



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 1
OF KLICKITAT COUNTY
Special Meeting/Open Public
Meeting KVH Conference Rooms
A&B
February 6, 2023
Zoom ID 891 1191 6612**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A Special meeting of the Klickitat Valley Health (KVH) Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, February 6, 2023 at 2 p.m. in KVH Conference Rooms A/B for the purpose of Bond Discussion with AWPHD Executive Director, Matt Ellsworth.

A quorum was present with the following additional commissioners present: Commissioners Crystal Scott, Larry Hocter, Mark Sigfrinius, Connie Pond and Ron Ihrig.

Also present were: Leslie Hiebert, CEO; Lori Groves, CFO; Charis Weis, Director of HR and Community Outreach; Erin Wooley, CNO (via Zoom); Annie Stone, Outpatient Clinic Director; Jonathan Hatfield, Director of IT and Compliance Officer; Matt Ellsworth, AWPHD Executive Director.

CALL TO ORDER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

President Scott called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. President Scott asked if any Commissioner present had a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda. All Commissioners present noted that they had no conflict.

SPECIAL MEETING BUSINESS

Matt Ellsworth, Executive Director of AWPHD noted that the AWPHD is committed to work more with members to pass bonds and levies. He noted that in a survey of constituents in a community 34% thought the Public Hospital District was a corporate or private company and only 33% thought it was actually a public entity. He added that over the past five years of PHD bond levy's less than 20% passed, and they lost by less than 3%.

Matt reviewed the Do's and Don'ts and noted that the list of what you can do is longer than what you can't. (Please find copy of Guidelines for Elected and Appointed Officials' Participation in Elections Activity in Board Record Book). He note that the number one rule is education versus advocacy. He added – don't say "vote yes", that is the difference. He noted that district resources cannot be used to promote "vote yes" He added that commissioners can sign letters to the Editor in the paper as commissioners. He noted the importance of commissioners being engaged in the process. He noted that the district can send out one piece of mail to the district and can respond to emails with information/education, just can't say "vote yes".

Matt stated that the first thing that needed to be done is to pick which election day to file for. He noted it is important to see what else would be on the ballot, if there are things that could impact

voter turnout, i.e. snow birds being out of town, and also to consider when was it done the last time.

Matt noted that people feel differently about tax increases. He noted that people don't feel a personal connection to federal and state taxes, but that local taxes are more personal, the money stays local and they can visibly see how it is spent. He stated that it is important to prove to the community that they can trust you with the money given and to assure voters that there is a return on the investment.

Matt encouraged the Board to ask for what is needed, not what they think will pass. He noted that voters don't make their decisions based on the amount or fine print. They base it on what it means to them.

Matt advised that staff should be encouraged that every time they say the name of the hospital they note that it is publically owned. He also noted that employees should be polled to determine what they would like to see – so they can see that the district is investing in them and also to know what to campaign on.

Matt suggested doing listening sessions in towns that are a part of the hospital district, but are outside of Goldendale city limits. He noted that commissioners should be assigned to areas to engage with. He also noted the importance of finding outside groups or community events that give opportunities to share information and education. He advised that it is important to note this is a generational change and the Board will need to be vested.

Matt noted that the key messages that win and engage are:

- Community Ownership
- Demonstrate Value
- Leverage Trust
- Strategic messages

He added that it is important to communicate the new things that will become available as the community is already paying for what we currently do. He noted that we can take what we have done previously and streamline it. He advised that the education piece needs to be sent to everyone in the District, not just to voters. It cannot say "Vote Yes". It must include the ballot language and should include three bullet points. He noted that it can be sent out as soon as the Resolution is passed.

Matt noted that losing messages to avoid include:

- Fear mongering
- The end is near
- It could be worse (don't compare to other places)
- Go it alone
- Complacency – just putting it on the ballot and hoping it passes

Jim Semlor noted that in his experience Goldendale is unique and asked how to best address that.

Matt suggested that we look at the demographics and focus on pockets i.e. renters concerned about the increased tax burden on land owners being passed on to them, and talk to them – give them top line items that offset their objections. Build a case of value and transparency.

He explained that 33% will not be persuaded by marketing or education, they are a “brick no” and that instead of spending resources on trying to convince the “brick no” people to change their minds it would be more beneficial to focus on people that have moved to the community since the last bond attempt, as well as people that don’t normally vote or haven’t voted. He added that it is easier to get a new vote than to convert a no vote to a yes.

Leslie Hiebert, CEO inquired how to approach areas in the district that previously voted no. Matt replied to look to see if there are new people in those areas and if there are go into that area and provide information/education.

Leslie asked Matt, based on his experience, what he would recommend in regards to timing. Matt noted that he recommends April. He noted that most of the work has been done. He added that AWPFD will be providing assistance. He added that a Resolution would have to be passed by the Board by February 24th. Lori Groves, CFO expressed concern regarding the short amount of time to plan and focus. Matt replied that there have been a lot of new people moving to the area, and KVH had many more visits in December than previously. He noted that during Covid, healthcare developed a positive momentum within communities, and every day that goes on it is less favorable.

Leslie inquired if it would be helpful to do a preliminary poll to see if our community is in line with the state polling results. Matt noted that a community this size is hard to poll, he noted it could be done legally, but it would not be effective.

Jim Semlor asked how we show value. Matt replied that we need to talk about value differently. Instead of listing what we are going to do – be more descriptive i.e. instead of stating increased cardiac care, say increased cardiac care for seniors. Be more reflective and strategic about value statements.

Charis Weis, HR-Community Outreach, asked if there is any value to creating hype for voting day. Matt replied, we need to motivate voters. He noted that some didn’t know about the issue on the ballot, didn’t care about it or tend to avoid tax issues in general as they can be complicated. He said we need to show the value and make it easy for them and focus on education.

There was some discussion regarding what one word most captures the “feel” of the project. Matt suggested “local”, Annie Stone noted that she felt that “trust” may be the word. Matt suggested “value, trust and local”

Commissioner Sigfrinius noted that once we establish the new things we will be able to provide if the bond passes it might be easier to come up with the word.

Jim Semlor noted that he believes value is the end game. His feeling is that we have been here for most of our community for 75 years. They will want to know why they have to pay more when we have been able to do new things in the recent past without any help. Matt noted that we can explain that in the past we were able to access grants, etc. for additional funding, but now we

need help from the community to make these generational changes. We need them to partner with us to move forward with increasing services, etc.

Commissioner Hactor asked what the cost would be to the District for the assistance provided by AWPHD. Matt noted that AWPHD would not be charging for their assistance. The District would be responsible for the cost of the election, the District mailer, some marketing costs, and staff time.


Charis Weis asked if we should start from scratch regarding marketing. Matt replied that once the paperwork has been filed to be on the ballot, should make lists, workshop message and see what is still relevant and may be able to use much of what we have as the project itself has not changed.

The Board determined that they would like to have a Special Meeting on February 20, 2023 at 2:30 p.m. to review the project including updated costs, etc. in consideration of whether to move forward with a Resolution at the Regular February 22, 2023 Board meeting.

Having no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Pond made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:25 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hactor. The motion carried unanimously.



Crystal Scott, President of the Board



Ron Ihrig, Secretary of the Board