

**Orcas Island Health Care District**  
**Board of Commissioners - REGULAR Meeting Minutes**  
**REMOTE BOARD MEETING**  
**September 21, 2021**  
**5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Commissioners Present (via Zoom):**

Art Lange, President  
Diane Boteler  
Patricia Miller, Secretary  
Pegi Groundwater  
Richard Fralick

**Staff (via Zoom):**

Anne Presson, Superintendent

**Commissioners Absent:**

None.

**I. Call to Order**

President Lange called the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of 2021 to order at 5:01 pm. He noted that there was a quorum with four Commissioners present; Commissioner Boteler joined at 5:41. He welcomed members of the community and the members of the Island Hospital leadership team to the meeting.

When asked if anyone had modifications to the Agenda, none were indicated.

**II. Public Comment**

There were no requests for Public Comment at this time.

**III. Consent Agenda**

The items contained in the Consent Agenda included: the September 7, 2021, Regular Board Meeting Minutes and an AP Voucher Report dated 9/13/21 in the amount of \$6360.08.

**MOVED by Commissioner Groundwater, seconded by Commissioner Fralick to approve the Consent Agenda. VOTE 4:0:0. MOTION CARRIED.**

**IV. Island Primary Care – Orcas: Updates**

- a. **Staffing Update** – IH CEO Charles Hall discussed current staffing and recruitment. Current providers include Dr. Frank James, medical director; Dr. Jon Peterson (Thursday and Friday); Dr. Kathleen Garde (third Wednesdays); and PAs Jennifer Utter and Karen Caley-Orr. Dr. Georgeanne Freeman, who has a practice in Austin, Texas, has expressed interest in serving as a locum, especially in the demanding summer period; her background is in family practice and urgent care. Rachel Cleghorn, PA, has been hired and will begin October 18; she comes from in state with a good background in underserved communities, primary care, family medicine, urgent care, women’s health, and chronic disease management. The hiring of a new female provider should be official within a month; she has 17 years of experience in primary, high-acuity care within clinic, women’s health, and underinsured communities, and was formerly a medical director and clinical assistant professor. She has a young family and has been getting to know the community. She is expected to start in January. A second physician has had an IH site visit and will visit Orcas in late September; he has 25 years of experience in primary care,

urgent care, and rural medicine. IH is also in dialog with a regional doctor with extensive family practice/urgent care experience, and continues to talk with physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants to evaluate their interest. The final core staff mix will be two full-time providers with PA/NP support, serving 55-60 patients per day once the Clinic is operating at full capacity. Specialist services are being offered by Libby Lewis, CCC-SLP, to support students at the school district and adults with memory issues. Dr. David Rice, urologist, will be visiting to explore need for services.

- b. **Update on PB-RHC status** – A team from IH, the District, and medical policy specialists met with a congressional delegation from the staffs of Sen. Patty Murray, Sen. Maria Cantwell, and Congressman Rick Larson to discuss challenges of action taken by Congress to change Medicare reimbursement for PB-RHCs, much of which came to light after the clinic opened. IH's five-year pro forma budget was built on the Medicare's reimbursement model that was in place at the time, and had not changed in many, many years. That level of reimbursement is what provides for long-term sustainability.. IH signed a contract with the District in October 2020 and put in an application for ownership under Orcas Family Health Center's existing RHC number. Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, which included an unexpected change to payment rates for RHCs that jeopardized the Orcas clinic and clinics throughout the County. IH would lose about \$768,000 in 2021 on its Orcas contract and about \$5 million over five years. The team met with our three legislators' staffs to gain support for a grandfather clause, SB 934, designed to strengthen the Rural Health Clinic Act of 2021 by including in the grandfathered-clinic definition "any qualified rural health clinic that was in existence, in 'mid-build', or that had either submitted an application or had a binding written agreement with an outside unrelated party for the construction, purchase, lease or other establishment of such a rural health clinic prior to December 31, 2020." For the remaining Islands in San Juan County, the team urged Congress to recognize that a primary care clinic on a rural island should be granted a cost-based rate, the same as done for Critical Access Hospitals. IH would like to declare the whole region as a special designation for enhanced reimbursement. The battle over this legislation isn't over. Superintendent Presson added that she had spoken to our lobbyist earlier in the day to stress that speed is vital; waiting another year for relief would create great stress and uncertainty. Fralick asked if they hoped for resolution by the end of the fiscal year, and Presson and Hall indicated that they were pushing for that.

- c. **Clinic ops update** – Practice Administrator Patty Codd gave an update on clinic operations from April 5 to Sept. 17. Provider visits numbered 4071, nurse visits (e.g., shots, injections, education, ear lavage, suture removals) numbered 1181, labs were 1083, x-rays were 513, and after-hours provider visits remain at 11, with none since the beginning of July. The on-call physicians are coming to good resolutions with patients on the phone.

The clinic will be down one provider for a few weeks until the new Physician Assistant joins the staff. New staff additions are Cheryl Holland, RN; Syann Neal, phlebotomist; Bridget Wright, appointment coordinator; and Veronica Alexander, RN. Five employees have transitioned from full time to per diem, so they can continue to serve as needed; one employee has resigned. Alenna Garcia has accepted the position of patient liaison, helping connect patients with resources and resolve questions quickly. A new service is courtesy x-rays for patients of all non-IPC-O providers at designated times, and to be scheduled, every weekday.

- d. **COVID vaccines** – Elise Cutter, IH COO, reported that starting in mid-October COVID vaccines will be administered in clinic by appointment only. Moderna boosters will be administered once those are approved; Cutter is not sure yet if they'll do third shots for immunocompromised patients. Patients who have appointments for other purposes can also get a vaccination during those appointments. For now, IH is only providing Moderna, yet that could change as the County can serve as a hub to provide other vaccines, if needed. COVID testing by appointment will increase, available Monday-Wednesday-Friday 11:00-noon and Tuesday 4:00-6:00 for COVID-like symptoms, exposure to someone who tests positive, and pre-procedure testing; there will be no travel testing at this time. IH has not had the Pfizer vaccine, but San Juan County and Ray's Pharmacy are trying to obtain the Pfizer vaccine.

**V. Committee and Work Group Reports**

- a. **Building Group** – An unexpected inspection of the building was conducted by a representative from a state agency that is part of hospital accreditation, and it will be followed up by a formal inspection in the future. The inspector identified a few problems, including signs of possible pests and exposed bare wood indoors. Fralick noted there had been no pest control contract since 2017. He met with San Juan Pest Control and is recommending a contract for quarterly outside spray treatment and inside work, as needed. The exterminator also recommended unbaited traps in the attic. Fralick will bring back a bid once it's received; a placeholder amount has been entered in the budget. Fralick felt that improved cleaning, sealing of the bare wood, and perhaps replacement of some ceiling tiles with watermarks were needed. He asked if Groundwater had spoken with a "handyman" candidate yet; she has not heard back from the person.

Regarding the refrigerator and freezer, the new freezer compressor is on premises, and Fralick has called Brown Refrigeration to schedule an appointment for its installation and for checking loss of refrigerant in the fridge. Presson reported that the electrician has the replacement parts for the light fixtures and has been discussing installation with Aimee Johnson, clinic manager. She also reported that the electrician is fully vaccinated.

- b. **Finance Committee** – Commissioner Miller met with OFHC staff to review the closeout of their financials. They are requesting a final subsidy of \$20,000 to cover the remainder of their wind-down costs, such as final costs of remodeling the building back to its original state and preparation of their 990 report, as well as repayment of loan from Dr. Shinstrom. That amount would give them a \$10,000-12,000 cushion for any late bills. The payment would be under the same agreement in place to date, under which unused funds are returned to the District.

**MOVED by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Groundwater to approve payment to OFHC of \$20,000 to cover clinic wind-down costs, contingent on the Finance Committee's confirming 1) that OFHC will remain in existence long enough to complete the reconciliation, and 2) that the contract has adequate language to ensure that. VOTE 5:0:0. MOTION CARRIED.**

Bruce Rylander is working with Miller on updating his original financial modeling tool, which hopefully will be ready by the next meeting to develop different scenarios based on various assumptions. The tool will be as simple as possible, and Miller invited the commissioners to submit any suggestions.

Groundwater asked about the financials sent before the meeting, noting that we had planned to buy a clinic-grade refrigerator. Presson responded that we have already purchased one that is standard in IH clinics, but no invoice has been received yet.

**VI. Old Business** – no old business was presented.

**VII. Operations Report**

Presson reported that she had made no significant changes yet in the proposed 2022 budget, as the impacts of the federal RHC changes are still unclear. However, the financials have been updated through August 31, 2021. She is awaiting staffing information and remodel estimates from Johnson and Codd. She is now developing projections based on higher revenue numbers and using those as the basis for the allowed 1% cost increases. She made that change so the numbers are consistent with what we want to do with the budget. She adjusted down the COBRA costs to \$20,000 from \$30,000 but believes actual costs will be less. Reimbursement was limited to employees who are still full time at year's end. She also put in \$20,000 for the OFHC wind-down and \$250 for a pest control service in December. As far as the future cost associated with the interior clinic remodel, Fralick noted that remodeling two clinic offices to exam rooms would cost about \$18,000 and that furnishings would cost about \$6000.

**VIII. Public Comment**

There were no requests for Public Comment at this time.

**IX. Executive Session**

The commissioners and the District's attorney, Don Black, moved into Executive Session at 6:11 p.m. under RCW 42.30.110G. They planned to return at 6:50 p.m. The Commissioners asked for two 20-minute extensions and reopened their Regular Meeting at 7:33 p.m.

**X. New Business**

President Lange report that no action would be taken following the conclusion of the Executive Session.


**XI. Upcoming Meetings**

President Lange reported that the next Regular meeting of the OIHCD Board is scheduled for October 5. Other meetings were listed on the Agenda.

**XII. Meeting adjournment**

**MOVED by Commissioner Fralick, seconded by Commissioner Boteler to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.  
VOTE 5:0:0. MOTION CARRIED.**

**Minutes approved this 5<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2021.**

DocuSigned by:  
  
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**Attest: Patricia Miller, OIHCD Board Secretary**

10/30/2021

**Date signed**