

**South County Health District  
Regular Meeting October 31, 2023  
Catherine Creek Community Center, Union, OR**

**Call to order** 10:05AM by President Susie Wirkkala

**Roll Call:** Present – Fred Hawkins, Maja LeFever, Debbie Clark, Susie Wirkkala, Kathy Kirby, Gerry Zastrow, Mary Brookshire and District Manager Adina Ferguson.

**Approval of Minutes:** Kathy Kirby made a motion to approve the corrected minutes from 8/29/23 and the minutes from 9/26/23. Seconded by Gerry, approved unanimously.

**Financials:** Financials were reviewed. Adina noted that the net income was low for September because the dentist had taken some vacation time and the clinic was closed for those days.

**Meeting with Nick DuCote and Nod Palmer:** Both Adina and Kathy attended. Kathy felt that it was a good meeting and that the groups were cohesive and complimentary. She felt she had a better understanding of the separate roles of each group. CUP is a landlord, providing space. SCHD is the owner of providers and services for the community. It was discussed that the dental clinic does not have enough space. The sterilization lab is too small. Our compressor is housed in an uninsulated and unheated box on the outside of the building where it freezes in the winter. Our employees do not have a break room. The building needs security doors to protect providers and patients. Nod was surprised to learn these things and feels that he can start working on them right away.

Nick noted that CUP and SCHD need to decide what projects they wanted to pursue and get the estimates of cost as quickly as possible. He is looking at Feb – March to get started on the details of the grant proposal so he can present a good pitch to federal legislators who will be involved with the process of approving our funding. The grants should include the needs of both groups.

Adina noted that the definition of the project to be funded is open at this time. CUP has a piece of property that they want to use to build a new building. It is not earmarked for any purpose yet. Grande Ronde has not given notice to vacate the clinic building where they now reside. We have an opportunity to put forth our needs for the district and clinic and develop a mutually beneficial plan of action with CUP for this grant.

Nick pointed out 3 points we need to have ready for any grant:

1. A study showing the cost of a new building – CUP has this study and will share it with us.
2. A study showing the cost of remodeling the building where we are now to accommodate the dental clinic, the district and our programs projected into the future.
3. A study showing the cost to remodel an existing building that the district would procure.

These three items would be the basis for justification of any funds that might be requested.

There was some discussion on how to proceed with finding an existing building to do a study on. It was decided that Kathy would contact Ralph and ask him what he thought would be the best way to identify a suitable property from those discussed and get that done.

Adina noted that there would be a meeting in mid-November involving both boards to have a brainstorming session on what would be best for the community and what programs each entity was interested in pursuing. Nick will arrange the time and date. It will be during the week of Nov. 13-21. Kathy noted that we will want Nick to facilitate to keep things on track. Adina noted that we have money in the feasibility grant to cover that as well as cover the studies we need done by Ralph. Debbie added that we need to have that money spent by the end of January. She also noted that there is additional grant money if we need to increase our funding for the research phase of the project.

Adina and Kathy noted that Nick is advising we do a semi-annual joint meeting with the CUP and SCHD boards to keep projects moving forward.

**Performance Review of District Manager:** Susie handed out a packet of information to the board regarding the performance review of District Manager Adina Ferguson. Her last review was in 2020. The board received a copy of her job description, instructions on how to go about doing a performance review and a form for providing feedback and comments. Susie asked board members to fill out the performance review form and return it to Dr. Donick in a sealed envelope. It was decided that the deadline would be November 15<sup>th</sup>. Susie asked Gerry to assist her with the review and compilation of the responses from the board and from the clinic staff supervised by Adina. The results would be shared at the November meeting and salary increase discussed.

**Catherine Creek Community Center:** Debbie noted that she attended the semi-annual Advisory Board meeting for the CCCC. They are hopeful we will continue our plans to work on a health and wellness program for the community. They feel the most urgent need would be a foot clinic for our community for those who are not able to do their own foot care. Due to the liability issues and the fact that this is a service that would involve a medical provider, Debbie turned this over to Adina to find out what it would take to put this together and to find resources for the provider needed.

Adina noted that she is talking to our insurance agent about the cost for the liability insurance needed and she has found that hospitals and medical clinics are dropping this service due to the liability and the low reimbursement rates from Medicare. The need for this very vital service is being taken over by nurses who are setting up their own company so they can bill insurance. Adina asked Kathy if she would be willing to apply her RN background to this project. She said she would. She shared that while the medical community is walking away from foot care, it is a vital part of maintaining health and wellness for the elderly and disabled population. Foot care clinics not only help people keep their toenails trimmed, but they address callous, bunions and other issues that can break down the skin and alter the gait of a person. The only resource people have right now is a beautician who does pedicures that cost between \$80-100. This is a barrier to many seniors who need the help. Serious medical issues like diabetes can be found through signs discovered during routine foot care. She feels this is a marvelous outreach. Adina noted that the district can bill insurance quarterly for providing the service.

Debbie also requested Adina check with our agent to see if they would do a seminar for Medicare/Medicaid to help people understand the process.

Adina will update the board at the November meeting of her findings and see they want to move forward.

**Clinic Update:** Adina noted that there is nothing further to discuss about the clinic.

**Board Sharing Review:** Susie announced she had received the following communications from various board members over the month of October:

1. Group text about meeting date from Mary. She reminded it needed to be captured for records retention.
2. An email from Kathy requesting she be included in the meeting with Nod and Nick. Susie instructed her to contact Adina directly to see if she could be included in the meeting.
3. An email from Fred letting her know that he had contacted the Ethics Commission regarding what he felt was an ethics violation. He asked that the Ethics handbook be given to board members. This handbook was distributed to the board last May.
4. An email from Adina to share the opinion received from our attorney, Eileen, regarding the issue of conflict of interest.
5. A second email from Fred suggesting the meeting between Adina, Nod and Nick would require decisions be made which Adina could not do since she has a conflict of interest with her mother's property. He was planning to talk to Nod directly to make sure Kathy was included. He noted that he is talking to the Ethics Commission and that they said our attorney could be giving us bad advice. He then said he doubted that Adina wrote the email she sent out and felt that Debbie had written it.
6. A notice from Debbie that she was removing her property from the feasibility report due to Fred's efforts and the net result of taking focus away from board business.
7. An email from Mary with an opinion from the Ethics Committee that verified what our attorney had already told us.

Susie noted that the month was filled with crap – particularly the negative communication that was making comments about other people. She reminded the board that all communications are public records. Discussions should be held at public meetings.

A discussion ensued about whether or not individuals had meant to make accusations or file ethics claims. Fred noted that it started when he received a report that did not have a name on it and he had no idea where it came from.

\*\*\*NOTE: The report was put into the board packets for the August meeting and discussed as to the reason for the report and the next step of approving a study to be done by Ralph Edwards to assist the board in the decision-making process.

**Excerpt from 8/26/23 Minutes - Update on building project:** District Manager talked to Nick DuCote about his timeframe for getting our project funded. He noted that he is planning to submit grants for another local non-profit in the coming cycle and will not be able to get to us for at least a year. Adina let him know that we will be working with Cherie Kausler to get the preliminary information about available properties and specifics of what the district wanted to do regarding a new building project. **Debbie provided a report to the board with what they have found so far.** At Nick's suggestion the district is going to have an engineer, Ralph Edwards, do a study and report for us that we can use to start soliciting grant money for the remodel of the old Boulder Market. The report will include a floor plan and estimate of costs. Ralph gave Adina a preliminary estimate of \$500,000 to set up the clinic and do all needed repairs including the parking lot. The plan is to raise smaller amounts of funds from our local grantors, such as OCF, Ford Family Foundation and other to fund each phase of the remodel. It was noted that SCHD has already garnered a lot of support from local partners who are familiar with our need for more space. It was asked if we have a conflict of interest because Debbie Clark owns the Boulder building. The District Manager responded that our attorney was asked about the issue during our board training in April when the possibility of using the building first came up. Eileen's response was that this is common in small communities and was not a problem as long as Debbie recuses herself from the buying decision. It was also mentioned that the Clarks would be essentially donating some of their equity in the building with the proposed purchase of the property, should the board move forward. Several questions were asked about the soundness of the building, condition of the roof. Adina noted that Ralph indicated that the building was sound and we should be able to do what we want with it. The board decided to table further questions about the building until we have Ralph's report.

Fred said he talked to Charlie at the Ethics board. He said he did not file a complaint. He said Charlie suggested that attorneys give bad advice. Debbie asked if he told Charlie who our attorney was since Eileen Eakin does the Ethics and legal training for the Special Districts Association. She also noted that she gets uneasy wondering why Fred would not have an open discussion in front of the board to ask questions and clarify before talking to an enforcement official about violations.

Gerry said she felt enough was said about the matter and that it was settled. She made a motion that if there was another situation about this type of disagreement in the future that a special meeting be called so the board could discuss the concerns among themselves and decide how to handle things. Second from Mary. Vote passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ 2023

**Vote:**

Fred Hawkins \_\_\_\_ Mary Brookshire \_\_\_\_ Debbie Clark \_\_\_\_

Susie Wirkkala \_\_\_\_\_ Kathy Kirby \_\_\_\_\_ Gerry Zamzow \_\_\_\_\_ Maja LeFever \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ President