

Health district audit report results

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pulled some numbers from other critical access hospitals in the state of Oregon and throughout the Pacific Northwest in order to make a comparison. The results were mixed.

The health district's operating margin was down a whopping 44.38 percent in 2024, compared to slightly positive trends of 4.63 percent for Oregon and 1.23 percent for the Northwest. The previous two years also showed negative operating margin compared to slightly positive margins for Oregon and the rest of the Northwest.

The district's total margin for 2024 was also lower than compared critical access hospitals, an 8.61 percent drop compared to a 3.51 average rise for other Oregon hospitals. MCHD broke even in 2023 and saw a positive 5.28 percent margin in 2022.

After all that, however, Volk said the district's current assets still outweigh its liabilities. In fact, he said that a poll of the healthcare industry showed the industry as a whole is more optimistic than might be expected.

"Even though we had a tough inflationary period,

overall, I would say that most who responded were pretty optimistic," he said.

In fact, most rural hospitals seem to be planning capital investments to align their facilities with changing healthcare needs.

It wasn't all good news for the health district that night, though. Close to a dozen members of the public were present at the meeting. Most, if not all, were anxious to speak their mind to the board.

There was no space for public comment on the night's agenda. When the board moved directly into the audit report, Marge Kenny of Hepppner spoke up and told the board members that the treatment was rude.

"There's been more problems up here at this hospital in the last few years. We have a few people here who would like to speak. If you're not even going to give them the chance to speak, why, there's problems," said Kenny.

"Maybe it's not on the agenda, but can't you make an exception when you see people here who want to say what they have to say?"

MCHD Board Chair Diane Kilkenny addressed the concern by saying the board had started removing

public comment from the agenda when they received an audit report because the presentation is so long. She also said the public should have known that.

"This agenda, and this packet, was published last week, and all of this was on there," said Kilkenny. She invited participants to either submit comments in writing or return for the next MCHD board meeting. "And we do appreciate all of you being here, but I would say this is not new. We did this last year, too."

"Well, this is this year," Kenny replied.

In other business, the board:

- Renewed a physician associate employment agreement with Jon Watson, PA-C. Watson has been with the health district since 2018 and works primarily in Irrigon Medical Clinic. The renewal is for three years.

- Renewed a licensed clinical social worker employment agreement with Rebecca Humphreys, LCSW. Humphreys has been with the health district for three years and is renewing for another three years. She divides her time

between Pioneer Memorial Clinic and MCHD Home Health and Hospice.

-Passed a resolution naming Diane Kilkenny, Emily Roberts and Nicole Mahoney as authorized signers on MCHD bank accounts and removing all previous authorizations.

-Agreed to a request from South Morrow County Seniors Matter for assistance in obtaining an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for the Hepppner senior center. CEO Emily Roberts noted that the assistance will include a LifeVac choking rescue device.

MCHD board meetings are held the last Monday of each month. Agendas for upcoming meetings can be found online at www.morrow-countyhealthdistrict.org/board-of-directors.

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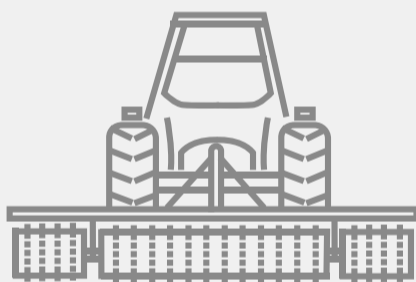


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