

## **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, September 8, 2020. The meeting began at 5:10 PM.

- **Members Present:**

Kevin Jourdain, Chairman; Christopher Dupont, Cindy Lacoste, Isaac Mass, Carmen Ostrander, Sean Collins

- **Also Present:**

Val Liptak, Acting Superintendent; Dan Tsai, Acting Secretary, EOHHS; Cheryl Poppe, Acting Secretary, DVS; Dr. Mohammad Dar, Medical Consultant; Dr. Thomas Higgins, Interim Medical Director; Norman Gousy, Chief Financial Officer, Pat Dill, Interim Nurse Executive; Mark Yankopoulos, Legal Counsel; Alda Rega, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, EHS; and Nancy Shimel, Recording Secretary

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

- **Former Board of Trustee Member:**

Kevin Jourdain reported that former member of the Board of Trustees, Margaret Oglesby, has passed away. Mr. Jourdain expressed his thanks for her many years of dedicated service to the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. He provided a summary of Ms. Oglesby's experience with the military and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Mr. Jourdain expressed his condolences to her family. He noted that in lieu of flowers, donations are being accepted to the Alzheimer's Association.

Mr. Jourdain made a motion to make a memorial contribution to the Alzheimer's Association in honor of Margaret Oglesby, to be taken from the Trustee fund, in the amount of \$200.00. This motion was seconded by Cindy Lacoste.

A Roll Call vote was taken to approve this \$200.00 memorial contribution. The Roll Call vote is as follows: Sean Collins (Yes); Cindy Lacoste (Yes); Isaac Mass (Yes); Carmen Ostrander (Yes); Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

- **Public Comment:**

John Paradis, former Deputy Superintendent at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke requested to make public comment. Mr. Paradis stated his appreciation for the remembrance of Margaret Oglesby, and that it was an honor to serve on the Board of Trustees with her. Mr. Paradis is a member of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Coalition, which is a coalition of veterans, family members and other concerned citizens. He noted that the coalition received notification that Payette is starting a stakeholder involvement process. The coalition looks forward to providing their input to Payette on what they would like to see at the new Soldiers' Home, specifically the adoption of a small house design while keeping with the latest trends in the community living concept under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and as recommended by the nationally recognized non-profit – the Greenhouse Project.

Mr. Paradis stated that he hopes to hear discussion from the Board of Trustees on the inclusion of an adult day healthcare program as part of the new Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. He noted that adult day healthcare programs are frequently listed as the number one program that families have mentioned to us that they would like to see as an option before being admitted to the long-term care program. He believes that there is a need for this program with expectation that veterans in the system is expected to increase within the near future. He relayed that the adult day healthcare program would assist with the management of patients before they are admitted to long term care. Community based care will assist with keeping them healthy for a longer period of time. We ask for the support from the Board of Trustees for an adult day healthcare program. It expected that the veterans in the system are expected to increase by approximately 30%.

**Public Comment (cont.):**

Mr. Paradis noted that he hopes for feedback from administration on the progress the Commonwealth is making on the implementation of a disinfection system. He expressed his thanks to the Board of Trustees for welcoming the coalition's ideas and suggestions. Kevin Jourdain stated that he received a copy of the presentation given by Mr. Paradis, and he has circulated this information to the other Board members. He asked that they reach out with any questions. He noted that he appreciates the work of the coalition on behalf of the staff of the Home.

Kevin Jourdain expressed his thanks to the union for coming to the meeting today and for their work on behalf of the employees at the Home. He also expressed thanks Cheryl Turgeon for the provision of information to the Board.

Cory Bombredi, union representation for SCIU Local 888 Chapter requested to make public comment. He relayed that it is refreshing to have an administration willing to work with the union members to provide care with honor and dignity to the veterans at the Home. He expressed that Val Liptak has done a great job in gaining control of an unfortunate situation and working toward making much needed improvements at the Home for the veterans and staff. He noted that she has made a commitment not only to our veterans, but to the community of Holyoke as a whole by providing approximately 100 additional state jobs. We encourage anyone looking to build a career in healthcare to apply at Mass.Gov. He also stated that labor relationship throughout the whole process have been impressively handled by Jeff Krok and Suzanne Quersher. He expressed his thanks for their professionalism. SCIU Local 888 is committed to working with the new administration to restore the good name of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke to what it once stood for.

Kwesi Ablordeppey, a certified nursing assistant employed at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke for 20 years and Chapter President of SCIU Local 888 Chapter requested to make public comment. He requested to address the Board of Trustees as they move forward in hiring leadership. He stated that he hopes to see diversity in the future administration of the Home so it would reflect members and veterans at the Home, as he has only seen one instance of this in past leadership.

Mr. Ablordeppey also asked the Board of Trustees to consider providing more security at the entrance to the Home to ensure the safety of staff and veterans.

Mr. Ablordeppy noted that many of the union members represented at the Home do not know the members of the Board of Trustees. He asked if once the COVID restrictions have been lifted, Board members might be able to come and introduce themselves to the staff at the Home or to organize an open forum for this introduction. Kevin Jourdain thanked Kwesi for his input and welcomed him back to any future Board meetings for public comment. He stated that the Board would be happy to take the opportunity to do that and to please make them aware of any event that they would like the Board of Trustees to attend.

Kevin noted that if there are any additional comments they would like to relay, please send along to him and he will ensure it gets out to the other Board members as well.

Eric Segundo, who is also a member of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Coalition, is speaking on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of Massachusetts. Mr. Segundo currently serves as a National Legislative Committee Member for Massachusetts and is also a past State Commander. He noted that the VFW of Massachusetts have closely monitored the actions of the Board of Trustees and the State in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. He reported that they have testified before the Joint Committee on Veterans of Federal Affairs, and they are the first state-wide organization to sign a resolution supporting the coalition to call on the State to fund a new Soldiers' Home with the inclusion of an adult day healthcare program.

**Public Comment (cont.):**

Mr. Segundo stated that he is in agreement with John Parady that the creation of an adult day healthcare program is a necessity at the Home. He noted that there is research on the benefits of this program. The VFW of Massachusetts is requesting that the design team incorporate an enabling outdoor environment using the existing pavilion space as part of an adult day healthcare program. The VFW asks for the support of the Board of Trustees in the creation of this program.

Mr. Segundo noted that he would like to strongly voice their concerns around any dissolution of the autonomy of the Board of Trustees. They are strongly against any moves by the Commonwealth and the Governor to remove representation by county of the Board of Trustee members. Each county has Board of Trustee members representing the interest of their respective counties. If removed, there will be a continuous loss of the independent voice of the veterans' interests on the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Segundo noted the the VFW of Massachusetts agree that the Board of Trustees has the authority to hire and terminate the Superintendent at the Home. He agrees that there should be a public vetting of the Superintendent - to include family members of the Home to meet candidates for the future Superintendent. He stated that the VFW of Massachusetts supports concerns that an advisory council should be established. This council would have a seat at the Board of Trustees meetings, so they are able to offer advice and/or feedback and honest assessment of what they are hearing from the veteran community. We request that this coalition be heard, and that the Board of Trustees consider this recommendation. He noted that they are ready to assist the Board on this advisory council.

Cheryl Turgeon, who is a family member of a resident at the Home that has resided there for over 3 ½ years. She noted that she fully understands that an adult day healthcare program is vital for the Home. She provided information of her family member's condition throughout the COVID-19 outbreak at the Home, and noted the importance of outdoor visitation for the mental health of the veterans. She advised that the outdoor visitation area will need modifications with the cold weather approaching. She stated that she also hopes the Home will consider the addition of Sundays to the outdoor visitation schedule. She made note of all the activities which the veterans were involved with prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. She asked that the administration consider re-opening the Canteen and re-instituting additional socially distanced activities.

Ms. Turgeon referenced Attorney Pearlstein's report and noted that she understands the events that occurred prior to the current interim administration coming into the Home. She would like the Board members and Administration to fully acknowledge what the families of the veterans residing at the Home have been through. She noted that the residents are veterans who gave their service and suffered immensely and deserve a sense of normalcy. She stated that the veterans have protected our democracy, freedom and way of life, and it is imperative that we recognize this and reciprocate this.

Kevin Jourdain stated that he will follow up on these items during the Report from the State.

- **Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion by Isaac Mass and seconded by Carmen Ostrander, it was unanimously VOTED to table the approval of the Board of Trustees meeting held on August 11, 2020 until the next Board of Trustees meeting on October 13, 2020. A Roll Call vote was taken and is as follows: Sean Collins (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes).

- **CFO Update**

Norman Gousy reviewed the "Trustee Fund-Summary of Receipts and Disbursement Report for FY20 for the period ending August 31, 2020, as well as the current month's activity detail. He provided information the operating budget using the standard reporting format. Mr. Gousy noted that there were no expenses to speak of during this period. The UBS and Westfield Bank statements were also provided. Kevin Jourdain requested

**CFO Update (cont.):**

detail on the 108 uncashed checks. Mr. Gousy noted this was a typographical error, this should state \$108.00 in uncashed checks. He further noted that during August there was \$433.00 in uncashed checks. These were for payment to prior entertainers at the Home. The checks were voided and the funds were put into the cash account. Three new checks were issued in August and there remains 2 uncashed checks to be followed up on, which represents the \$108.00 that was detailed on the report. Kevin Jourdain also inquired on entries from Rovithis Realty to confirm that these donations represented a percentage of the commission on the sale of a house. Mr. Gousy confirmed this, and noted that we get these on a regular basis from Rovithis Realty. Kevin Jourdain also made note that our investment account with UBS continues to do well – gaining \$50,000 in the prior month. Kevin Jourdain inquired if the interest documented is on the checking account. Norm confirmed that this is from the checking account at Westfield Savings Bank. Mr. Jourdain noted the low interest rate is due to it being a checking account.

Mr. Gousy also reviewed the State Operating Fund Expenditure Report. He reported that the Home does not have a new budget yet for FY21. We are currently working on a 312 allocation of the FY20 budget. Kevin Jourdain asked for clarification on the 1% decrease shown when comparing FY20 to FY21. Mr. Gousy stated that the decrease is due to the Category DD – Pension Insurance. At the beginning of FY20 there was a recalculation of paid FMLA, which created a higher budget for FY20. This is a reduced number – it is more accurate for paid FMLA, otherwise it would be the same. Mr. Jourdain asked if there was not an increase from the legislature. Mr. Gousy stated that there is no budget at this time. Secretary Tsai affirmed that the Home will have any and all resources it needs for the operations on the ground. He explained that on the broader state level, the Governor proposes a budget at the beginning of the year; this then goes through the legislature, and the state is given an approved appropriated budget. He stated that none of this has any bearing on things at the Home. He reported that expenses will be higher than the previous year and this will not be a constraint for the Home. Kevin Jourdain stated that he recognizes the commitment from the Government, as well as Secretary Tsai's commitment, but we are two months in the new budget year and no appropriation has been approved. Kevin Jourdain inquired as to where we get this money when no appropriation has been approved? Alda Rego, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, reported that the Governor files an interim budget, and when the legislature does not pass the budget, it essentially gives the Commonwealth three months of funding until October. At that point, the legislature will either file the budget and give to the Governor, or do an additional interim budget. She reported that the entire State of Massachusetts is currently running on an interim budget – carrying over from last year to ensure services run without interruption. Kevin Jourdain noted that if our resource need is more than last year, we will need to come in with big increases in the second half of the year. Ms. Rego reported that we would have to file a supplemental appropriation to ensure our commitment that the Soldiers Home has every resource they need to provide excellent care. She reported that if our resource need is greater than last year and we are going to run at a rate equal to last year's budget, we will have to come in with a large increase in the second half. Ms. Rego stated that they will work closely with the Soldiers' Home and file supplemental appropriations. She reported that their commitment is to ensure the Home has every resource needed to provide excellent care. Secretary Tsai stated that we will ensure the process is seamless, escalating things to make sure the Home has all the resources it needs. Kevin Jourdain confirmed that the start of FY21 was on 7/1/20. Alda Rego confirmed this. She noted that it is sometimes the legislature is delayed with the reconciliation of differences before it is submitted to the Governor. Kevin confirmed that the three month delay would be for the months of July, August and September. Ms. Rego confirmed that it would be through the end of September 2020. Kevin Jourdain requested an update at the next Board of Trustees meeting on October 13, 2020. Alda confirmed that she would provide an update at the next Board meeting.

Isaac Mass stated that he and Chris Dupont had previously requested information related to whether we are offering adequate compensation to attract the best possible candidates, as we are restaffing our leadership team. Mr. Mass noted that he has not seen a needs assessment to determine if this is appropriate and whether it needs

**CFO Report (cont.):**

to be increased. He inquired about bringing in an outside consultant to look at our compensation structure. Secretary Tsai stated that the discussion of compensation from an executive standpoint will be added to their agenda for the next Board of Trustees meeting. He noted that there is a range of executive search firms assisting with recruitment, and they report on the compensation challenges as they go about that. Isaac Mass requested to have that informational report sent to the Board of Trustees. Secretary Tsai confirmed if they receive a report with this information, they will forward to the Board. Secretary Tsai stated that the budget topic overall will be added to the next Board of Trustees agenda.

Cindy Lacoste noted that there were 5-10 recent management positions hired for and she stated it would be helpful to know what the salary range for these positions is, or to be able to review the job descriptions. Secretary Tsai asked if they can get a better understanding of the information that would be helpful and that they will try to provide that requested information. Isaac Mass stated that they would like to know where we have had difficulty recruiting; to know the compensation we are offering and did we meet the recommendation to do something different than the recommendation; if the candidate is minimally qualified or superiorly qualified. Secretary Tsai requested that this be put as an agenda item for one of the upcoming Board meetings. Kevin Jourdain to add item to the agenda relative to the provision of more detail on the FY21 budget and the staffing questions for the Board of Trustees meeting on 10/13/20.

Kevin Jourdain inquired if all the funds in the FY20 license plate retained review account were spent? Norm Gousy confirmed that they were not bringing anything forward. He noted that revenue comes in through license plate registrations. This represents some of the activity in the first two months of the year. Kevin Jourdain inquired if it is anticipated that this would be equal to what we received in FY20? Mr. Gousy provided the process of retained revenue and noted that it would be difficult to determine how much we will receive.. Kevin Jourdain stated that we need to be mindful of using that fund as a catchall to spend on different initiatives. Isaac Mass inquired if this is something we can expect as a backfill of the budget as it was spent on emergency measures. He asked if this is a long term depletion for both Soldiers' Homes in Holyoke and Chelsea. Norm stated that Chelsea may have their PPE expense on there as well. He reiterated that Secretary Tsai has said that the State is committed to backing us for any type of expenses we need. Mr. Mass inquired if the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea was required to spend their account down as well. He would like a comparison to ensure we are getting equitable treatment with Chelsea Soldiers' Home around this, and that we should do a budget walkthrough at the next Board meeting. Secretary Tsai confirmed that we will address this item as a part of the overall budget discussion agenda item at the next Board of Trustees meeting. Kevin Jourdain noted that the Board is concerned about the long term depletion in our retained revenue account, and that this gap was filled with dollars used for various projects, including the electronic medical records project. He would like to take a closer look at the license plate fund at the next Board meeting. He will add this budget discussion to the Board of Trustees meeting on 10/13/20.

Alda Rego clarified that there is no control of how much revenue comes into the retained revenue account, and that both Holyoke and Chelsea use this account for whatever they would use their state appropriations for. She reiterated that we do not have a budget now, but as we continue, we will ensure all the needs of the veterans are met in an appropriate manner. She stated that she looks forward to discussing this at the next Board meeting. Kevin Jourdain stated that as good fiscal stewards, if we see this dramatic reduction of accounts year over year that is COVID related or beyond the capital planning of facility, we will be looking for state assistance to have these things recouped.

Norm Gousy provided information on the antennas on the roof at the Soldiers' Home. He stated that they are currently used by Holyoke Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Water Company, Gas Company, Electric Company, Western MA Emergency Management, and USPS. He stated that there is a meeting scheduled with the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAMM) this week to discuss what we can do to

**CFO Report (cont.):**

increase revenue from the antennas on the roof. Kevin Jourdain noted that this is a good revenue source for the Home. He inquired if any of the above companies currently pay for this? Norm stated that the FBI pays \$2,000 per year. Chris Dupont thanked Norm for his efforts with getting a meeting organized after he had discussed with him the fair market value associated with this. Kevin Jourdain suggested that we look into commercial wireless companies as well. He requested that Chris and Norm send an update email to him prior to the next Board meeting with the status on the antenna revenue.

- **Report from State and Administrator:**

Daniel Tsai, Acting Secretary for EOHHS, thanked the Board of Trustees for their continued partnership and those in the community for their voice. We welcome this, and it is critical as we are thinking of this capital project and what the future could be. This is an opportunity for all of us to come together to determine the right configurations for the Home. Secretary Poppe also thanked those that gave public comment. She noted that we are looking to obtain input as we move forward with the capital project. She also thanked Mr. Jourdain for his remembrance of Margaret Oglesby.

Secretary Cheryl Poppe provided the following update:

We have been focusing on infection control efforts as we move into the Fall and a potential second surge. We continue weekly surveillance testing for veteran residents and staff and have been building our stockpile of all necessary PPE items. The Holyoke Soldiers' Home has and will continue to have access plentiful and sufficient PPE, including N95 masks and other PPE supplies. We are fortunate that our efforts over the past months on PPE have ensured this is the case. The Home's leadership team has also developed a standard protocol to follow if a resident or staff member tests positive. In addition, we are pleased to note we now have an Abbott rapid test machine available on site at the Home.

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

I am excited to announce that we have officially moved into the stakeholder engagement phase of the Home's expedited capital project. A new website with information on the project has been posted, which includes a survey for the public on the future of the Home. I encourage everyone to participate in this effort and provide feedback through the survey. Our selected vendor, Payette, will also be holding interview sessions over the next month with many stakeholders to gather additional information.

We appreciate the partnership of the Board of Trustees in this work and look forward to providing you a number of updates on the Home.

Dr. Thomas Higgins provided the following updates:

Facility Infection Control:

- We are taking all precautions possible related to infection control and following all guidance and requirements from CMS, CDC, and DPH. In many cases we are going above and beyond including with our weekly surveillance testing, stocking of PPE, and vigilance for new cases or symptoms.
- As discussed, we continue to have full PPE supply and frequent shipments of new supplies, including N95 masks.
- We continue to monitor supplies and usage on a daily basis and remain in touch with EOHHS to support PPE resourcing, especially as we move into the fall and a potential second surge.
- We continue to follow Governor Baker travel order imposing restrictions on travelers entering the Commonwealth, effective August 1, 2020. These restrictions apply to all state employees and contractors.
- We continue with our screening process and questions for staff and visitors at the entry to the Soldiers' Home. We will continue to amend the screening questions based on the updated guidance from the Governor and DPH.
- We continue regular walking environmental rounds and infection control rounds.
- We continue regular skin checks to monitor for skin infections or concerns.

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

- During the Refresh Project, we are creating care units that will be able to function independently to improve our infection prevention efforts.
- We continue to work to bring online a temporary swing space unit on Two North for any positive or suspected positive residents as needed. Until this unit is online, our colleagues at Holyoke Medical Center continue to offer us space at their facility for any residents who need isolation.
- We are implementing policies regarding veteran's rooms and what can be allowed in a long-term care facility. We appreciate the support of family/significant others to make this happen.
- We are continuing our efforts to clean and organize all administrative areas to improve infection control compliance.
- The City of Holyoke remains Yellow on the state's dashboard for COVID-19 cases.

**Medical Updates:**

- Veterans' vital signs are monitored every shift, and those with abnormal values are promptly evaluated by the medical team.
- Aspiration pneumonitis and urinary tract infections are most commonly determined to be the reason for patient changes in status, which are known conditions predominant in this age group.
- Specific testing for COVID-19 is based on severity of symptoms, pre-test probability based on potential exposure, and knowledge of prior COVID-19 testing results. While in high alert, our testing posture continues to be vigilant.
- As mentioned, we have completed COVID response algorithms to address escalation and de-escalation of infection prevention responses, contact tracing, surveillance testing of negative vs. recovered patients, and isolation of employees. The escalation policy was implemented Friday evening with the staff member testing positive.
- Of note, as we learn more about the virus, treatment, and trends, these algorithms are "living" documents that will change as the CDC and DPH issue updated guidance.
- We received the Abbott ID-NOW rapid PCR test machine and underwent training for appropriate use. We performed our first rapid swab this morning.
- We will still need to obtain non-rapid tests on individuals in order to further confirm results from the rapid tests. Both test swabs will be taken simultaneously.
- We are working with Baystate Medical for infection prevention and epidemiology consultation contract with regular support including attending meetings and phone consultations. Dr. Higgins and Ms. Liptak are working with Betty LaRue, Chief Operating Officer of Baystate Medical Practices, to finalize a proposal for detailed analysis of the Home's current infection prevention practices, and a management services contract for ongoing infection prevention and infectious disease consultation.
- Dr. Higgins is also working to secure both an initial palliative care consultation and ongoing support from Baystate. We expect the evaluation to be complete in November 2020.
- Dr. Higgins, Pat Dill, and Chuck Bryant have evaluated four different types of ultraviolet-C (UVC) cleaning equipment, including the Xenex. We also had follow up discussion with the VA on this. The last presentations occurred on Friday 9/4, and pricing quotes have been requested from all four vendors, in accordance with procurement rules. We have had extensive discussions with Cooley-Dickinson Hospital and Baystate Medical Center to determine which units they chose, and why. A decision will be made shortly on which unit to purchase. We will prioritize purchasing the unit that is most effective for our care setting.
- We are reviewing the August 26, 2020 CMS Memo regarding the Interim Final Rule Revisions related to LTC Facility Testing Requirements and Revised COVID-19 Focused Survey Tool to ensure we are in compliance with federal guidance updates.
- In addition, we are reviewing the new CMS rule and guidance for Targeted COVID – 19 Training for Frontline Nursing Home Staff and Management.

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

- Though our outpatient department remains closed at this time to maximize infection control in the building, we are continuing to have our outpatient providers call through their patient lists from the year prior to COVID-19 to make sure outpatient needs are addressed. The physicians and NP are comfortably on track to contact all outpatients by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The recent warm, humid weather we have experienced lately raises the risk for water borne Legionnaire's Disease, but thus far we have not identified any cases.
- Urinary antigen testing for *legionella pneumophila* is being performed as clinically indicated in veterans with suspected pneumonia.
- We are also following our facility's water treatment plan and are conducting expanded testing of water fixtures around the facility.
- Two candidates have expressed interest in the permanent CMO position. Our goal is to have the right candidate based on experience, managerial and clinical skills, maturity, and sufficient infection prevention and quality improvement background to meet the facility's needs. We will be beginning the interview process for these candidates at the end of this week.

Pat Dill provided the following update:

Clinical Staffing:

- We remain above the industry standard for staffing patterns based on Hours Per Patient Day (HPPD), including the highest CMS standards for long-term care facilities.
- The Home's current HPPD is above the CMS standard for a five-star long-term care facility of 4.408.
- Organic and Agency staff is being used for all clinical staffing needs.
- Since the last update we have hired the following:
  - CNA – 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift – 0.8 FTE
  - CNA – 3<sup>rd</sup> Shift – 1.0 FTE
  - FSW I – Dietary – 0.5 FTE
  - Occupational Health Nurse – Start date is September 28, 2020
  - Director of Nursing – start date is October 5, 2020
  - Nurse Practitioner – start date is November 9, 2020
- We are also finalizing two additional positions:
  - Assistant Director of Nursing (ADON) – Candidate Recommended; pending start date
  - Clinical Nurse Educator (RN IV) – Internal Promotion
- Additionally, the Director of Social Services, who had been on leave for some time, has resigned and we will be recruiting for this open position.
- With our Staffing Office fully on-boarded, the team is focused on hiring and creating operational policies and procedures to ensure proper staffing as we move forward.
- We continue to bring on new staff every month utilizing multiple agencies to assist in sourcing staffing. As our efforts continue, we need your assistance to get the word out that we need more qualified and mission driven applicants to staff the Soldiers' Home. Please use your networks to assist us in getting the best team for our veterans.
- Please note as requested by the Board of Trustees there was no correlation between full-time or part-time employee illnesses during the height of the COVID outbreak.
- We continue to implement improvements in education and communication for clinical staff, nurse supervisors, and veteran care coordinators (VCCs).
- Our education and training computer lab is almost complete and will be fully up and running this month. We continue to provide on-going house-wide training and competency checks on PPE compliance.

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

Val Liptak provided the following update:

Human Resources and Labor:

- We have completed the creation of permanent staffing schedules, accounting for our current operations at six units and also planning for eight and eventually all ten units to be back online.
- We have been discussing these permanent schedules with the unions to ensure they are able to provide feedback.
- The permanent schedule proposal developed by the Home's leadership team was sent to the unions for review and feedback.
- After review, SEIU 888 requested modifications to the permanent schedules. This task has been completed and the modified permanent schedules have been sent back to the unions.
- We will continue to work collaboratively with the unions to implement the permanent schedules.
- We continue to have monthly labor management meetings with the MNA and SEIU 888.
- The unions provide agenda items in advance and we have committed to addressing all concerns.
- We continue to provide consistent metrics to the unions at their request (number of FTEs, staffing levels, overtime utilization, etc.)
- Our Interim Nurse Clinical Consultant Team remains in place until December with the continued focus on Infection Prevention, Staffing, Staff Development, Quality, and Staff Support on all shifts.

Pat Dill provided the following update:

Quality and Compliance:

- The Holyoke Soldiers' Home is accredited by the Joint Commission.
- The Joint Commission focuses both on current practices and care but also a facility's overall processes, systems, and documentation.
- As we have highlighted for the Board in previous meetings, there are long-standing deficiencies at the Home regarding standardized policies and procedures, as well as formal documentation issues. This is the focus of the Transition and Rebuilding phase. Developing structures, systems, and processes will take time.
- We had an unannounced visit from the Joint Commission on July 21st and 22<sup>nd</sup> in which they reached similar conclusions.
- As we were preparing our Plan of Correction for the Joint Commission we asked for clarification regarding three areas of the report. Due to this request, we are awaiting the final findings to create our correction plan.
- Once we have the final report and the correction plan we will send the information to the Board of Trustees.
- Once we submit the Plan of Correction to the Joint Commission, they will provide provisional approval until all of the items in the plan have been implemented.

Facilities and Operations:

- We remain at 6 units open:
- We continue to work with DCAMM on the infection control refresh project for the entire building.
  - Repairs to the older 3E and 3W shower rooms will be completed by the third week of September and we will be moving the veterans on to their new units the last week of September.
  - Phase 2 of this project will begin immediately after the move and will include elimination of the indoor smoking room, which is currently closed.
- The following systems are in the process of being updated: Wander Guard, the Overhead Paging System, and the Security Video System.
- We are working with DCAMM and a vendor who is reviewing building and infection control quick hit improvements to assist in preparations for the potential COVID resurgence in the fall.
- The Interim Facilities Director and Col. Lazo continue to evaluate the operational needs of the maintenance, environmental care, and dietary departments.
- We plan to have the recommendations implemented by mid-September.

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

- We are interviewing for the open EVS positions:
  - The DCAMM Program Coordinator will be starting in September 28, 2020
  - Informatics Coordinator – Candidate Recommended; Pending Start Date
  - Director of Facilities – 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Interviews/Facility Tour will occur the week of 9/21/2020
- Chief Operating Officer – Michael Lazo will officially be in this role as of September 21, 2020

Systems and Operational Status:

- The policies and procedures review continues and we are currently putting them into a standardized template as we prepare for a new software management system to be implemented.
- The Policy Tech Kick off meeting was held on August 28, 2020. Members of the team already have access to the program and an implementation plan is being developed.
- A leadership team action tracking system is in place to measure improvements in the workstream areas we have identified.
- The medical records organization is completed.

Veteran, Family and Staff Support:

- Outside visitation and patio visits are on hold due to a non-clinical staff member testing positive. We intend to resume on September 19, after additional testing is complete.
- Zoom meetings with families are being planned for the month of September.
- Communications continue to be developed for families, the staff, and the unions.
- Grief Support Programs continue, which provide staff with an opportunity to come together to receive support in coping with grief, loss and, trauma during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A socially distanced Barbecue Picnic for the staff and veterans is scheduled for September 11, 2020.
- Open Forums for staff will be held on September 9, 2020. Staff will be given leadership updates and it will be an opportunity for them to bring forward concerns.

Secretary Poppe provided the following update:Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Project:

- The Chelsea Soldiers' Home (CHE) and Holyoke Soldiers' Home (HLY) are preparing to procure and implement an EMR solution. An EMR will enable the Soldiers' Homes to increase patient dignity and safety, better support the clinical team, and improve billing.
- The overall project status remains on target and we have a number of updates:
  - The RFR has closed and all the bids are in. We received several responses which are now being reviewed by the Strategic Selection Team.
  - The initial submission of the VA initial application was submitted.
  - The EOHHS IT bond "FY21-26 IT Capital Planning Forms New Project" Excel document as well as the "Electronic Medical Record FY21 IT Capital Funding Request" memo was completed and submitted for review.
- While a significant amount of project work has been completed, there remains much work ahead. Overall the engagement and support from across the organizations have led to success at this point of the project.

Long Term Planning, Transition and Oversight:

- The expedited Capital Project is in full swing.
- A robust stakeholder engagement strategy has been developed and officially kicked off on September 4, 2020.
- It includes an online survey available to anyone who would like to participate and in-depth interview sessions with veteran residents, staff, families, and key leadership in many areas of the veteran and clinical community, as well as the Board of Trustees and local, state, and federal officials.

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

- We have also created a website to provide ongoing updates on the capital project to the public. The link to the website and survey is [mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject](https://mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject).
- Another component of the project is gathering and analyzing health care, demographic, and community data from a deep wealth of sources including the state, VA, local health care, and housing to ensure we have a full picture of the landscape, which will help identify future needs of the veterans in the Commonwealth.
- This broad data collection is a heavy lift, but it is invaluable to the analysis for projecting the needs of our future veterans. Through this data collection we will obtain a data-informed understanding of the future veterans we aim to serve, and their projected wants and needs as it relates to care.
- Additionally, on August 11<sup>th</sup> a physical site assessment was performed of the Home from an architectural perspective, including analyzing the physical layout of the facility to identify any weaknesses within. This will help inform where improvements need to be made to ensure a safe environment for our residents and staff.
- We are committed to an expedited timeline, and we will continue to be flexible and dynamic in doing this work. Thanks to the many people involved along this process, we are making real progress.

Follow up on BOT Motions adopted on July 14, 2020:

As discussed throughout the update, many of the items from the Board's July motions have been completed or are in process, including the permanent staff schedule, hiring of an occupational health nurse, closure of the smoking room, and the implementation of EMR. Additionally, legislation filed by the Governor addresses items such as the annual DPH inspection and the qualifications for the Home's leadership. We have also been providing regular written updates to the Board including the latest updates and information on infection control efforts and policies, but in addition we would be happy to share the detailed policies of helpful.

Dr. Mohammad Dar provided an update on the motion related to medical orders:

- We are 100% aligned and agree with the intention put forth by the Board that we are in full agreement that there should be absolutely no coercion and no pre-emptive positions or stances taken by staff who are discussing end of life care and goals of care with residents, families, and their healthcare proxies. This is important to codify.
- In speaking with clinical experts and reviewing what is standard practice around end of life care for other long term care and medical facilities, we have identified standard approaches that make sure this is the case while allowing clinicians to have supportive and delicate conversations with residents and families that are responsive to their specific questions about their loved one's care and can provide maximally informative answers to questions free of bias.
- We have work underway to codify this policy/protocol – with the goal of also aligning with standard practice in similar health care facilities.
- We would expect to provide an additional progress update at the next Board meeting.

Val Liptak reported that this concludes the State and Administrator Update Report and opened the discussion up to any questions.

Kevin Jourdain made a motion to take a 5-7 minute recess. All Board members were in favor to take a brief recess. The Board meeting will resume at 7:00 pm.

The Board meeting resumed at 7:00 pm. Kevin Jourdain opened the discussion up for questions on the State and Administrator report:

Kevin Jourdain noted that one of the recommendations made in Attorney Mark Pearlstein's report was that the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke undergo an annual inspection by the Department of Public Health (DPH). He inquired if we have reached out to DPH to schedule an inspection of the Home, as he wants to ensure that we follow what all of the other skilled nursing facilities are following. Secretary Poppe reported that the leadership of the Soldiers' Home has been working closely with DPH, and that it will take requirements for inspection, but we are working collaboratively

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

with DPH on epidemiology and infection control practices. She noted that the Home does not fall under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), but in the meantime we are collaborating on ways to improve infection control and all processes. Mr. Jourdain noted that this was a recommendation in the report from Attorney Pearlstein and that all are onboard, and Governor Baker wants to do this - there is no opposition to it. He stated that we should be following the same regulations that other nursing homes do, noting that we want to have the highest medical standard to follow. He stated that the Board stands ready to accept whatever report is produced and readiness to make it better. Mr. Jourdain stated that he would like to have a more proactive response on this item. Secretary Tsai reported that they are fully aligned on this point, and DPH is fully involved in every way possible. Currently the Soldiers' Home is not subject to licensure by the Department of Public Health. The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke does not fall under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Meanwhile, we all work together, with Dr. Dar and Dr. Higgins working collaboratively with the Department of Public Health to improve infection control practices. We have written into the governor's proposed legislation to bring the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke under the same authority as all other skilled nursing facilities, where statutorily it is not today. There are legal pieces proposed in the Governor's legislation, separate from a formal vehicle to bring the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke under that umbrella. We have DPH colleagues involved completely. Even though CMS and a range of other skilled nursing facility regulations do not legally apply to the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, we believe the Home should abide by every single one of those regulations, and to have compliance above and beyond every single guideline for any skilled nursing facility. The direction from the team on the ground is compliance above and beyond every guidance that would exist for every skilled nursing facility in the Commonwealth. Dr. Dar reported that the Home does stay in contact with DPH, epidemiologists and quality control specialists as new guidance comes out. He stated that the Home always wants to be in compliance. Dr. Dar noted that he is part of a core team doing infection control assessments in 360 plus nursing homes across the state. One of his first actions was to sit down with leadership at the Home and determine how they would be scored in a live inspection. We continue to monitor and do potential inspections. Mr. Jourdain stated that he would like to know when we will give DPH a formal invitation to inspect the Home and provide a report on how we stand relative to their standards. Secretary Tsai stated that they could have DPH do a mock survey. He reported that there is specific action required to do a formal CMS inspection with CMS surveyors, as was proposed as part of the government legislation. He stated that what they would like to do is schedule a mock survey that allows us to do the same thing as a formal survey. He wants to make sure the context of the federal survey piece is clear to all. Mr. Jourdain inquired what is prohibiting us from doing a formal survey now? He stated that he has brought this up at multiple meetings since July 2020, and he is now following up to ensure we do this. Secretary Tsai stated that CMS surveyors are paid by federal dollars, and that there are things that pertain to how surveyors work that are not just a function of individual pieces. He stated that there is a federal construct for the role of these surveyors. Secretary Tsai confirmed that he will follow-up with Mr. Jourdain on this item prior to the next Board of Trustees meeting. Carmen Ostrander inquired if special permission is required for a survey, and is this why this has not been done? Secretary Tsai stated that the issue is that the inspectors are governed by a set of federal regulations on how to inspect federal surveys. Given this dialogue, Secretary Tsai would like our team to look at specific federal stipulations and circle back to ensure we can effectively achieve the same sort of thing one way or another. Isaac Mass stated that he appreciates that they will get an answer to the Board by the next meeting. He inquired if it is a correct assumption that you'll be providing the date that the inspection will occur? He noted that we are not bound by anything that comes out of the report, and we would like to compare what is happening at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke to other skilled nursing facilities. Mr. Mass also noted that the Board had previously requested a copy of the Joint Commission report, and they have not received this yet; although he understands you are awaiting to get clarification on items, this is not a reason for the report to have not been provided. As the facility is undergoing six other inspections, he noted that transparency is very important, and an inspection by DPH will provide a level of transparency. The documents in the Joint Commission report will provide another level of transparency. This is not about public perception - we need to know where we are and where we need to go. The entire Commonwealth, who are represented by the Trustees by appointment by the Governor, want to provide that level of oversight and we cannot do that without documentation. Mr. Mass requested that the preliminary Joint

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

Commission report be sent to the Board by tomorrow. Secretary Tsai stated that we share the exact goals on transparency and that no one on the Board or anyone working near the Soldiers' Home believes we should be subject to any less standard than any other skilled nursing facility in the Commonwealth. We will follow-up on procedural matter with DPH around certain pieces that we are not able to directly control and will circle back. Secretary Tsai will connect on where things stand on the Joint Commission practice, and when we have a complete survey response from the Joint Commission, it will be forwarded to the Board. Cheryl Poppe reported that CMS surveys are conducted by DPH. She noted that the Soldiers' Home in Chelsea falls under CMS. CMS has just now started conducted surveys again due to COVID. They were doing infection control focused surveys at nursing homes that fell under CMS. She noted that DPH are probably in the process of doing catch up on surveys, and also added that these surveys are not scheduled, they are unannounced.

Kevin Jourdain inquired on the administrative employee who tested positive for COVID-19, and the resulting cancellation of outdoor visitation for 14 days. This seems challenging for the residents to have visitations completely shut down. Was there no way the staff member could be isolated? Dr. Dar reported that as soon as the positive COVID case was identified, the individual was sent home and contact tracing was done. All cohorts were sent home and quarantined. He noted that if we underestimate COVID-19 and that it could not spread outside these people, it would be a dangerous assumption to make. We follow DPH and CMS guidelines – keeping as minimal traffic as possible to keep the veterans safe in the Home. Once we have gone through the 14 day timeline and we have data to show there has been no spread of COVID-19, we can come down from the high alert position. We are currently maximizing activities with the veterans, doing televisits with families. We do recognize that it is frustrating for families, veterans, and staff, and would not recommend this if we did not think it was safest for the veterans.

Isaac Mass noted that there is only a two-third to three-quarter percentage for compliance with surveillance testing for staff, so one-quarter to one-third of staff could be asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19. He questioned why these individuals are allowed to have contact with the veterans on a daily basis, but family members who are willing to take a rapid COVID-19 test, are not allowed to have contact with their veteran family members? Shouldn't these restrictions be extended to staff unwilling to take the COVID-19 test? Dr. Dar noted that the more people tested for COVID-19, the better. We currently are having sitdowns with statisticians on around the likelihood to catch COVID-19 – this is way the state has set minimums for how much to test. During surveillance testing at the Home, we have consistently met these minimums. Mr. Mass inquired if we would have testing for family members? Secretary Tsai noted that we are trying to ensure we are holding the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke to the same requirements of skilled nursing facilities in the Commonwealth – these are around testing guidelines in CMS, specific guidance around visitation, and testing positively. Kevin Jourdain inquired if it is the standard for any nursing home in Massachusetts that if anyone in the facility tests positive for COVID-19 that there is then no visitation for 2 weeks? Secretary Poppe stated that the guidance from CMS is that if there is any staff member or veteran who tests positive for COVID-19, visitation needs to cease. The Home is following CMS guidelines in terms of visitation. Secretary Tsai reported that there were times earlier on in the COVID pandemic, that the Home was at a 95% compliance rating for staff testing. He reported that we are now in discussions with the Unions to finalize a labor requirement to allow us to describe the COVID-19 testing as mandatory for staff. He reported that there is a meeting on Monday, and that as soon as we have this finalized after the Union discussion, an update will be provided to the Board of Trustees on this. Carmen Ostrander inquired if the 38% of staff not tested are working from home? Secretary Tsai stated that is part of the discussion they are having with the Unions – the bargaining units have specific control on this. Val Liptak reported that 146/201 staff were negative in the last surveillance testing on 9/1/20 and 9/2/20, which represents 73% compliance. The only staff working from home are those who had contact with the individual staff member who tested positive. They are working from home for 14 days because there was contact tracing done. Kevin Jourdain inquired if the other 38% of staff that refused testing are still working with the veterans? Val Liptak confirmed that yes they are. Kevin Jourdain noted that the management and the Board of Trustees are not happy with this and that this is a problem. Isaac Mass also stated that he feels that one of rules wrong. The rule that says only a certain percentage of employees needs to be tested is wrong, along with the rule that all visits should be shut down. Feedback should go back to the rulemakers to see if incongruity there, and if CMS would require that 100% of staff

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

need to be tested, we would not have this conversation. We have a problem with incongruity of letting people have contact with veterans at high risk, than lower risk family members.

Isaac Mass inquired if leadership received the “Reimagine Future Report” from the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home Coalition. Secretary Tsai requested that this be forwarded. Kevin Jourdain will forward this report to leadership at the Home.

Issac Mass inquired on why health care proxies are unable to have eyes on the care being provided to their loved one. He asked if the health care proxy is not considered part of the medical care team. Dr. Dar stated that when there are extenuating circumstances around goals of care, CMS guidelines permit us to allow the health care proxy into the home to be with their loved one, but this is not an allowance we have to do on a live basis. As far as any request that health care proxies have for care, for updates, televisits or a call with the physician, our team is dedicated to answering those questions while keeping within guidelines. We cannot just open up adhoc visitation by health care proxies at this time during COVID-19. There is a limitation on the situation we are in now. Mr. Mass noted that it is helpful for the members of the public to know that the Board reads everything they are given and they can trust the Trustees to do the work. Mr. Mass asked if the health care proxies have the right to have private conversations with the subject of the health care proxy, that are outside the ears of the health care provider. He noted that when doing a zoom call, you don’t know if there is a provider in the room. Can they have a private conversation with the health care proxy and how can they have confidence in the information they are receiving? Dr. Dar confirmed that if he is stating they should be able to have a conversation with the person they hold the health care proxy for, then yes, they are welcome to have a private conversation with the veteran at any time via phone or video. The video can be shown around the room to demonstrate privacy. He noted that these are the same rules that other facilities are subject to. We are trying our best to keep loved ones safe. To the degree we can maximize televisits, we will, and when safe, we will continue to do so.

Kevin Jourdain inquired if the veterans are able to have access to the canteen in a socially distanced way? Val Liptak stated that the canteen is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Home, which is part of the second phase of the refresh project, which is beginning at the end of September so it is currently unavailable. We are cleaning out the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor recreation room to be used as a multi-purpose room, and the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> floor unit will be refreshed.

Kevin Jourdain inquired if we are moving forward with the Xenex machines as they are fully funded under the CARES act. He noted that this has been raised by the coalition members, among others. Dr. Higgins replied that we have finished the evaluation of 4 different machines, and he has had conversations with environmental services at Cooley Dickinson Hospital. They have retired the Xenex machine in favor of the Surficide machine for various reasons. Some have propriety bulbs – all are the same in terms of the light being used. The advantage to this unit is that it has three emitters, and you get much better cleaning at a smaller dose of UV radiation. He noted that UV does degrade paint and plastics the longer you have the UV pointing at something, so we would like to buy the unit that has the lowest possible radiation levels of UV and still provide the level of cleaning. We will be ranking the four different units, with part of the decision being price and value of the unit. We expect to have a preliminary decision by the end of the week, and a final decision within 2 weeks. Kevin Jourdain reiterated that the cost of the units should be covered by the CARES act, and inquired if we will be purchasing one or two machines? Dr. Higgins stated that we would like to have two, but the price per machine runs between \$80,000-\$100,000. He noted that emitters can be used in smaller spaces independently. In many veteran rooms, we would need two units. We’ll make considerations on where to place, and take into consideration the effort that the environmental services department has to spend moving them around.

Kevin Jourdain relayed a concern he received that veterans do not have ideal access for respiratory therapy services at the Home. Val stated that we do not have respiratory therapists on site, but daily rounding is done if someone has respiratory issues. Mr. Jourdain inquired why we do not have these services available to residents while in the midst of an epidemic that strikes at the respiratory system, and that these services are needed in a facility of this nature. Val

**Report from State and Administrator (cont.):**

reported that she is not aware of any long term care facility that has respiratory therapy services on-site. She stated that there are enough clinicians on site to provide respiratory treatment if needed. We are looking at a physician and nurse practitioner model for this education to ensure staff can do proper respiratory therapy assessments and give proper treatment. Mr. Jourdain asked for confirmation that the veterans would have access to these services if needed. Val confirmed that they would. She noted that we have a great working relationship with Holyoke Medical Center. If a patient has a respiratory condition that needs acute level care, they would be transferred out. They would not stay in a long-term care facility.

Kevin Jourdain stated that there have been some concerns expressed from families and residents on whether there is a long-term plan for an Ombudsman. Val confirmed that a volunteer has been connected and we are also looking for a permanent certified Ombudsman. This is a requirement and our legal counsel is currently working on getting a permanent Ombudsmen in. Secretary Poppe stated that there is a federal Ombudsman program that occurs if you are CMS certified. She stated that she had a meeting with Elder Affairs and they did provide options that both Soldiers' Homes in Holyoke and Chelsea can pursue to adopt the program. She noted that we would have to pay for this and we are looking for long-range solutions that would benefit both homes. Isaac Mass noted that the Ombudsmen issue was reported as part of the VA survey.

Isaac Mass inquired the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) interviews are for a third interim CMO? He reported that the only person that has hiring authority for a permanent CMO is the Superintendent. Val stated that the position has been posted, noting that this is a very difficult position to fill, so we are being proactive. She reported that Dr. Higgins is staying on as interim CMO until we put a permanent CMO in place. Mr. Mass inquired why do this until we hire a Superintendent? Val acknowledged that but she stated that from her experience, the Superintendent would be looking to Dr. Higgins for a medical review of the candidates. She stated that long term care is one of the most difficult places to fill a CMO position, and there tends to be a long lag time before being able to onboard them.

Chris Dupont stated that his requested analysis on the correlation between full-time employee vs. part-time employee callouts at the Home was reported as completed. He requested a copy of that analysis. Val to provide copy to Mr. Dupont.

Chris Dupont inquired on how many vacant beds are in the Home currently. Val stated that currently we have 92 veterans in the Home. She stated that with the refresh project and the new square footage, the census will decrease from the previous census to 172. Mr. Dupont noted this equals approximately 100 beds being vacant, and inquired when the appropriate time would be to resume admissions to the Home? Val stated that she would not recommend resuming admissions until we stabilize and have policies, procedures and infection control measures in place, and we have sufficient staff on board. We are still utilizing agency staff to complement organic staff. This needs to be set up and running well, and Joint Commission plans and other reviews to be done before resuming admissions. Mr. Dupont inquired if there is still an active waiting list in place, and are the persons on that list being updated? Val confirmed that the wait list continues and there have been calls. She will follow-up on what the response policy is and will provide that.

Chris Dupont inquired what the plan is for visitation with the colder weather coming. Val stated that they are looking at putting sides up on the pavilion and bringing in heaters. There are ongoing conversations about the plan for winter. We will update on that plan at the next Board of Trustees meeting on 10/13/20.

**Old Business:**

Trustee Account Audit Update from Powers & Sullivan and the Chair: Kevin Jourdain is working with the outside auditor on this – no new updates on this.

Meeting the Capital & Infrastructure Needs of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke: Kevin Jourdain stated that this was touched upon during the State and Administrator Report. He noted that there is going to be ongoing discussions with stakeholders through Payette, and approximates that this will be a 4-6 process. He has recommended the following involvement:

1. The Board of Trustees to have one initial meeting with Payette regarding their overall vision and improvements for the new Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. He has requested that Payette have an early meeting with them.
2. The Board of Trustees be given a schedule of all stakeholders who are invited.
3. The stakeholder meetings be available remotely so anyone can listen in on these meetings. Any materials provided by the stakeholders be provided to the Board of Trustees.
4. The Board of Trustees be present with Payette in the first initial meeting and a meeting at the end, remotely.
5. A report be produced summarizing all of this for the Board of Trustees and state officials, including recommendations going forward.

Follow-up on Board rules adopted on July 14 relative to recommendations from Attorney Pearlstein report: Kevin Jourdain reported that a number of these items are moving forward. A number of bids have been received for the electronic medical record. There have been permanent staffing improvements, an occupational health nurse has been hired, the DPH issue is ongoing, and improvements with labor relations. Mr. Jourdain stated that he is impressed and encouraged by the work that administration and the unions have done to work closely. He inquired if there is anything to discuss regarding written policies and education of staff.

Val Liptak provided the following updates:

- Education and training room will be completed this month – 25 computers to be set up by month's end.
- Implementation of the Policytech policy management software system planned – superusers to be identified and provide education to staff.
- Orientation program has been developed over the last few months for new staff.
- Competency tools have been developed to allow staff and administration to know competency requirements and that staff are competent on an annual basis, following regulations under education and training.
- Omnicell medication program to be implemented.
- Three person staffing area tracking probationary review program . Items addressed require education signature sign-off.
- All Form 30's have been reviewed –all will be signed by staff and executed along with their EPRS.
- CPR program to be implemented – this was previously a requirement for just RN's, but will now be required of RN's, LPN's, and CNA's and offered to all staff.
- IV Training and other training – one nurse practitioner that is being onboarded has a background in education, training and infection control. Entire focus on clinical group providing proper education.

Kevin Jourdain inquired if 100% of staff will have performance appraisals? Val confirmed, adding that there is a process in place to track and monitor EPRS that is sent to management on a weekly basis until we are at 100%. We will have statistics on the annual report to ensure that EPRS compliance is done.

Isaac Mass noted that he has received feedback from the community that potential candidates may be discouraged from working here due to vandalism and security problems in the parking lot. He asked if this can be looked at. Val stated that we will review any security incidents over the last 12 months and report back. Kevin Jourdain reported that the State Police did a comprehensive security study that he will distribute. He asked that we consider security measures and protocols that were identified as possible risk areas in this report as we think of the new building. He inquired if we have a Director of Facility Management. Val stated we have identified 2 final candidates who will be coming back for 2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews for the Director of Facilities position.

**Old Business (cont.):**

Discussion of Recommendation of SHH Legal Counsel to review past Executive Session Minutes for Possible Release: No new updates on this item.

Announcement of Date and Time of Bennett Walsh meeting: Kevin Jourdain reported that there was a hearing today at 11:00 am in Hampden County Superior Court before Judge Ferrara. He noted that it is posted on YouTube for members of the public. Judge Ferrara stated that he would take the matter under advisement and will have a decision on the matter within 10 days regarding the termination of the Superintendent and the appointment of future Superintendents. He noted that we will know where we stand on this item by the next Board of Trustees meeting on 10/18/20.

Board discussion, recommendations and motions relative to proposed changes to statutes related to the Board of Trustees:

Kevin Jourdain noted that he takes with great joy the energy of the many community advocates who have expressed that they believe in this Board. They also believe this Board of Trustees should maintain its authority and composition in Western MA. We look forward to a vigorous process at some point if the legislature takes up various proposals to do something other than that. Kevin Jourdain and Isaac Mass will be meeting with administration officials on Thursday, and will have more information on this and debrief on this topic. More to come on this item following that meeting. Mr. Jourdain expressed his thanks to the Baker administration for giving us a forum to talk about this.

Isaac Mass inquired if it would be appropriate at the next Board of Trustees meeting or at a Special meeting to start outlining the process for the appointment of the next Superintendent, if that should happen. This will be put on the next Board of Trustees agenda as a new business item.

**Adjourn:**

Kevin Jourdain made a motion, seconded by Isaac Mass, to conclude the Public Session and move into Executive Session for the purpose 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 Executive Session has ended. Thank you to all who attended this evening.

Roll Call Vote is as follows: Sean Collins (Yes), Chris Dupont (Yes), Cindy Lacoste (Yes), Isaac Mass (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), Kevin Jourdain (Yes). It was unanimously VOTED to conclude Public Session and move into Executive Session at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Shimel  
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees