

Board of Trustees
Meeting held via Zoom video/phone
9 December 2020
1300 hours

Present:

Colonel Joseph Krawczyk, President
 Colonel Gary DeGasta, Vice President
 Michael Klopchin, Secretary
 Kent Butterfield
 Jennifer Carmichael

Arthur Charron
 Charly Dickerson
 Michael diMonda
 Frederick Dunn

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

Excused: CPT Brenda Cruickshank

Robert Hooper

Guests: Steven McClafferty, Finance
 Jean Cody, QAPI Nurse
 James Kinney, Maintenance
 Christina Cosgrove, Social Services

Melinda Crowl, Marketing
 Fred Loy, Friends of the VVH
 Jean Cody, QA
 Asa Morin, Social Services

Tonya Goodell, Human Resources
 Representative Mary Morrissey
 Shannyn MacVicar, Cardinal Unit Mgr
 Robyn Boland, Executive Assistant

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 Mr. Michael diMonda to accept the 14 October 2020 minutes as written, second by Mr. Jamie Percey. Motion carried.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PRESIDENT WELCOME	President welcomed Board of Trustees and all guests, including Representative Mary Morrissey and Fred Loy. Vice President Col. DeGasta thanked Representative Morrissey for all her continued support for veterans and willingness to help assist with legislation to support Vermont Veterans.	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
HOME REPORTS CEO	Thank you isn't enough to express how the staff have stepped up with every new recommendation, requirement, change in policy or procedure. They are right there to continue to provide incredible care to our Veterans and Members. They are also giving suggestions regarding the rollout of the daily testing and the vaccine process.	INFO

This is the last Board meeting with Al Faxon, COO. Personally thanked him for all he has done for VVH, brought the military culture back to the Home, relates to the Veterans, and CEO has learned leadership and patience skills from him. He will be missed.

Last Friday during the governor's press conference learned will be starting daily antigen testing which gives results in 15-30 minutes. Have been working on details to implement this next week. Prior to every shift, every day, every employee will have this test done. Then each Wednesday, will have PCR test done as well. We were only doing the PCR test once a month, now doing once a week. There is a lot of time involved, intensive paperwork, documentation, staffing, etc. Working with HR on how the antigen test results will be handled as can't all go to Dr. King.

Had first meeting on Monday with our pharmacy regarding the vaccine arrival. The pharmacy staff will administer the vaccines and do all the paperwork. Upfront, VVH will need to get consent forms signed and copies of insurance cards for staff and residents. The federal government is allowing the pharmacy to bill for the actual labor of administering the vaccine. It will be a 2-dose requirement and will have 3 clinics available to administer it. It is not mandatory by CMS or VVH. Unless the State of Vermont makes it mandatory, it is voluntary for the residents and staff. The flu shot is still available to staff. Precautions being used now (masks/distancing) will continue for all even if vaccinated until there is herd immunity. Indoor visits were put on hold the Friday before Thanksgiving as the community spread increased. We are allowing window visits and have cell phones for residents to use to help with communication. Goal is to keep our residents safe. Nursing home residents in the State of Vermont that have had COVID is 40% and we want to stay ahead of that stat. All test results have been negative other than the one employee back at the beginning of COVID. Concerned with impact of staffing if we have an outbreak. We are not allowing temporary employees to work at two facilities. PPE supply doing ok. State of Vermont looking to purchase a large amount of N95 masks and gloves. We are looking for off-site storage as goal is to have a 6-month supply of PPE at all times.

Tomorrow has meeting with Finance and Management to go over FY22 budget. Once the governor makes his budget public, then can get into specifics. There will be an increase request in general funds directly associated to increased cost of operations related to COVID. We did receive some CARES money. Should also be receiving incentive money from CMS because infection control rate has been so well. Regarding the budget, our figures are not inflated. We are close to the governor's guidance. No date has been set yet to appear in front of the legislature and suspect it will be held via Zoom.

Thanked the staff for doing a phenomenal job each and every day, 24/7, keeping a close eye on our veterans and members, looking for signs of depression or self-isolating, and in meeting the needs of the residents that are on quarantine.

Has learned a lot from the COO, and much respect to him, his respect for his country and what he has

**PATRICIA CROSSMAN
DIRECTOR OF
NURSING**

INFO

**DR. PETER KING
MEDICAL DIRECTOR**

brought to the facility is outstanding. Wishes him the best with his future and with his family.

A lot of challenges with the staffing of the facility, second shift primarily. Supporting a lot with agency nursing. Pulling from the floor to help cover a supervisor position that will be out for a while. In the process of interviewing for 2 LPN full-time positions that will help support the nurses on that shift. Just hired 2 LNA's and interviewing another LNA. We have had good success getting agency staff in here compared to other facilities in the state. Should we get a positive case, we will have designated staff to each unit, no floating off the units. The rolls of the unit managers if we get a positive case will also look different. The overall goal with consistent staffing is to try not to have staff cross over as much as possible. Strategizing the rooms and residents and developing staffing patterns to that to utilize the best amount of time of staff and how we are covering the facility. It is a team effort.

Starting to work on competencies to keep staff familiar where practice is always the best practice and supporting them in that as much as possible. We have 2 certified MDS nurses now, and a unit manager that is going on for a bachelor's degree. There are several employees enrolled in the infection preventionist course for certification. All nurses can apply and take the course. Encourage anyone that wants to take the course to advise so can make it happen for them. The more knowledge that we can share and spread throughout the facility, the better care and services we are giving.

Supporting the antigen testing as the clinical team will be doing a lot of that. Will also be starting the N95 fit testing of staff. Continue to participate in the SVMC crisis meeting each week. Also participate in the ECHO training which is a global education on COVID, involves WHO (World Health Organization), and keeps us up to date. Support and participate with DAIL conferences.

Also praised COO, working with him has been inspirational to have his experience in logistics that facilitated our approach with COVID. He will be missed a lot and his bright personable character that brings a smile to the residents faces when they see him coming.

Also expressed gratitude to the Board of Trustees for the Art Charron Selfless Service Award as was very humbled by it due to Art's giving of company, companionship and support to everyone at VVH and truly honored to have received the award in his name.

Goal is to stop COVID at our door. To have the infection rate so high in the community and not in our facility is wonderful. Hopeful to make it through. Grateful to be here and for all the staff and all they do for this.

Best news of the month is the vaccine. Vaccines that we have accrue both an individual benefit and a benefit to society. To the individual, it lowers your risk dramatically of getting the disease, and if you get disease, it is much less severe from the studies that we have at this point. With society, it benefits when everyone gets the vaccine. We are hoping that discussions around that will improve our vaccination rate to be able to address this. We know what life is like without the vaccine, what we are doing right now,

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	<p>and until we all get it, this is how life stays. We hope that will provide the incentive and encouragement for people to get the vaccine. Vaccines are generally very safe and this one has a good track record in initial studies and will see as it rolls out in much larger populations. We know what COVID can do-it is a dangerous disease. The vaccine is the light at the end of the tunnel. When asked about the vaccination being voluntary for the employees, responded feel it is important to get the vaccine and feel nationally there may be a lot of entities that are reluctant to make the statement to have vaccination be mandatory because it is early in the roll out of a new vaccine's career. Vaccination, in general, has had such a positive benefit on mankind, and within health care, it is vital and one of the essential things we can do to avoid getting our patients sick. He supports any aggressive measures that help improve influenza vaccine, and given the fact that nearly 40% of the people that die from this disease are nursing home residents, it would only stand to reason that it would make sense to make it a job requirement in the future.</p> <p>We are in final stages of hiring a nurse practitioner which will help supplement our services, support what the provider does, and be a consistent presence in the Home. Question was raised if the nurse practitioner will somehow impact the clinic support provided by the VA. It likely will but doesn't supplant the MD support because MD support is needed for admissions and most of the updates, as over half are regulatorily required to be done by MD's. It will decrease the need for additional nurse practitioner hours.</p>	
<p>MELINDA CROWL ADMISSION/MARKETING</p>	<p>Will also miss the COO, especially for always being there to bounce ideas off of and for his confidence in her.</p> <p>Provided current census information.</p> <p>Have had to cancel a lot of our events due to COVID so have been busy filming those activities and sharing them with our community and on our internal channel Touchtown. This includes the Tree Lighting Ceremony and will be doing Day of Remembrance and Wreaths Across America. We had a lot of family members send in holiday messages that we are showing on Touchtown. Invited the Board members to send a video or picture with a written message to be shown on Touchtown for the residents. The cover story in Vermont Maturity issue came out. The link to the website doesn't do justice to the one in print. That is mostly a Chittendon county publication but knowing we are trying to reach out to the northern part of the state, this was important. Trying to tape a lot of events to bring them to our residents and the community. Focus has been trying to put some cheer, holiday lights and videos on the channel.</p>	<p>INFO</p>
<p>FINANCE</p>	<p>Requested authorizations from the Board. The first one is to (regretfully) remove Allan Faxon and Tonya Goodell as signers on our two local checking accounts - One is the Member's Trust and the other is the Donation Account. Secondly, request to add Melinda Crowl and Robyn Boland to take their places.</p>	<p>CLOSED</p>

	<p>First motion is to remove Allan Faxon and Tonya Goodell from check signing. Ms. Jennifer Carmichael made the motion, second by Mrs. Joyce Scribner. No discussion-motion carried.</p> <p>Next motion is to replace Allan Faxon and Tonya Goodell with Melinda Crowl and Robyn Boland. Said motion made by Mr. Jamie Percey, second by Mrs. Joyce Scribner. Question was raised if this is voluntary and both Melinda and Robyn responded they are willing to do so. No further discussion. Motion carried.</p> <p>A request was made regarding the Common Trust Endowment Account. Last year between dividend, interest, realized and unrealized gains, total is \$39,037. Would like to have a motion to move \$39,000 from the Common Trust Endowment Account over to the Board's Strategic Plan Account within the Donation Account to pay invoices specific to the Strategic Plan. Motion was made by Mrs. Joyce Scribner as presented by Mr. McClafferty, second by Ms. Jennifer Carmichael. Statement made regarding that in the past this is the money that was made available to the CEO to purchase things, but last year said those funds were going to be put towards the strategic planning initiative and that we are running close to the money we owe to BerryDunn. The contract is with the state and the state has been paying the invoices. The Board owes money back to the state, need to reimburse the state. A brief discussion followed. Contract was for two years, but the invoices have to be paid as the state receives them. The motion is on the floor and a second to move money into that account. No further discussion. Motion carried.</p>	<p>CLOSED</p> <p>CLOSED</p>
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PRESIDENT	<p>President Krawczyk verified that all members of the Board have received a copy of the draft version of the Strategic Plan this week. Then requested members of the Board to review a page presented earlier in the day by BerryDunn regarding the plan. Reference made to the third bullet that the plan is a living document and it isn't going to be put on a shelf and not thought about any longer. The fourth bullet is that it can be used with different audiences-legislators, family members, staff members, board members, etc. Will be making updates over the course of time with the plan and will require attention from everybody. Would like to give all the board members a couple months to go through the plan and look to make sure it accomplishes the goals that we set forth to do when we hired BerryDunn to help us put this plan together. In the February meeting, we will allocate enough time to go through section by section of this plan to make sure we are comfortable with it before moving forward to establish priorities, such as which feasibility studies to move forward with first, and decide where do we go from here. It was almost a year ago today (on December 11) when the first meeting took place with BerryDunn. Have been able to accomplish a lot in one year.</p>	OPEN

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
BOARD COMMENTS	<p>Mr. Jamie Percey inquired about being able to use funds from the member’s assistance fund for residents to purchase cigarettes because it is an addiction for some people. The CEO responded that previously have had discussions with then Commissioner Reardon regarding this and we cannot use state funds or donated funds for cigarettes. We have made this known to the Veteran Service Organizations and for a while they were providing cigarettes, but no longer do. Our obligation is that we can provide a patch but can’t use state funds to purchase cigarettes or alcohol. The second question was regarding the increased one on one positions in the last year compared to the previous year, and do we feel it is COVID-related as far as isolation, or some other key factor? We are using nursing staff for one on ones from that area for it as trying to keep the Home in an isolated state so not to bring COVID in. CEO responded seeing a lot more of the veterans coming in have more comorbidities and a lot more undiagnosed mental health. Have been doing Zoom interviews with people before taking them in, only to find they present well in the Zoom video and on their medical information but not the same once they are here.</p> <p>Col. Gary DeGasta expressed thanks to COO for the wonderful job over the years and in complimenting and supplementing the CEO.</p> <p>Representative Mary Morrissey extended her thanks to the COO for the incredible job and will be sorely missed. Also wanted to thank the staff and administration for doing an outstanding job every single day and proud of what they do every day by going into work and taking care of our veterans.</p> <p>COO responded that it has been an extreme honor serving the State of Vermont, its veterans, and the Board. Being with this staff and these veterans has been an amazing time and is very hard to leave. Reason for leaving doesn’t have anything to do with the job. Has other things he would like to accomplish and are family related. Thanked for trust and confidence. Also thanked CEO for letting him run free with the Rifle Range and several other things. Truly enjoy it, love this job and when the pandemic is over will be back in the building participating in things.</p>	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
PRESIDENT	<p>Reminded the Board the next meeting is 10 February 2021. Wished everyone a happy holiday, to be safe and protect themselves by wearing a mask, social distance, and to wash hands.</p>	INFO
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
ADJOURNMENT	<p>With no further business, President Krawczyk entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Mr. Michael diMonda, second by Mrs. Joyce Scribner. Motion carried.</p>	CLOSED

Meeting was adjourned at 1358. Next Board Meeting 10 February 2021.