

PIONEERS MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE DISTRICT  
207 West Legion Road, Brawley, CA 92227  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Tuesday, March 28, 2023  
PMH Auditorium  
5:00 pm

## Minutes

**PMHD MISSION: Quality healthcare and compassionate service for families of the Imperial Valley**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you require special accommodations to participate in a board meeting, please contact the District at (760) 351-3250 at least 47 hours prior to the meeting.

### I. **CALL TO ORDER** (time: 5:00 pm – 5:15 pm)

President Santillan called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the PMH Auditorium

#### A. Roll Call

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Katy Santillan, President  
Rachel Fonseca, Secretary  
Linda Rubin, Treasurer  
Nick Aguirre, Asst. Treasurer/Secretary

**STAFF:**

Damon Sorensen, Interim CEO  
Carly Loper, CFO  
Carol Bojorquez, Interim CNO  
Ramaiah Indudhara, MD, Chief of Staff  
Sally Nguyen, General Counsel

**GUESTS:**

Carly Zamora, Chief of Clinics  
Jorge Reyes, HR Director

Absent: Enola Berker, Vice President

#### B. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Director Aguirre, seconded by Director Rubin. **The motion was unanimously carried.**

### II. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Director Rubin noted that she spoke with ACHD who reported that there is a bill for seismic compliance going through the legislative process. This bill will be beneficial for healthcare districts as it would provide for a five-year extension. At the end of the extension, if compliance is still not achieved, the State may provide assistance in the way of funding or render another extension.

Director Fonseca advised that this Saturday will be the Cesar Chavez celebration for the City of Brawley. All wishing to attend is invited.

SECTION

Director Aguirre announced that we recently lost a past member of the PMHD family, Mr. Mirelas. The Board sends their deepest sympathies to his family.

- III. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – At this time, the Board will hear comments on any agenda item and on any item not on this agenda. If any person wishes to be heard, he or she shall stand; address the chairperson and state the subject, or subjects, upon which he or she desires to comment. Time limit for each speaker is 5 minutes. A total of 15 minutes shall be allocated for each item. *(time: 5:15 pm – 5:30 pm)*

Ms. Oreida Chin, Director of the Imperial Valley Cancer Support Center, addressed the Board. She stated that she was disappointed that no one reached out as follow up regarding the hospital issues. Her main concern is the oncology department as there may be patients not receiving the appropriate care for their condition. The Cancer Center is struggling as their main source of referrals came from Pioneers. Despite that, they were able to assist about 140 people. She is, again, concerned about patients that may be left out of the necessary care and no one is talking to them.

- IV. OLD BUSINESS** *(time: 5:30 pm – 5:40 pm)*

There was no old business.

- V. MEDICAL STAFF REPORT** – Ramaiah Indudhara, MD, Chief of Staff, will present for Board consideration, the following matters: *(time: 5:40 pm – 6:00 pm)*

- A. Recommendations from the Medical Executive Committee for Medical Staff Membership and/or Clinical Privileges, policies/procedures/forms, or other related recommendations

Dr. Indudhara provided a brief overview of the medical staff report. He reported that the masking and COVID requirements will be changing starting April 3<sup>rd</sup> for healthcare facilities. The use of mask is still recommended for high-risk areas and those individuals who are at high risk. Work continues on improving physician documentation. The Transcription staff noted that the new hospitalist group has been very prompt in responding to documentation questions and the need for signatures. Dr. Indudhara mentioned that the transfer report shows that some specialties continue to have a 15-20% transfer rate. These specialties include GI and neurosurgery. A motion was made to approve the medical staff report by Director Aguirre, seconded by Director Fonseca. **The motion was unanimously carried.**

- VI. POLICIES/PROCEDURES/REVIEW OF OTHER ITEMS** – The Board will consider and may take action on the following: *(time: 6:00 pm – 6:45 pm)*

- A. Approval of Minutes
1. 2/22/23 Supplemental Meeting
  2. 2/28/23 Regular Meeting
- B. Hospital Policies
1. Claims Management

SECTION

## 2. Mandatory COVID 19 Vaccination

## C. Update Reports

## 1. Women's Auxiliary

The Women's Auxiliary is donating some equipment to Pioneers. The information will be sent to Ms. Bojorquez, Interim CNO. Auxiliary was planning to have their big attic treasures event, but they checked their storage and found that they didn't have a lot of items. They will be hosting mini-sale event by the Gift Shop next month.

## 2. LAFCO

Nothing to report.

## 3. Funding Requests Committee

There were no requests.

## 4. Compliance Officer Evaluation

## 5. General Counsel Evaluation

Evaluation feedback was provided to each Board member in case they wish to redo their ratings. All Board members are to bring their final ratings to the next supplemental meeting which is April 19<sup>th</sup> for final tabulation.

## D. February Finance Report

Ms. Loper reported that the month of January saw an increase in the inpatient census. This resulted in the gross revenue increasing to \$1.3 million per day. Expenses decreased slightly and contract labor decreased. There was a profit of \$132,000 to the bottom line. The profit was due to receiving a dish payment for 2019, which we were not expecting. Without that DSH payment, there would have been a loss of about \$671,000. OB volumes increased by about 21% in February. Cash Days on Hand was extremely tight at the end of February. This was due to the District having to send out the IGT matching payment. A question had been posed as to whether Mechanics Bank was a strong bank or not. Ms. Loper provided a flyer of information from Mechanics Bank on their viability. The news regarding some faulty investment was related to another bank and did not involve Mechanics Bank. Also, because Pioneers is a public entity, the bank covers 110% of what the District has in their bank. There was a question about whether self-pay OB patients are covered by the State for 30-days. Ms. Loper advised that only California residents are covered for the 30-days, if they are eligible. Most of the self-pay patients are not California residents, so we are exploring the possibility of them being covered under a rule for refugees. A discussion ensued regarding how charges are applied in the clinics to see how they are performing. The possibility of licensing the smaller clinics as RHC's is being explored.

SECTION

## E. Human Resources Report

Mr. Reyes mentioned that the State released information as to when they will be releasing the retention bonus for employees. It will be issued on March 30<sup>th</sup> for Pioneers. Once Pioneers receives the lumpsum check, they will begin the process of disbursement to the staff that qualify for the bonus. It is still unclear as to how much each individual will receive but will know more once the funds are received. Mr. Reyes advised that there was only a 0.7% turnover rate for February.

## F. Revised PTO Policy

## G. Discussion and Possible Approval of District and Contract/Agreements Policy

Several Board members had expressed concern regarding having too many consulting agreements and their wanting to be better informed about their activities. The contract policy was revised so it requires that all consulting agreements regardless of cost need to come to the Board for consideration. Also, consultants are to provide a weekly report of their activities. It was also noted that there is only one person with signing rights. The Board was asked if they wished to appoint someone else. The Board advised that Board members can also sign, so there is no need to assign someone else at this time.

## H. Authorize Amendment to Boston Scientific Peripheral Intervention Agreement

Contract Value: varies; Contract Term: Ongoing; has out clause; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Supplies

## I. Authorize Addendum 5 to Task Order No. 2019-01 with Xtend Health, LLC

Contract Value: \$9,916 to \$19,833; Contract Term: One month extension; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Purchased Services

## J. Authorize Statement of Work for Revenue Recovery Project with Warbird Municipal Advisors

Contract Value: \$1,700/day + 30% of recovery; Contract Term: One and half (1 ½) years; Budgeted: No; Budget Classification: Purchased Services

## K. Authorize Statement of Work for Managed Care Contract Advisory Service and Contract Negotiations with ECG Management Consultants

Contract Value: not to exceed \$50,000; Contract Term: One (1) year; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Purchased Services

## L. Authorize Proposal for Grant Writing Services with California Consulting, Inc.

Contract Value: estimated \$51,000; Contract Term: One (1) year; Budgeted: No; Budget Classification: Purchased services/potential revenue

## M. Authorize Membership Dues for Hospital Association of San Diego and Imperial County and the California Hospital Association

Contract Value: \$86,767; Contract Term: One (1) year; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Dues & Subscriptions

ITEM J – Ms. Loper reported that each payor that Warbird reviews and analyzes takes about a 10-day turnaround. It is an industry standard that they get a percentage of any funds recovered. She has set the agreement in such a way that if we do not

SECTION

like the outcome of the first payor review, then they do not continue with any further reviews.

ITEM L – Ms. Loper chose option 1 on this agreement and has requested that they add an out- clause in case the District does not wish to continue the service.

ITEM M – Director Rubin asked what would happen if the dues were not paid. Mr. Sorensen noted that they advocate for all hospitals in California, so their efforts will not change if we do not pay the dues. The dues can be paid on a quarterly basis. CHA provides other services such as training and CEU's which a lot of the staff take advantage of.

A motion was made to approve items A through M by Director Rubin, seconded by Director Aguirre. **The motion was unanimously carried.**

**VII. MANAGEMENT REPORTS** – The Board will receive the following information reports and may take action. *(time: 6:45 pm – 7:30 pm)*

A. Operations Reports – Damon Sorensen, Interim CEO

1. CEO Report (Interim Chief Executive Officer)

Mr. Sorensen reported that the staff is doing a lot of excellent work on improvements across the board. He is happy to see that trend and the District is heading in the right direction. Mr. Sorensen noted that he tells staff that we want to be a great place to work, a great place for physicians to practice and a great place for patients to get quality care. If all those things are achieved, then the finances will follow. He stated that he is very pleased with the progress. Mr. Sorensen advised that there are some opportunities in the community for Pioneers to provide specific services. The staff is focusing on improving those areas so that we can then offer to provide those services. He mentioned that as we continue to look at costs, one area that needs to be reviewed is benefits. The benchmark for the expense of benefits is between 20%-25%; Pioneers is at 31%. This means that for every dollar in salary Pioneers pays, it pays an additional 31 cents in benefits. Mr. Sorensen reported that the benefits will be reviewed to find savings, yet remain as "friendly" as possible for employees. The revised PTO policy will only apply to new employees. Most turnover at Pioneers occurs within the first three years. So, having a really rich PTO plan for individuals who are not going to stay longer does not make sense. The sick bank was also carved out of the PTO bank, so that it could be managed better. Mr. Sorensen noted that about 45 days ago, Pioneers hired some LVNs at a rate higher than the current LVN's. He advised that this will be fixed starting the first day in April where the current LVNs will be adjusted to match. We are starting the budgeting season and will discuss assumptions and changes in the coming months. Mr. Sorensen believes Pioneers will continue to see improvements, which will allow for recommendations to be made to make some salary increases in other areas. It was reported that Mr. Sorensen received a text on Monday night advising that Pioneers was approved for Imperial Heights by CMS. The team is beginning to work on the transition. It is a good move for the community that Pioneers is

SECTION

taking over as Imperial Heights had turned in their notice to CDPH that they would be closing. He mentioned that interviews for the marketing director position have been held. There were a lot of good candidates. An offer was made to Michelle Ramirez, and she has accepted.

## 2. Hospital operations (Interim Chief Nursing Officer)

Ms. Bojorquez expressed her gratitude to the Board for giving her the opportunity to serve as the District's interim CNO. She advised that the new COVID masking guidelines will go into effect starting April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Masks will only be required for specific conditions. Those employees who opted out of the vaccine, will also have to wear a mask. Employees that have been vaccinated will receive a sticker to place on their badge. COVID Testing will continue for OB and surgical patients. ED Throughput huddles started on February 15<sup>th</sup> and there have been a lot of people participating. A lot of significant progress is being made. The Safety Huddles started on March 13<sup>th</sup>. All departments participate in these huddles. The primary focus for Nursing is physician control. This is looking at the staffing for the volumes that we currently have and placing staff in the appropriate area.

## 3. Clinics operations (Chief of Clinic Operations)

Ms. Zamora reported that the focus of physician recruitment has been in the areas of OB and GI. She has received a few CVs from physicians interested in our hospital. As soon as she connects with them, she'll be able to give the Board an update. The clinics had three resignations in the month of February. Their reason for leaving was due to pay. There was an increase in volumes in the clinics, except in the Calexico clinic. The clinics have started morning huddles to review the visits for the day and staffing needs. Ms. Zamora stated that Pioneers suspended the oncology service. This was due to the inability to find a physician. There was a group from San Diego who wanted to lease the space for an oncology physician. However, the physician would not be able to be here full-time, so that did not work out. The group now has two physicians working out of their Yuma office and has reached out to Pioneers to renew discussions about space.

## 4. Medical staff (Chief Nursing Officer)

Ms. Bojorquez noted that she, Mr. Sorensen and Ms. Segar-Miller are working closely with the new hospitalist group. They provide data and feedback on how the group is performing and setting expectations. The group is actively looking for a medical director. Mr. Sorensen mentioned that the fee for the Medical Director is part of the agreement, and he has requested a credit back to January 1, 2023, since they have not provided one since then.

## 5. Finance (Chief Financial Officer)

Training for the point-of-service collections was completed and it should be going live starting April 1<sup>st</sup>.

SECTION

## 6. Information technology (Chief Nursing Officer)

The automated patient portal has gone live. Patients can now go into the portal to find out their lab results.

## 7. Facilities, logistics, construction, support – (Chief of Logistics and Support Services)

There was nothing to report.

## 8. Quality resources - (Director of Quality Resources)

Ms. Segar-Miller stated that her goal has been to support the team and provide the tools needed for them to succeed. Everyone has been very open to receiving coaching. There have been some very transparent conversations and the response has been positive. There have already been some great successes in the Emergency Department, for example.

## 9. Board matters

## B. Legal Counsel Report – Sally Nguyen

## 1. All matters to be discussed in Closed Session

**VIII. CLOSED SESSION** – The following matters will be considered by the Board in closed session; the Board will reconvene in open session to announce any action taken on matters considered in closed session. *(time: 7:30 pm – 7:50 pm)*

## A. CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS INVOLVING TRADE SECRETS – Safe Harbor: Health and Safety Code §32106, subparagraph (b)

1. Based on the Board's prior findings regarding Trade Secret classification, as contained in Resolution 2023-01, consideration and discussion of possible initiation of the following:
  - a. Updating Certain District Strategic Planning Initiatives

## B. PENDING OR THREATENED LITIGATION – Safe Harbor: Subdivision (b) of Government Code §54956.9

1. Claim of Coronado v. PMHD

## C. PENDING OR THREATENED LITIGATION – Safe Harbor: Subdivision (b) of Government Code §54956.9

1. Conference with Legal Counsel regarding threatened litigation involving possible facts or circumstances not yet known to potential party or parties, disclosure of which could adversely affect the District's position.
  - a. Compliance Issues

SECTION

**IX. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION** *(time: 7:50 – 8:00 pm)*

A. Take Actions as Required on Closed Session Matters

**The Board provided direction to Legal Counsel on how to proceed with the claim of Coronado.**

**X. ADJOURNMENT** *(time: 8:00 pm)*

The meeting was adjourned to the next meeting.



Board Secretary



Clerk of the Board