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Health district board approves preliminary architectural remodeling plans for long term nursing care

The Morrow County Health District Board, at their regular meeting Monday night, gave CEO Victor Vander Does a preliminary go-ahead on plans to remodel Pioneer Memorial Hospital to accommodate long-term nursing care patients. While technically not a "nursing home," the remodel would allow for care of long-term patients. Vander Does will

now direct the architectural firm to proceed with more detailed plans and submit those plans to the state architect for approval.

The district has already admitted one long-term nursing care patient and expects another shortly. Another five patients are on a waiting list.

The plan would expand and remodel existing rooms upstairs at the hospital to provide rooms for eight long-term patients—three semi-private rooms, which accommodate two patients each, and two private rooms to accommodate one person each.

Plans also call for bathrooms built according to American Disabilities Act standards, a nursing station and a utility room.

Anderson Dabrowski Architects, LLC, estimated costs at around \$767,083 for the entire project, including \$406,670 for building costs; \$86,334 in architectural fees; \$157,066 in other owner costs; \$65,007 for a 10 percent contingency; and \$52,005 for eight percent for market conditions/location.

"Who pays for this?" queried Vander Does. He said that Medicare will ultimately pay around 75 percent of the remodeling costs over a period of years, and will pay for around 75 percent of staffing costs. He added that MCHD has \$500,000 available to borrow because they recently paid back a half million dollar loan. He also said that an additional half million dollar payment is expected from the state of Oregon around the end of the summer because they failed to reimburse the

district correctly for clinic visits over the last six years.

Residents of the facility will pay for costs incurred for their care either through private pay or Medicaid. Monday night the board, at Vander Does' recommendation, set private nursing care rates at \$250 per day for a private room or \$190 per day for a semi-private room. Vander Does said that he arrived at those figures after completing a market study of charges for private pay rates for nursing care at facilities in Hermiston, John Day and Burns. "All were within \$25" of MCHD's proposed rates, he said. He said that Medicaid will reimburse the district at around \$175 per day with additional Medicare reimbursements to make up the cost difference between the Medicaid payments and the facility's actual costs at settlement time. "Six grand (per month) is about the going rate for a nursing home these days," said Vander Does.

In a related matter, Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney told the board that they would have to rename the facility to accommodate the changes. Previously the hospital's name was Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home. However since the facility has not included a nursing home for some time and will not technically become a nursing home, the board must change the name. The name Pioneer Memorial Hospital was not available as there is another hospital in Bend with that name. Mahoney suggested Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Nursing Care Facility and the board agreed.

Also at the meeting, Mahoney told the board that the district broke its record in bringing in \$602,093 in gross patient revenue for the month of March. The district ended March with a \$98,654 gain for the month and a \$147,004 gain for the year, for a \$16,334 average monthly year-to-date gain.

In other business, the board:

-accepted the 2007-08 fiscal year budget as presented. The budget lists \$5,576 in resources, excepting taxes, and an additional \$914 in property taxes for \$6,490,427 in total resources. Last year's adopted budget included \$4,895,447 in resources and an additional \$875,357 in taxes for \$5,770,804 in total resources. A public hearing has been set for May 21.

-heard from Vander Does that he has a good prospect for a physician from the Salem area who has expressed interest in relocating to the district.

-heard that the hospital received good reviews and only minor infractions following Critical Access Hospital and state fire marshal inspections.

-learned that a contract with TimeLine, a physician recruitment company, did not include advertising costs of \$19,875 for a mailing campaign. The contract had been signed and the district could not withdraw from the contract. "I had no idea it was going to cost this much," exclaimed Vander Does.

-approved paying tuition and other costs for a basic EMT who lives in south Morrow County to attend school to become a paramedic. In addition to

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HEPPNER

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Ione mayor resigns position

Ione Mayor Mark Bruno verbally announced his resignation to the Ione City Council during a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, April 10. Bruno gave no reason for stepping down.

The Ione City Council will address the issue of replacing Bruno at the next meeting on Tuesday, May 8. The council will be actively searching for another council member to replace him. During this time, the president of the council, Wayne Hams, will step in as mayor until a new mayor can be appointed.



Mark Bruno

Don't forget Election Day

Don't forget that Tuesday, May 15, is Election Day in Morrow County. Voters have the choice of mailing in the ballot or returning it to any designated drop site in the state.

All ballots must be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Postmarks do not count! A list of drop sites are as follows:

- New Boardman City Hall, Monday - Friday April 27 to May 14, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; May 15, Election Day, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Irrigon Annex, April 27 to May 14, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; May 15, Election Day, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Bank of Eastern Oregon in Ione, April 27 to May 14, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 15, Election Day, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Morrow County Road Office in Lexington, April 27 to May 14, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; May 15, Election Day, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Morrow County Courthouse, April 27 to May 14, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; May 15, Election Day, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

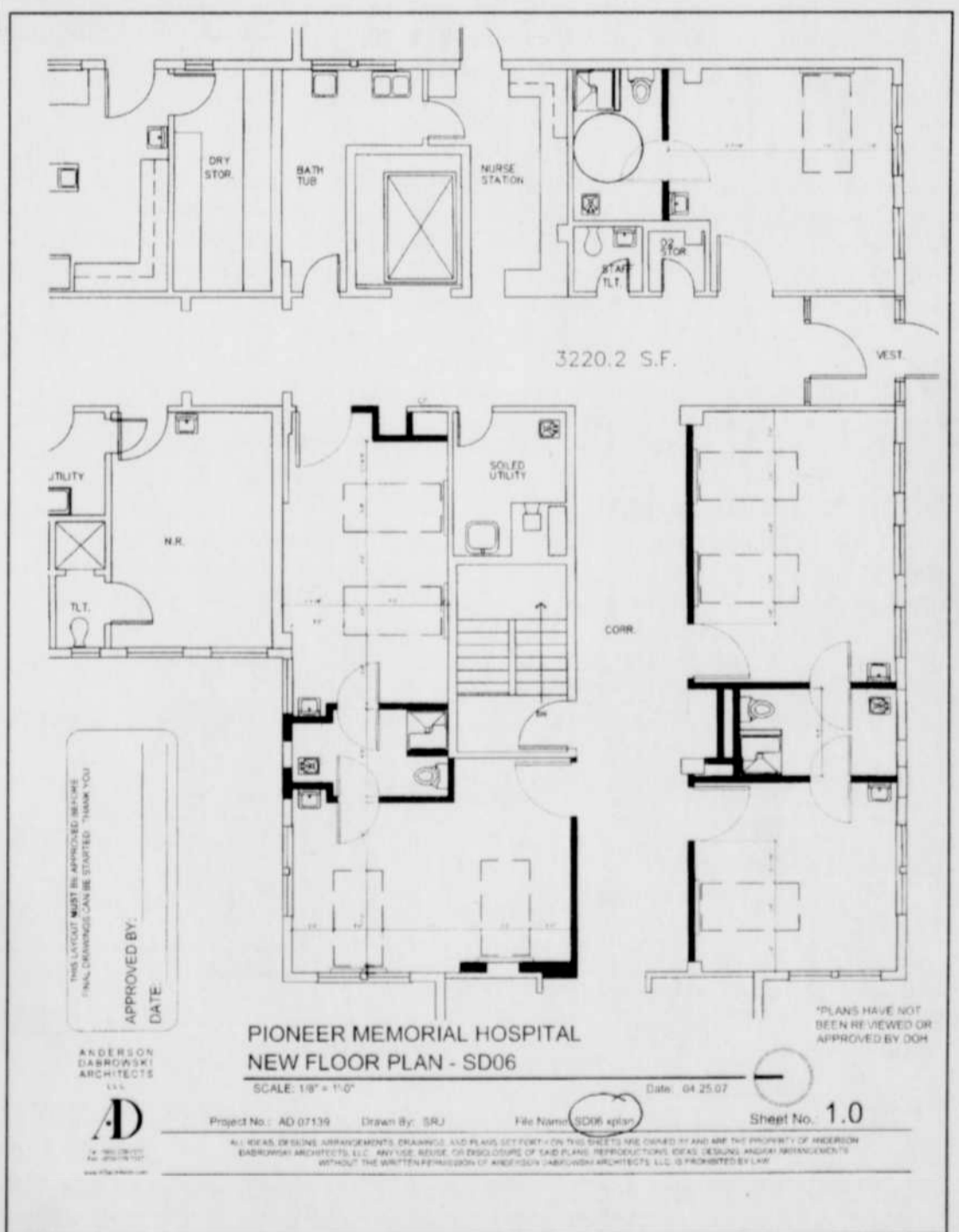
For more information call 676-5604, 922-4103, or 481-2112.

Chamber After Hours a success



The Heppner Chamber of Commerce After Hours was held at the Bank of Eastern Oregon on Thursday, April 26. Coffee, punch, and hors d'oeuvres were served. Quilts and artwork were put on display for everyone to view. The next Chamber After Hours will be held at Wheatland Insurance on Thursday, June 28. The Chamber is appreciative of the Bank of Eastern Oregon's efforts to make this event a success.

**ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
 MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.**



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