

## MCHD hears public comment regarding termination

The Morrow County Health District Board, at their April 25 meeting at the Port of Morrow offices in Boardman, heard public comment via telecom, specifically concerning the termination of Victoria Walz, who had subsequently initiated a Facebook campaign against the district. Walz allegedly used the district's computer during work time for personal reasons. She listed on Facebook the district employees who had left the district or had been terminated by the district.

At the meeting, CEO Emily Roberts outlined a plan to test wells in the district for contaminants, such as nitrates, coliform bacteria, arsenic and lead. Morrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty was on hand in support of a Morrow County Health District/Morrow County Health Department partnership to facilitate the collection of samples and testing of wells. "I want to remove the cost, time barrier and work with Public Health," said Roberts. "I feel it is critical." It was noted that water filters can help prevent contaminants and people can also buy filtered water for drinking and cooking uses. Roberts suggested providing water testing kits where people could pick up the kits for testing their wells once a week, perhaps picking up the kits on Sunday and returning the water samples for testing on Mondays, noting that both Oregon State University and the University of Oregon have testing programs. "I would like this to be an ongoing project," she said.

Roberts advised the board that they did not need to take action on the plan.

Also at the meeting, the board approved three health provider contracts with Edward Piepmeier, M.D. as locum tenens, Jillian Webb, nurse practitioner, and Christine Seals, M.D., providing "They can meet our standards," said Roberts.

The district is still recruiting for a family practice physician, an MD or a DO (doctor of osteopathy), and a behavioral health consultant (a licensed clinical social worker or a psychologist) for Pioneer Memorial Clinic and a family practice physician, an MD or DO, for the Irrigon Medical Clinic.

At the meeting, Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney presented a proposed budget for fiscal year 2022-2023 with "net patient revenues up 29 percent or \$3.8 million over current year-end projected volumes, which are historically low due to the pandemic and a provider shortage resulting in reduced utilization. The 2022 budget includes a 4.5 percent cost of living increase." The proposed budget included no new capital loans, but added four EMS positions in Boardman, six EMS positions in Irrigon and one medical staff-executive coordinator."

"The FY 2022-23 budget includes a 4.5 percent cost of living increase for non-contracted and union employees, annual levity step increases, market adjustments for pay scales, a 15-percent estimated increase to the district's employee health insurance contribution cap beginning 1/1/2023, and the addition of 11 FTEs (full time employees) over last year's budget due to staffing changes. \$20,385.

Mahoney said, "Other revenue amounts did not fluctuate a great deal except for the addition of \$200,000 in COVID Provider Relief Funding for the clinics and a federal grant request that has been submitted for a new CT scanner for \$585,000 that could be awarded in FY 2023."

"The forecasted amount of \$3,078,680 is a 20-percent increase over the current year revenue due to increased property values in residential, commercial and industrial development in primarily the north end of the county," she said. "There are no new capital equipment leases or loans budgeted for this year."

Also at the meeting, the board learned the district is to receive \$657,983 from the Amazon Gift Payment distribution.

The 2022-23 budget includes the following proposed resources: Pioneer Memorial Hospital-\$11,678,067, compared to \$10,168,965 adopted for 2021-22; Home Health & Hospice-\$1,217,749 vs. \$1,148,484 adopted for 2021; Boardman Ambulance-\$654,401 vs. \$567,954; Irrigon Ambulance-\$449,615 vs \$348,603; Ione Ambulance-\$3,676 vs \$4,420; Heppner Clinic \$1,734,724 vs \$2,061,75; Irrigon Clinic-\$2,061,756 vs \$2071,900; Ione Clinic-\$278,624 vs \$274,882; Other Revenue -\$467,343 vs. \$267,343; Donations and Grants-\$909,000 vs \$274,00; Interest Income-\$45,000 vs. \$60,000; Community Service Fees-\$311,900 vs. \$293,100; Electronic Health Record Reimbursements-\$0 vs. \$0; 340B Retail Pharmacy Net Revenue-\$260,000 vs \$260,000; Operating, Capital, Long & Short Term Loans-\$0 vs. \$67,500; Total Resources Except Taxes-\$20,071,855 vs. \$18,339,208; Property Taxes (including Local Option Taxes if applicable)-\$3,078,680 vs. \$2,372,518; Total Resources-\$23,150,535 vs. \$20711,726.

2022-23 proposed expenditures: Pioneer Memorial Hospital-\$12,068,033 vs. \$11,975,707 for last year; Home Health & Hospice-\$1,392,900 vs. \$1,230,084; Boardman Ambulance-\$863,687 vs. \$552,838; Irrigon Ambulance-\$863,769 vs. \$404,972; Ione Ambulance & Lexington EMS-\$20,385 vs. \$21,21,512; Heppner Pioneer Memorial Clinic-\$2,467,243 vs. \$2,075,910; Irrigon Clinic-\$2,008,841 vs. \$1,697,013; Ione Community Clinic-\$258,069 vs. \$239,389; Community Benefit Grants-\$50,000 vs. \$50,000; Revenue Deductions and Bad Debt-\$1,275,420 vs. \$1,415,174; Capital purchases-\$1,343,640 vs. \$590,970; Capital Lease Principal Reduction-0; Long & Short Term Debt Principal Reduction-\$316,495 v. \$343,713; Total Expenditures-\$22,928,483 vs. \$20,597,282; Net decrease in cash-\$222,052 vs. \$114,444.

The board also received the following unaudited financial statement for March from CFO Mahoney: \$1,209,576 in gross patient revenue, less \$253,319 in

revenue deductions, plus \$218,296 in tax revenue and \$14,844 in other operating revenue for \$1,696,035 in total operating revenue, less \$1,557,545 in total operating expenses for a \$138,490 gain from operations and \$48,035 in a non-operating gain for a \$186,525 gain for the month.

In other business, the board:

-approved a 20-year loan at 4.15 percent for refinancing the district's USDA loan. "I haven't found any rates more favorable," noted Mahoney.

-approved the following equipment purchases: a portable x-ray machine purchased with COVID funds, a hospital water softener, a hospital bathtub-a Pioneer Memorial Foundation Donation, and a pulmonary function test machine, purchased with COVID funds for additional testing for people with COVID.

-approved the following capital purchases from July 1, 2022 to June 30 2023: replacement of administrative car for staff-\$30,000 paid with cash from operations; hospital flooring-\$28,000 cash from operations; hospital interior paint-\$10,000 cash from operations; hospital water softener system-\$65,000 cash from operations; Pioneer Memorial Clinic back entrance project-\$35,000 COVID funds; 2 Zoll Defibrillators for crash carts-\$21,930 donation; freezer for QC materials-\$6,088; Irrigon Ambulance Hall site prep and paving-\$400,000 in grants received in prior years; door security systems at all locations-\$125,335 in grants received in prior years; two computer switches-\$10,677 in cash from operations; Omnicell Software interfaces-\$26,610 in cash from operations and a CT scanner with injector-\$585,000 federal grant, if awarded; total capital purchases-\$1,343,640, with \$170,287 to be paid with cash on hand, \$525,335 to be paid by prior grants/donated funds; and \$648,018 to be paid with the current year's grants and donations.

-received the following statistics for March: Pioneer Memorial Hospital had six admissions, two hospital respite admissions, five swing bed admissions, six admissions for observation, two hospital respite admissions, 662 outpatient admissions with emergency room, 100 emergency room encounters, 1,752 lab tests, 98 x-ray/ultrasound tests, 37 CT scans, five MRI scans, 31 EKG tests and 13 respiratory therapy sessions; Home Health had 153 patient visits; Hospice had two admissions and one discharge, with no deaths; Pharmacy had 2,331 drug doses for \$93,1218 in drug revenue.

-received the following report on provider visits: the Heppner Clinic had 343 provider visits, the Irrigon Clinic-406, and the Ione Clinic, 92.

-received the following ambulance reports for the month: Heppner Ambulance had 18 transports for \$36,830 in revenue; Boardman Ambulance had 22 transports for \$48,469 in revenue; Irrigon Ambulance had 15 transports for \$28,352 in revenue; Ione Ambulance had no transports.

## Ione Community 4-H Club takes field trip



Above pictured (L-R): Miley Strzelewicz, Phegley Padberg, Novalee Campbell, Liam Heide-man, Corey Rice, Khira Kreitzer, Kole Strzelewicz, Cadance Kreitzer and Madelyn Cambell. Dr. Bob and Jessie Peters are in background.

Below: Members of Follett Meat Co. met with members of the Ione Community 4-H Club this past week as part of the clubs monthly meeting.



Nine members of the Ione Community 4-H Club participated in their monthly meeting with a field trip. The trip included a tour of Follett Meat Co., where owner Justin Follett walked students through the processing of animals. Many of the students in the club show market animals and this provided some insight into creating a quality product for a consumer. Part of their experience was getting

to watch half a beef being cut up. "It was a really neat experience," said member Khira Krietzer, an eighth grader in Ione. "It will help me decide how to feed my show animals."

The second part of the field trip was to Frontier Genetics with Bob and Jessie Peter. Club members were able to watch the artificial insemination of a mare and get a lesson on

genetics. At this stop, club member, Miley Strzelewicz also gave a presentation on theriogenology; the study of animal reproduction.

Ione Community 4-H is a club in Morrow County that was established in 2011. The current club leader is Dawn Eynetich and the club participates in many kinds of livestock, primarily, but also includes static opportunities as well.

## Public invited to view 4-H candidate presentations

Oregon State University Extension, Morrow County will be conducting interviews for a 4-H Program Coordinator/Outreach Program Coordinator on Friday, April 29, 2022. The community is invited to view community presentations by each of the three candidates. The presentation for candidate A will be available from 3 to 3:30 p.m., candidate B from 3:45 to 4:15 p.m. and candidate C from 4:30 to 5 p.m.

The public viewing for the presentations will

be done through zoom. Community members can log onto the zoom link posted below. Community participants will be asked for feedback through a link shared at the time of the presentations. For those who are unable to view

presentations during the scheduled times, but would like to, please contact Julie Baker at julie.baker@oregonstate.edu for a link to recorded versions.

Please email Julie Baker also for the link to the Zoom presentations.

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### Town & Country 2022

#### An Evening With The Stars

The Town & Country Event will be May 19th 2022 at the Gilliam & Bisbee building. Dinner by Chef Alvin Liu. No host bar by Bucknum's Bar & Grill

Door prize donated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Tickets are limited! \$35 per person. Available at the Chamber Office, City Hall, Murray's Rx and Bank of Eastern Oregon

- Man of the Year
- Woman of the Year
- Educator of the Year
- Student of the Year
- Business of the Year
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