

Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Board of Trustees Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke (HLY) was held telephonically on Tuesday, July 14, 2020. The meeting began at 5:20 PM.

- **Members Present:**

Kevin Jourdain, Chairman; Christopher Dupont, Cindy Lacoste, Cesar Lopez, Isaac Mass, Carmen Ostrander

Kevin Jourdain reported that Richard Girard has resigned from the Board of Trustees. There are currently six out of the seven seats on the Board of Trustees filled.

- **Also Present:**

Val Liptak, Acting Superintendent; Dan Tsai, Acting Secretary, EOHHS; Dr. Mohammad Dar, Interim Chief Medical Officer, Norman Gousy, Chief Financial Officer, Pat Dill, Interim Nurse Executive; Mark Yankopoulos, Legal Counsel; Col. Michael Lazo, Interim Chief Operating Officer; Alda Rega, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, EHS; Asya Rozenhal, EOHHS Facilities, Capital and Strategic Planning Manager; Liz Minnis, Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Planning of DCAMM, Ganesh Ramachandran, Senior Project Manager for the Office of Planning of DCAMM; Cheryl Poppe, Acting Secretary, DVS; and Nancy Shimel, Recording Secretary

- **Pledge of Allegiance** - All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

- **Public Comment**

John Paradis, former Deputy Superintendent at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke requested to make public comment. Mr. Paradis is a member of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Coalition, which is a coalition of veterans, family members and other concerned citizens. The coalition provided testimony at the Statehouse today. Mr. Paradis provided the background that in 2013, the Board of Trustees were fully briefed by the then Superintendent, Paul Barabani, on the design to add 120 private rooms as well as convert existing rooms to the Home. This would create 278 fully compliant beds meeting VA standards. In 2015, Mr. Barabani also briefed the Board of Trustees about creating an Adult Day Health program at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. He reported that these projects were approved by the VA for 65% funding, however the Long Term Care and Adult Day Health Programs never resulted in getting the State's 35% matching commitment for funds. Mr. Barabani requests today for the Board of Trustees to take action to increase funding for sufficient space, staffing, and equipment to provide safe care for the veterans. He requests that the Board expedite the design of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke to allow for construction of newly compliant rooms for 250 veteran rooms, including private bathrooms/showers for each room, as well as the establishment of an Adult Day Health program with submission to the VA by the April 2021 deadline.

- **Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion by Cindy Lacoste and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on June 9, 2020 with the following change: Replace the name: "John Parody" to "John Paradis", and to accept the unamended minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held on July 1, 2020.

Kevin Jourdain conducted a Roll Call vote on the approval of the amended minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on June 9, 2020, and the unamended minutes of July 1, 2020. The Role Call vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), and Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

- **CFO Update**

Norman Gousy reviewed the "Trustee Fund-Summary of Receipts and Disbursement Report for FY20 for the period ending June 30, 2020, as well as the current month's activity detail. He noted that the majority of income was from interest in gains. Norm provided information on the operating budget using the standard reporting format. The UBS and Westfield Bank statements were also provided. Kevin Jourdain noted that the UBS balance is divided into two divisions, cash and equities, that equal \$1,089,928. He is pleased to see this growth and noted that this is the highest balance we have had to date.

CFO Update (Cont'd):

Kevin Jourdain reported that the Board of Trustees will be requesting a return of \$100,000 in funding to the Trustee Account. These funds were going towards the funding of the electronic medical record implementation project. The project is a joint venture between the Soldiers' Homes in Holyoke and Chelsea. It was noted that the Board of Trustees at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home also contributed funds towards this project. The State is now going to be funding this project.

A motion was made by Cindy Lacoste, and seconded by Chris Dupont, to accept the CFO report, subject to the pending audit being done by Powers and Sullivan.

The Roll Call vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

- **Report from State and Administrator:**

Daniel Tsai, Acting Secretary for EOHHS, recognized that Val Liptak and the team from the Soldiers Home in Holyoke, and Cheryl Poppe, Acting Secretary, Department of Veterans Services, are present on this call today. Secretary Tsai reported that the Home has come out of crisis mode. All veterans have recovered who were COVID positive, and there are zero COVID positive cases in the Home. We have implemented ongoing proactive surveillance testing. Infection control and safety of the veterans and the staff are our top priority. We are currently in the transition and rebuilding phase moving forward. Outdoor visitations are taking place for the veterans and families. Secretary Tsai expressed the need to stay vigilant with PPE in the Home. He reported that elements from the investigation report completed by Mark Pearlstein are being implemented. One example of this is the implementation of the permanent staffing schedule. We have posted a number of critical vacancies for the senior leadership positions.

Val Liptak, Administrator, provided the following situational update for the Home:

Current Census as of 9:30 am today:

- 97 veterans are at the home
- 22 veterans are in the dorm
- 26 veterans are currently at the dedicated skilled nursing unit at Holyoke Medical Center
- 1 veterans in an acute care setting
- Total 146 across all settings

Resident Testing/ deaths:

- 100 veteran resident deaths (76 positive, 20 negatives, 3 recovered, 1 unknown)
- Status of cases at the Home:
 - 0 positive
 - 17 negatives
 - 82 recovered
 - 46 pending
 - 1 refused
- The residents at the home have remained mostly stable

Employee Testing:

- Employee retesting to occur bi-weekly.
- Retesting was done the last two days – July 13th & 14th – 265 staff were tested
- Results from Staff testing from July 2nd and 3rd,

Report from State and Administrator (Cont'd):**Employee Testing**

226 staff were tested.

- 224 negatives
- 1 inconclusive
- 1 invalid
- The plan is to continue testing approximately every two weeks.
- We have the next testing date scheduled for July 27th and 28th.

Total Employee Count: 334

- 302 Active employees
- 90% of our staff is currently reporting to work
- 32 employees are currently out of work:
 - 21 Direct Care
 - 6 employees are still out due to COVID
 - 15 employees are out on FMLA.
 - 2 employees due to IA
 - 9 employees are out for other reasons
 - 11 Non-Direct Care

Human Resources and Labor:

- The Home's Organization Charts have been updated to reflect current vacancies.
- We are working on the recruitment of an Interim Medical Director.
 - We interviewed two candidates last week.
 - Dr. Mohammad Dar, Medical Director at MassHealth, is on board as Interim Chief Medical Officer until we find a long-term interim during the permanent replacement search.
- The new Program Analyst is slated to start working July 20, 2020.
- The final candidate for the DCAMM Program Coordinator is onboarding.
- We currently have the following positions posted:
 - Superintendent
 - Deputy Superintendent
 - Chief Medical Officer
 - Director of Operations – interviews scheduled
 - Director of Nursing – interviews scheduled
 - Nurse Educator – interviews scheduled
 - Infection Control Nurse
 - Occupational Health Nurse
 - Informatic Specialist
 - And many other clinical and operational positions are posted.
- We are currently reviewing the Facilities Director position and the Assistant Director of Nursing. These will be posted this week.
- We are completing the review of 83 job descriptions. This will be completed this week.
- Developing a plan for all staff to meet with their supervisors, sign off on their job description, and develop performance goals and an evaluation process for this fiscal year.
- Identified dedicated space for our education and training computer lab, materials needed, ordered furniture, this will be up and running the end of August.
- Meeting with the unions on a regular basis, keeping minutes of meeting with action items noted, and developing the set schedules for September.

Report from State and Administrator (cont'd):**Operational Status:**

- Currently reviewing 700 policies and procedures and creating new policies as needed. 21 policies were discussed at the Policy committee meeting earlier today.
- Developed a leadership team action tracking system to measure improvements in the 7 work streams areas we have identified.
- Medical Records started packing records to be stored at Iron Mountain for offsite storage. The goal is to have two full years onsite. 5 years have been packed with 5 years to go – 50% complete.
- We are working on a record retention program/policy for all documentation in the building.

Systems and operational processes:

- Working with our vendor to implement a policy and procedure software program.
- Creating shared files for better tracking, communication and preparation for the policy software program.

Veteran, Family and Staff Support:

- Last week we held Open Forums to update all staff. We had over 170 employees attend.
- Onsite and Jill Adams have met with our team to develop staff and family support programs.
- A Grief Program for staff and families will be implemented by the end of the month.
- We completed our first round of Web Ex meeting with all the veterans and families - including the veterans currently located at the Holyoke Medical Center.

Long Term Planning, Transition and Oversight:

We are preparing the solicitation notice for posting to procure the architectural firm for the DCAMM needs assessment/to begin the capital project.

Pat Dill, Interim Nurse Executive, provided the following infection control and clinical staffing update for the Home:

Infection Control Status:

- During the Refresh Project, we are creating care units that will be able to function independently to improve our infection prevention of the overall work flow.
- Created a temporary swing space unit on North Two for a patient under investigation or a positive patient, if needed.
- Started organizing and cleaning up all the patient care areas to improve infection control prevention measures.
- Developed a policy regarding veteran's rooms and what can be allowed in a long-term care facility.
- Started cleaning and painting administrative areas with organic staff.

Clinical Staffing Status:

- We remain above the industry standard for staffing patterns based on Hours Per Patient Day (HPPD).
 - We continue the process of phasing out the National Guard Staff.
 - The plan is they will be phased out by the end of July.
- Our Interim Nurse Clinical Consultant Team remains in place until December focusing on Infection Prevention, Staffing, Staff Development, Quality and Staff support on the evening Shift.
- The Assistant Director of Nursing resigned last week.
- We have final candidates for the two staffing positions to support the nursing department.
- We have an employee who moved into a Manager of Staffing and Scheduling that will be working at SHH and WMH.
- Held Open Forum for staff last week with approx. 170 in attendance.
- Holding Clinical Meetings for RN, LPN and CNA this week.

Report from State and Administrator (cont'd):**Col. Michael Lazo, acting Chief Operating Officer, provided the following Operational and Facilities Update:****Non – Clinical Status:**

- The Interim Facilities Director and I continue to work with the organic team to evaluate the operational needs of the maintenance, environmental care, and dietary departments.
- Overall recommendations will be reviewed and implemented by the end of the month.

Facilities Status:

We remain at 6 units open:

- 3 recovered units
- 3 negative units
- We continue to work with DCAMM on the infection control refresh project for the entire building.
 - Kurtz Incorporated remains onsite working every day.
 - The third floor remains on target to be done by the end of the month/first week of August.
 - Phase two bids closed on Friday.
 - We will have a contractor picked for Phase two this week.

Cindy Lacoste inquired if the software tracking program is new. Val confirmed that this is a new software based program that we have purchased and are implementing at the Home for the management of policies and procedures. This was not put out to bid. It is a program that is currently utilized at Western MA Hospital and we are adopting here at the Soldiers' Home. Isaac Mass inquired if this is the same system used at Chelsea Soldiers' Home. Val was not certain if it is utilized at Chelsea. Cindy Lacoste asked if this program can be tied into the electronic medical record system. Val reported that Policytech is a standalone program. It is an educational and training model that can track employee review of policies. It has the ability for staff to ask questions. Cindy inquired if this is the same system to be used for education and training? Val confirmed that this is the case.

Isaac Mass requested that the Board of Trustees be provided with the new policy on veteran property that can be allowed into the facility. Val confirmed that a copy will be forwarded to them.

Isaac Mass inquired on the vacant positions of 5 leadership and 4 additional critical positions. He noted that Chris Dupont had previously asked questions at a prior Board of Trustees meeting around if we had evaluated whether the compensation for these positions is enough to get an adequate pool of candidates. Secretary Tsai noted that since the last Board of Trustees meeting, we have retained a professional search services firm to assist with recruitment for these positions. This is to ensure we are getting the best candidates. The firm will advise us on compensation as well.

Isaac Mass asked if the Board of Trustees will be provided with an update report on where we stand with this process. Secretary Tsai confirmed that as they receive information, they will provide updates to the Board.

Isaac Mass stated that the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Medical Officer positions all require Board of Trustee approval. He is concerned that these positions have been posted without input from the Board of Trustees regarding minimum qualifications being listed as preferred qualifications. He feels that this should be a team process with the recruiting team making recommendations on posting language and the Board should then approve this language. He wants to make sure we work together on this. He understands the need is urgent, but would like us to be in a position of being on the same page before making any hiring decisions, as we wouldn't want someone brought to the Board that we are not satisfied with because they did not have the qualifications or experience that the Board of Trustees is looking for. Secretary Tsai expressed his thanks for this input.

Report from State and Administrator (cont'd):

Kevin Jourdain asked if the Board members are going to be provided with the job descriptions for these positions. Secretary Tsai confirmed that they will be sent to the Board of Trustees. Kevin also inquired if the Board of Trustees can facilitate a discussion with the consultant team. Secretary Tsai clarified that it is a search firm, not a consultant team. Cesar Lopez inquired if there will be a search, and if the Board of Trustees would nominate and streamline a list of candidates. He noted that the Board of Trustees have the authority for appointing the Superintendent. Cesar asked if there will be a committee to explore candidates and how this appointment process will go. Secretary Tsai stated that we can come back with procedural goals as collaboratively as possible. We have engaged the search firm quickly in an effort to get a pool of candidates from which to review. Cesar stated that he does not want it to be that a hiring decision is made and the Board of Trustees were not involved in that decision. Kevin Jourdain noted that as the law stands today, the hiring of a new superintendent requires a Board of Trustees Vote – it does not mention anything about Governor approval.

Isaac Mass noted that it might be helpful for EOHHS to reach out to the MA Department of Education. Isaac is on the Board of Trustees at Greenfield Community College, and during their recent search for a president of the college, they underwent a very collaborative process with the Commonwealth that was quite successful. He reported that all parties were satisfied with the candidate selection. He felt that this would be a model worth looking into to help with our procedure going forward. Secretary Tsai thanked Isaac for this input.

A motion was made by Isaac Mass, and seconded by Chris Dupont to accept the State and Administrator report. All were unanimously in favor to accept the State and Administrator report.

The Roll Call vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

Old Business:

Trustee Account Update from Powers and Sullivan and the Chair – Kevin Jourdain received an update on the Trustee Account audit being done by Mike Nelligan at Powers and Sullivan. This update was also provided to Norm Gousy, CFO. Kevin Jourdain reported that there are a number of items requested by this outside firm that have not yet been provided to them. He detailed the outstanding items. Kevin has asked for full cooperation on the provision of the requested audit documentation, with assistance from the CFO. He reported that this request was submitted to state leadership. Norm Gousy reported that he is in process of working on the delivery of these requests, and will consult with Mr. Nelligan. Secretary Tsai reported that we underscore 100% commitment that this information will be identified and provided. Cheryl Poppe, Acting DVS Secretary, and DVS staff, will provide full support to the CFO to ensure the requested information is provided.

Isaac Mass inquired how we got to this point, as he had previously inquired if we had adequate support staff to meet these inquiries, and he was assured that we did. We need to ensure when issues identified as likely issues, that they are looked into and needs are met. He hopes that we can get audit completed and know where to go forward from this. Chris Dupont requested a copy of the Powers and Sullivan audit update. Kevin Jourdain to send to Board of Trustees members.

Meeting the Capital & Infrastructure Needs of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke: Secretary Tsai introduced members of the EOHHS team:

Alda Rega, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance at EOHHS.

Liz Minnis, Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Planning for the Division of Capital Management and Maintenance.

Ganesh Ramachandran, Senior Project Manager for the Office of Planning of the Division of Capital Management and Maintenance (DCAMM).

Old Business (Cont'd):

Secretary Tsai stated that all support the commitment to ensure we are able to service our veterans with the honor and dignity they deserve. The short term priority during the Refresh project is to ensure all infection control is in place and wallpaper and furnishings allow for terminal cleaning and appropriate separation between the veterans. Secretary Tsai noted that there is no question that significant changes and capital updates are required to the building structure to meet the needs of the veterans. The Commonwealth of MA is committed to making investments to support the right capital improvements to the Home. This must be done expeditiously. We are all on board to ensure we are providing the best long term solution that is right for the current veterans, as well as future veteran residents. He noted that all options are on the table and we are committed to making the capital investments required.

Alda Rega provided an overview of the capital project process, going through some of the details that are a necessary part of this process. She stated that DCAMM is responsible for the management of this project.

Liz Minnis gave an overview of what DCAMM does and their responsibilities to manage the project. She noted that DCAMM works with EOHHS and other executive branch agencies. The project managers are experienced architects who work with user agencies to assess facility needs and define goals, cost and scope of the project. She noted that we will go into the rapid planning phase. We will utilize the design team to do a needs assessment to define the goals of the project in preparation for project submission to the VA in April 2021.

Ganesh Ramachandran provided detail of the 12 week rapid planning phase. He noted that they will build upon the former studies, needs assessments and DCAMM studies. He provided the five point scope of the rapid planning phase:

1. Needs assessment
2. Engage stakeholders
3. Infection control is priority - review ongoing infection control measures
4. Explore feasible implementation scenarios
5. Develop an implementation roadmap

Chris Dupont asked if, for the meeting with stakeholders, has there been any discussion of meeting with the Soldiers' Home of Holyoke Coalition that has been formed? He recommends that this group be included, as it includes highly regarded professional veteran advocates, and he feels it would be a disservice to not include. Secretary Tsai confirmed that they will do so.

Carmen Ostrander asked for clarification if the 12 week plan will determine whether to move or expand the Home? Secretary Tsai reported that the Home is not being moved. He believes this is an opportunity for all to come forth to share a common mission; and to look forward to the future needs of the veterans, and to do so with the right stakeholders. We will see how we can balance as much input as possible within the April 15, 2021 deadline that we want to meet. This is the reason for the expedited process. Our desire is to partner together as expeditiously as possible, to do it right and assess the best path forward. We have a common mission, and we all come together around this.

Carmen Ostrander inquired if there is another property within Holyoke we could use or is the current plan to keep it on campus? Secretary Tsai reported that a range of options will be presented for this group to consider, but there are no plans to move to another location, but we are open to any suggestions.

Kevin Jourdain asked for clarification on one of the stated options being a new building, but with a smaller population. Is there an option that we have a new building with equal or greater than 250 patients? Ganesh noted that we want to work on three scenarios – a team to come up with options – we are not limiting by numbers. The

Old Business (Cont'd):

primary goal is to price different scenarios. Alda noted that everything is on the table as we work through with the stakeholders. We have to do a needs assessment to see current and future veteran needs. Kevin Jourdain confirmed that a needs assessment had not been done previously. Alda confirmed that it had not been done. Kevin inquired at what point in the process would they be provided feedback from the stakeholders, and will the Board of Trustees be one of them, and can we discuss options? Alda reported that once the needs assessment has been done, then we can actively engage with stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees, staff, residents, veteran service organizations, and other groups who have a vested interest in the care of the veterans – that would be in the second phase in the scope of work. That team of experts will help us in facilitating conversations to ensure we take everyone into account.

Isaac Mass expressed his thanks, noting the tremendous amount of work they have done. He noted the speed of the work has been impressive. He stated that he hopes that in the next 10-12 weeks, as we do needs assessments, we can look at examples of the best facilities around the country. He added that he knows this is geared to a competitive bidding process, but he hopes we don't abandon the idea of non-competitive federal funding, and we work with the federal legislature and federal branch to skip to the head of the line in this process. He noted that we failed to act before, and that there is support from around the country to make sure the veterans in this Home get the best possible care. Secretary Tsai noted that we are looking at the way we think about long term care and the different demographics of veterans evolving, and how we would structure this to capture this.

Chris Dupont inquired as to the sizing of the facility, noting that the number of residents had decreased over the last few years in order to stay compliant. Taking this into account, he suggested they look at when they had the most beds and look at the waiting list – this should validate the needs we have at the Home. He also noted that he hopes that the legislatures are aware that the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is not just a Western Massachusetts home. The census validates that we have veterans as far away as the Cape and the Islands.

Kevin Jourdain thanked EOHHS and DCAMM for moving as expeditiously as they have to get this process moving. He feels confident we can hit the deadline of April 2021. He noted that they deserve much credit, and we look forward to continuing to work with them for a new and improved facility based on the needs assessment and bringing it to fruition.

Kevin Jourdain made a motion, seconded by Cindy Lacoste, to table the Capital and Infrastructure Needs item. We will look for regular updates on capital infrastructure of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke and will keep this as a standing agenda items to get updates. All Board of Trustees members were unanimously in favor to do so.

- **New Business:**

Re-appointment of Medical Staff: Mark Yankopoulos reported that the Medical Staff have unanimously voted to reappoint Dr. Barry Smith and Dr. Alan Munro. The re-appointment of Dr. Barry Smith and Dr. Alan Munro was presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. Upon motion by Isaac Mass and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to approve the above mentioned appointments.

The Roll Call vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

Attorney Pearlstein Report followed by any Board actions and motions to be adopted by the Board as a result of the Pearlstein report: Kevin Jourdain expressed his thanks to Attorney Mark Pearlstein and his firm at McDermott Will & Emery for doing a comprehensive report. He added that the firm answered Governor Baker's call for assistance at no charge to the Massachusetts taxpayers. He reviewed Attorney Pearlstein's background and thanked the other investigators who continue to work on their investigations of the COVID crisis within the facility. He hopes that this reform will bring transparency, accountability and restoration of public confidence.

New Business (Cont'd):

He noted that the 174 page report included 9 primary recommendations to us. Mr. Jourdain noted that he agrees with all the noted recommendations and made the following observations:

- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke should not be exempt from the requirements of licensing and inspection that other long term care facilities hold. The care here should not be less than any other facility. Massachusetts government should not hold itself to a different standard. Kevin noted that the Home received Veterans Administration accreditation and Joint Commission accreditation. It should be noted that many private nursing homes do not hold Joint Commission accreditation, but do hold Department of Public Health accreditation. We will invite this looking forward. We should be held to the highest standard – the perception needs to be corrected.
- Recommend that the future Superintendent be a licensed Nursing Home Administrator with substantial healthcare experience. In the past, we have not met this standard, but this is something that is going to change going forward. Mr. Jourdain noted that with the exception of Cesar Lopez, none of the current Board of Trustees members were on the Board at the time that Bennett Walsh was hired. Mr. Jourdain recommends that the facility comply with DPH licensing and inspection. He noted that in 2016 there was a legislative statute to have a healthcare leader appointed to oversee both the Soldiers' Homes in Massachusetts. DVS has not complied with this mandate, but should act immediately to fill this role.
- Two Board of Trustees members to have relative clinical or healthcare administration experience.
- Future Trustee to have construction experience, as there will be a significant amount of capital planning.
- Implement permanent schedule system.
- Implementation of Electronic Medical Record (EMR).
- Hire a designated Occupational Health Nurse, as this is a standard at large healthcare facilities. Implement such a role to help protect staff and monitor staffing levels in case of another infectious disease outbreak.
- Expanded staff training program.
- Improved labor relations at the Soldiers' Home.

Cindy Lacoste inquired about the licensure of the Superintendent. Can we have an Administrator who has a healthcare background, but not necessarily licensure, as long as the Deputy Superintendent or Medical Director has licensure? Requiring that the Superintendent be a licensed nursing home administrator may eliminate candidates that have a great knowledge, but without licensure. Kevin Jourdain noted that it could be that the Deputy Superintendent has the license.

Secretary Tsai stated that there is no question that we need to have the right experience and expertise at all levels, including the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent. We have a strong preference for the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to have a nursing home administrator license, but it would be sufficient for the Deputy Superintendent to be licensed nursing home administrator and the Superintendent is a very qualified individual with hospital level experience.

Isaac Mass noted that he echoes the comments of Mr. Jourdain and would like to report the following 2 items:

- The Board of Trustees acted appropriately, asking the right questions to ensure that the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke had everything they needed, and were adequately prepared. It is not the job of the Board of Trustees to micromanage, but to take affirmative action to address.
- The leadership team had staff reach out to family members to ask them to change their medical directive, which likely resulted in veteran deaths. Carmen Ostrander also noted this is out of the scope of their practice and is against the law.

New Business (Cont'd):

Motion One was presented. Kevin Jourdain inquired if there is any requested discussion on Motion One. Cindy Lacoste requested clarification on the licensure requirement for the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent that it is required that one of these positions have nursing home licensure, but it is not required that both have it. Kevin Jourdain clarified that it was that one of these hold this license.

A motion was made by Kevin Jourdain, and seconded by Isaac Mass for Motion One (attached) to be accepted as an entire package. Acceptance of Motion One was adopted unanimously.

Roll Call Vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

A motion was made by Isaac Mass, and seconded by Kevin Jourdain for Motion Two (attached) to be accepted as an entire package. Acceptance of Motion Two was adopted unanimously.

Roll Call Vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

Announcement of Date and Time of Bennett Walsh meeting: Kevin Jourdain noted that there is no official announcement on this. The date is not in place at this time. He reported that news accounts report that the State has terminated Mr. Walsh. There has not been a hearing of the Board of Trustees. EOHHS has stated they will not have a hearing. Legal actions are taking place on this decision.

Kevin Jourdain reported that they are looking toward August to afford Bennett Walsh a hearing and to move in whatever direction we are going to move in. Legal Counsel at the Soldiers' Home is consulting with the legal counsel of Bennett Walsh, and EOHHS is monitoring this closely.

Status of the Medical Director Appointment: Kevin Jourdain noted that it has been alluded to that Dr. Mohammad Dar has been appointed as the interim Medical Director. He reported that MGL c6, sec 71 and our By-Laws require a Board of Trustees vote on any appointments of the Medical Director at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Mr. Jourdain inquired if it is the intent to submit Dr. Dar's name for consideration? Val Liptak provided Dr. Dar's experience and background. She noted that Dr. Dar served on the incident command center at the Soldiers Home from April 1. We are requesting that he remain on as interim Medical Director as we continue the search for a Medical Director.

Dr. Dar detailed his background, which has included clinical training in internal medicine, internist at the VA in Boston, emergency room care, urgent care, and hospital floor care. He has practiced at Brigham and Women's and Harvard Medical Center. He participated on the Affordable Care Act under the Obama Whitehouse. He has worked on infection control processes for nursing homes throughout the State of Massachusetts. He participated in the incident command center at the Soldiers' Home beginning March 30. He reported that he contracted COVID-19 and went through the experience toward recovery.

Secretary Tsai stated that he requested that Dr. Dar come back as the interim Medical Director. He noted that during the last few weeks, team based rounding has been implemented at the Home, outpatient telehealth visits have been scheduled, with a 15 month lookback of patients coming in. Dr. Dar has worked with infection control on augmenting infection prevention protocols.

New Business (Cont'd):

Isaac Mass expressed his thanks to Dr. Dar for stepping in. He inquired on Dr. Dar's opinion on whether the Medical Director Position can be adequately performed at 20 hours per week or if it should be a full time position, and whether the salary is adequate for this position. Dr. Dar stated that we want someone at the full time level, as we need the band width for the development of new things. As far as salary, it's a landscape review. Dr. Dar noted that he would not be the person to ask this, as he took a lower salary for the sake of doing this service.

A motion was made by Carmen Ostrander, and seconded by Cindy Lacoste to approve Dr. Dar as the Medical Director at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke.

The Roll Call vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Not Present). The VOTE was unanimous of those members present.

Discussion of Recommendation of SHH Legal Counsel to review past Executive Session Minutes for possible release: Mark Yankopoulos noted that the Executive Session minutes have not been reviewed in a number of years. He stressed to the members of the Board of Trustees that it is an affirmative obligation to do this, and that the Chairman or designee periodically review these. He advised that a schedule be put together for this purpose so that we can ensure we are staying in compliance with this going forward. Kevin Jourdain stated that he is in full agreement of this. He requested that Mark seek out any of these Executive Session minutes to be reviewed and bring for the consideration of the Board of Trustees to be released. Potential release will be done if appropriate.

Isaac Mass said he noted in the audit report that they received all minutes that were requested. Isaac asked that given the potential discussion they will be having about Bennett Walsh, he would have great interest in finding the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting where the vote was held for the appointment of the current superintendent.

- **Adjourn:**

Kevin Jourdain made a motion, seconded by Cindy Lacoste, to conclude the Public Session and move into two Executive Sessions for the purposes stated on the agenda. Mr. Jourdain noted for the public's awareness that the Board of Trustees will not be returning from Executive Session to Public Session. The Board of Trustees will adjourn after the second Executive Session has ended. Thank you to all who attended this evening.

Roll Call Vote is as follows: Chris Dupont (Yes), Cesar Lopez (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes). It was unanimously VOTED to conclude Public Session and move into Executive Session at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Shimel
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees