

**South County Health District  
Regular Meeting November 28, 2023  
Catherine Creek Community Center, Union, OR**

**Call to order** 10:35AM 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 minutes from 10/31/23. Seconded by Gerry, approved unanimously.

**Financials:** Financials were reviewed. No questions or concerns.

**Plaque for Margeurite Pike:** District Manager shared that she received contact from Sue Peeples, a former Nurse Practitioner who worked for South County Health District before the clinic was sold to Grande Ronde Hospital. It had been promised that a plaque would be obtained in memory of Margeurite Pike, the Nurse Practitioner who founded the district and served as its President. Margeurite passed away a few years ago, but the plaque was never done. Debbie made a motion the district purchase the plaque and Gerry seconded. The board voted unanimously to have the District Manager obtain the plaque and find a good place for it to be displayed.

**Foot Clinic:** District Manager shared that she heard back from our insurance company. We have enough coverage to include the foot clinic liability. She is working on the process for billing insurance for the service. We may need to set a fee for those who are not covered for the service by their insurance but are unable to do their own foot care. She asked Kathy and Gerry if they would be willing to be on a committee to hammer out the details for the program so we can get it on line. Kathy and Gerry both agreed to participate.

**Meeting with Ralph Edwards:** Kathy and District Manager Adina shared that they met with Ralph at the old tavern building which now belongs to Donnie Later. The building is gutted – it has no plumbing, heat or electricity. Total square footage is 9000 square feet. Donnie said she is not interested in selling the building at this time, but was happy to allow the district to use it for their study into costs for remodeling an existing building as part of their search for new clinic space. Ralph felt the Later building was not representative of the kind of building the district wants to remodel and use for a clinic. He then visited the current clinic building and did several measurements and assessments. He concluded that the current building rooms are too small for a dental practice. In order to remodel the building to accommodate SCHED the walls would have to be torn out and the inside rebuilt to allow more working space for the dentist and his staff. He felt this was not practical, given the fact that it would be very expensive and was not the best alternative for the district. He advised SCHED would be better off getting a building of their own so their money would go toward a capital asset rather than be spent on rent or lease. He said he would work on a report of his findings to date.

**USDA Telecommunications Grant:** Debbie shared that she has received a response from the USDA on her grant application from last January. The request was deemed ineligible because it did not meet the floor amount of \$50,000 after the panel subtracted items that were not covered under the grant. SCHD was encouraged to submit their project again at the next grant cycle in 2025.

**Review Board Policy:** Debbie shared with the board her concern that there had recently been some discussion of individual board member concerns with other board members outside the open meeting process. She pointed out that those concerns were then not brought to the entire board for discussion as required by our board policy. She praised Gerry's motion from the October meeting and the board's vote to require all issues be brought to the full board, even if it required a special meeting to be called. She challenged the board that this was an important move, but did not address the issue of personal opinions having been substituted for investigation and due diligence before the board taking action to cancel a project that had been in the works for many months. Debbie noted that the district is subject to a myriad of laws and regulations that no one sitting on the board was an expert at sorting out when a disagreement arises. She noted that our attorney Eileen Eakin's opinion on the issue of Conflict of Interest did not seem to convince the board to the facts of whether there had been a violation or not. Debbie suggested that we needed someone the board trusted to do the research when there is a concern on legal matters who would be supported by the board and trusted as a reliable and fair source of information. She pointed out that the primary responsibility falls to our District Manager, but it might make the board more comfortable to have a board member working with Adina to look into disputes such as the one that started in September. She noted that board member Maja LeFever is a trained and experienced law enforcement officer who deals with legal matters and investigation. She made a motion that the board appoint Maja LeFever as the SCHD Board Compliance Officer to assist the District Manager with all legal compliance issues and the Maja assume the responsibility of board contact to our attorney. It was seconded by Gerry. After some discussion the board voted unanimously to appoint Maja to the position of Compliance Officer for the SCHD Board of Directors.

**Performance Review for District Manager:** President Susie Wirkkala shared the process used for the District Manager, Adina Ferguson. She noted that the clinic staff, including Dr. Donick did a review on Adina's role as Clinic Manager and HR Director. The entire staff gave her nothing but the highest rating for her work, her support of them as employees and for her leadership skills. The second part of the review was done by board members Fred Hawkins, Mary Brookshire, Gerry Zamzow, Kathy Kirby, Susie Wirkkala and Maja LeFever. Mary Brookshire did not return her review to the clinic, so she did not participate in the outcome of the review. Mary stated that she had mailed her form to the clinic before the 11/15/23 deadline. Debbie Clark did not participate and declared her Conflict of Interest. Of the five board members who did review the District Manager, four were very positive while one was very critical. When all the responses were reviewed and tallied by Susie and by Gerry, the results were solidly positive for Adina's performance, even with the one individual who was critical. Susie noted that no further discussion would be needed, as all had been given the opportunity to contribute.

Susie opened the floor to discuss a salary increase. Debbie again declared her Conflict of Interest and abstained from the discussion. Susie then noted that Adina had requested a salary increase of \$7.00 per hour. Adina pointed out that her responsibilities as District Manager required experience and skills well beyond a clinic manager. She had provided a breakdown of salaries for several jobs that were more

comparable to her duties than a simple dental clinic manager. Small District Managers in Oregon average \$80,000 to well over \$100,000 per year. She noted her current salary is \$26.00 per hour, making her the lowest paid full time employee of the district. She felt that \$34.00 per hour was a fair interim salary while the district continued to expand their services. She also noted that she had not been given a raise since 2020, with the board citing that they wanted to wait for a better time to increase her wages. In her letter to the board, Adina pointed out that the clinic was doing very well financially, even with the substantial salary increases that had been approved for clinic staff earlier this year. She verified that the budget had more than enough funds dedicated to employee salaries and benefits to cover her request.

Fred declared that the average raise since 2020 was 2% annually. At that rate, Adina should be given a raise of \$1.56 per hour. Fred also argued that people in our area were not getting big raises to overcome inflation and cost of living. Fred noted that the public would be in an uproar if they found out that SCHD approved a 26% raise for our District Manager. Mary noted that it would be a bad time to spend money on employee salaries when the district was looking to expand into a larger facility. Mary referred to her printout and claimed that dental clinic managers only make about the same as Adina's current salary. She said she had called other dental clinics and talked to them to verify that their managers did the same work and had the same responsibilities as our District Manager.

Gerry noted that Adina does a great deal more than the average clinic manager and the district could not afford to lose her over an insulting salary increase. She did not feel Mary was making a fair comparison. Kathy noted that she had done a lot of thinking and was leery of the numbers being proposed.

Fred made a motion to approve an increase to \$28 per hour and Mary seconded. Gerry said she opposed that number. Fred stopped her by noting there was a motion and a second and the vote had to be taken. President called for the vote and response was 2 yes, 4 no. Fred Hawkins – Yes, Mary Brookshire – Yes, Gerry Zastrow – No, Kathy Kirby – No, Maja LeFever – No, Susie Wirkkala – No.

Kathy Kirby then made a motion that Adina's salary be raised to \$30 per hour and that it be reviewed again in April for adjustment when all clinic employees have their salary review done. Gerry seconded. President called for the vote and it passed 4 yes, 2 no. Gerry Zastrow – Yes, Kathy Kirby – Yes, Maja LeFever – Yes, Susie Wirkkals – Yes, Fred Hawkins – No, Mary Brookshire – No.

Meeting was adjourned

**Approval of Document by Board of Directors  
Minutes Regular Board Meeting 11/28/23**

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ 2024

**Vote:** Fred Hawkins \_\_\_\_ Mary Brookshire \_\_\_\_ Debbie Clark \_\_\_\_

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

Maja LeFever \_\_\_\_

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