and meeting adjourned.	CLOSED

Meeting was adjourned at 1449. Next Board Meeting 9 June 2021.