

**South County Health District
Regular Meeting May 28, 2024
SCHD Building 340 Hwy 203, Union, OR**

Call to order 10:00AM by President Susie Wirkkala

Roll Call: Present – Susie Wirkkala, Maja LeFever, Gerry Zastrow, Barb Weeks, Debbie Clark and District Manager Adina Ferguson.

Approval of Minutes: Barb made a motion to approve the minutes from April 30, 2024. Seconded by Gerry, approved unanimously.

Financials: Financials were reviewed. No concerns.

Employee Law Training: District Manager attended a Special Districts training in Pendleton for Employee Law overview and updates. She noted that SDAO offers assistance from their HR Director as well as their employment law attorney with any HR issues that may arise. They are providing a free template for a comprehensive employee handbook that is updated annually to include law changes and required employer compliance changes.

Dental Crisis in America Handout: The board reviewed data from the US Senate regarding the crisis in America regarding lack of access to dental care. The majority of Americans who don't receive dental insurance from their employer do not purchase individual coverage. Many who have insurance find that they are not covered for services that they need. Many go without care because they can't afford it. The data mentioned that many Americans seek care in other countries where they can get the services much cheaper – even factoring in the cost of travel and lodging. Adina shared that the Union Family Dental Clinic is considerably more affordable than other clinics in the area and that we work with individuals on obtaining the care they need. She noted that the most effective way to address the issue locally is through education. Even though we benefit from advanced technology and widespread access to information in Union County, it is staggering how many individuals, even those who are highly educated, do not understand the correlation between total body wellness and the need to diligently apply good hygiene habits. She noted that with the proper care, many people would not need expensive interventions designed to save their teeth. She noted that we have far too many young people in our community who are having full mouth extractions and dentures well before they reach their 50th birthday. She advocated for the district to develop an educational outreach program designed to reach children and families that will pass on the habits and knowledge needed to stop the unnecessary loss of natural teeth and the widespread issue of periodontal disease that leads to heart disease, stroke and other health problems. The board members unanimously agreed to have Adina look into funding for a program that will address these serious health problems and promote our new clinic project at the same time.

Board Priorities Discussion: The board reviewed the current efforts and projects and agreed on the following list of priorities:

- Work toward funding the building remodel for our new clinic. We have been approved through the first level on the Congressional Appropriations grant. The next level winners should be announced some time after the end of June. In the meantime we will work on grant money to get the roof done. We will continue to look for grants we can apply for if we don't make it to the next level with the current grant.
- Work on fundraising and publicity for the new clinic. We need to get the word out and develop a fundraising plan. It will be essential for any future grants to show local buy-in to the project and toward the district. Several ideas were discussed. The board will do individual research and discuss again at the next meeting.
- Training for the board. Debbie shared some resources available through Special Districts.

Budget Hearing: Adina noted that it is time for our annual budget hearing. The Observer should have the budget published in time for us to do the hearing on June 11th. Susie made the motion to set the budget hearing for June 11th. Gerry seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM