

**South County Health District
Regular Meeting September 26, 2023
Catherine Creek Community Center, Union, OR**

Call to order 10:04AM 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: Fred Hawkins requested that a change be made to the minutes, adding information on the City of Union grant reflecting that the city council had reviewed District Manager's request and had voted to allow SCHD to use the funds for nitrous. Secretary Debbie Clark opined that addition was not a true reflection of the meeting, as that information had not been addressed and probably should not be added. Board agreed to review the minutes with a notation at the next meeting

Financials: Board reviewed the financial statements. There were no questions or concerns.

Update on building project: Fred Hawkins requested this be placed on the agenda so he could talk about CUP and our relationship as a renter. He was asked to declare his conflict with his wife being on the CUP board and CUP being our landlord. He did so. He asked who did the feasibility report for the district search for a new building. Debbie responded that she did the report and the research. Fred shared that Grand Ronde Hospital notified CUP that they were going to be building their own clinic building, leaving the building without any renters if SCHD also moved out. CUP is proposing GRH buy their empty lot. He noted that Nick DuCote was present at the last CUP meeting with his assistant. It was mentioned that SCHD was looking for their own property. Nick suggested that the two groups work together so the clinic would not be empty. CUP has been surveying residents in North Powder, Union and Cove about their medical needs. They have gotten feedback that physical therapy and mental health are both needed. Mt. Valley PT has voiced interest in having space in Union if CUP was to build a building for them on the empty. CUP asked ??? why SCHD had not contacted them about the empty lot as they might have been willing to donate the land. Debbie responded that the major issue with the property was that it would require new construction which had been estimated at over 2 million dollars. Kathy noted that the study was looking at cost. Debbie agreed. Fred noted that GRH pays \$3000 for their share of the clinic building. Susie noted that if we had our own building supported by donations and grants, we would not be paying rent. Fred said that the other thing was DuCote noted that if three entities (including GRH) went out for the same grants for separate projects they would be competing for the limited available money.

Susie said both Susan Hawkins and Elaine have her phone number and could simply call her to set up a meeting to talk about their concerns. Fred asked if she wanted to set up a meeting and she said yes. Fred asked where the feasibility study stood at the moment. Debbie noted we are still waiting on Ralph Edwards to do the study on the Boulder Market and the project was stalled until that information is available. Fred claimed the feasibility study report handed out to the board confused him at the last meeting because he did not understand what it was. He thought Nick was the author of the report. Debbie noted that we discussed at a previous meeting that Nick was not going to be able to do the

investigative portion for a year or more while he works on other grants and it had been suggested by Nick that we could do the initial work ourselves and bring that to him.

Mary Brookshire noted that Debbie needed to declare her potential conflict of interest and should not be allowed to participate any further because the building was under consideration. Debbie said that was not correct. She made a statement for the record that the Boulder building belonged to her and her husband and noted that the law allowed her to participate in discussions and studies until a decision to purchase a property was being discussed.

Fred said he was uncomfortable. He's been on a lot of boards and this whole thing stinks. He noted that the cost per square foot for purchasing the Boulder should not have been talked about. Debbie noted that was part of the study and the decision process on finding a suitable property. Debbie noted that she had been discussing this with Nick, his partner and our attorney as she worked on the process and they were all comfortable with her work.

Kathy acknowledged Fred's feelings of being uncomfortable, and felt that as long as everyone involved made the proper disclosures of conflict of interest she thought the group was capable of keeping those issues in mind when processing information.

Mary disagreed because she heard Debbie talking about the potential of the Boulder building and what it could be used for when she walked in at the end of the meeting in August and she felt that was improper because the meeting was over. Debbie noted that the conversation had been recorded as part of the meeting.

Fred made a motion that all discussions and action on the Boulder property be suspended until SCHED had a chance to meet with CUP, GRH and Nick DuCote and discuss collaboration of the project. Gerry seconded the motion. Adina noted that we already had a contract with Ralph Edwards to do a study on the Boulder building. Fred admitted he had voted for that but afterward felt uncomfortable. He wished he would have voted against it. Adina noted that it is important to have all possible information for the eventual discussion of the board to decide on what course of action it would pursue. He noted that buildings had been discussed and suddenly the board is talking about spending money on a floor plan. It seems quick.

Debbie noted that in earlier meetings the board discussed the need to look at properties available and got a grant to pay for that study. It was understood that Nick would be able to do the study, but he later said it would take a year or more to get started so it was agreed Debbie would pursue the data needed to help get the project started and give the material to Nick to continue the work. Fred interrupted and reminded everyone there was a motion. The board voted unanimously to suspend the feasibility study until the meeting with CUP could happen. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion was opened by President Susie. Debbie noted that she wanted to clarify on Fred's statement that this came out of the clear blue sky and was very confusing. She reminded the board that the initial meeting with Nick DuCote and the board decision to use the grant happened months ago. Nick was not able to do the study in the timeframe they discussed and it was decided the Debbie would help gather

the data about available properties and document those findings with help from Cherie Kausler. Fred asked if she did grants and Debbie responded that she does do grants and she consults with non-profits. She noted that they looked at several sources to see what is available in Union and found the properties on the report.

Mary declared her conflict and noted that her husband's property was available and had not been considered. She noted that it was not currently for sale. Mary also said the Boulder was not currently on the market either. Debbie said the study was not closed, anyone who knows of property that should be considered can still put that forward. No buying decision is even in the near future.

Fred opined that we were in too much of a hurry. Fred suggested that information was being submitted to him without enough time to consider and suggested they would be asked to make a buying decision "next week". He said that making a buying decision takes him a lot of time and he might not want to buy the Boulder and he might not want to give \$180,000 for it. He thought it would require a building inspection and a DEQ inspection. Debbie noted that is why we have an engineer looking at the building.

Adina noted that everything is preliminary just to start the process and the discussion on what the board wants to do. It's just a minimal assortment of buildings to start the conversation.

Fred noted that when he got the new information about Grande Ronde he decided it was time to slow down and collaborate and maybe save some money. Fred asked if Nick had contacted Adina and she said she he had and wanted to get together to discuss working together with CUP but he didn't say when he wanted to get together.

Fred said that Susan (his wife) had been assigned as the CUP liaison for the city council 4 or 5 years ago and she's never been able to get off because they only have 4 or 5 members so she has never been able to get off. So that's why she's involved. Gerry asked if that is how he got the information he has been discussing, he said yes. He said that CUP would probably give the land to GRH but he didn't know for sure. He said Nick was the one who was concerned that SCHD is looking for their own building when the CUP building would be empty.

Adina reminded the board that the process started months before this new information that Grande Ronde wants to move out. She reminded the board that we do not have enough space and CUP told them that they would not be able to get us more space. We need the room to grow. Kathy noted that the phone works in both directions and CUP or Grande Ronde could come to us. Adina noted that none of us except Fred knew anything about Grand Ronde leaving until this meeting.

Susie stopped the exchange because it was not going over anything outside what has already been discussed several times. Susie said that someone from CUP can call her and set up a meeting and we can move forward. It was suggested that Fred can let Susan know that we would like to meet so we can exchange first hand information and decide on the next step.

Clinic update:

Adina shared that we have the nitrous. Dr. Donick is about 4 weeks out and hygiene is getting out to about 5 months for an appointment. Gerry noted that our community clinic is very much needed and she is happy with our progress. Adina noted we need another hygienist because our dentist relies on the work of the hygienist's exams to initiate his work. She announced that our hygienist left to take a job in Baker, but she has already procured a replacement, Heidi Denton. Heidi is from Union and has great contacts with the local community. Our dental assistant is still happy and no plans to move away. Adina shared that dental professionals just tend to move from clinic to clinic and it is something our clinic will need to deal with. This time around several hygienists applied for the position. Our reputation is building in the dental community and people are wanting to come to work for us.

Next meeting is Halloween. Debbie noted that the Community Center had several events coming up if anyone was interested. Catherine Creek Community Center is a valuable partner for SCHD.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:51 AM

Approved _____ 2023

Vote: Fred Hawkins ____ Mary Brookshire ____ Barbara Weeks ____ Debbie Clark ____
Susie Wirkkala ____ Kathy Kirby ____ Gerry Zastrow ____ Maja LeFever ____

Signed: _____ President