

Hospital board meets with potential replacement management company

Amanda Miller

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Fulfilling requirements set forth by the county commissioners, the Cheyenne County Hospital Board held a special meeting on Monday to hear from New Light Healthcare, a management company from Texas. Hospital employees from nearly every department were present to listen to the presentation, and ask questions of the management company.

The hospital board is in the process of reviewing potential management and leasing companies for the hospital. The county commissioners requested that the board compare it's current leasing company, Great Plains Health Alliance, to some competitors. The commissioners want to be sure the hospital is receiving the best service at the best possible price for the county residents.

Since this process began earlier this year, it has been met with some resistance from hospital employees. Many have voiced concerns over the possibility of a turn over and what that would mean for the employees. Some of the concerns include the benefits employees currently have, the contracts that Great Plains Health Alliance currently has for the hospital with supply companies, insurance companies and Medicaid, and also the ability for the potential management candidates to provide the same training, support and education that Great Plains provides. These are just some of the concerns that have been brought up by employees in the meetings.

Monday afternoon, New Light Healthcare began by reviewing the financial information from the past three years that they received from Cheyenne County Hospital. Todd Biederman, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Lee Hughes, Regional Vice President, began by stating the hospital has some strong points. They also said they saw areas that they felt their company could help improve.

New Light Healthcare spoke for about ten minutes before the hospital board called an executive session. The board cited the Open Meetings Act closed session reason as: "There were confidential data relating to financial affairs or trade secrets of corporations, partnerships, trusts or individual proprietorships."

The board went into executive session with the New Light Healthcare representatives at approximately 1:10 p.m., and came out of executive session at 2:10 p.m. Hospital employees were waiting in the hallway to continue the meeting once it went back into open session.

Board member Jane Young told the hospital employees that Mr. Biederman and Mr. Hughes were available to answer questions at that point. Mila Bandel, County Health Nurse, began the discussion by asking what the company could bring that would benefit the employees and the hospital.

Mr. Hughes explained that the purpose of New Light Healthcare was to make Cheyenne County Hospital as healthy as possible. He said that the revenue trends are going in the wrong direction, and he

thinks his company can help turn that around. He then asked Mrs. Bandel what she, and other employees, were getting from Great Plains Health Alliance that was working and that they liked. Mr. Hughes said that their company wants to keep the things that are working, and make the hospital better by fixing things that are not.

Mrs. Bandel asked them to clarify how they would do that, and if they would be bringing new employees in. Mr. Hughes said that New Light Healthcare does not typically bring new employees in. He also said he wanted to be clear that they do not eliminate jobs.

Les Lacy, Great Plains Health Alliance vice president for regional operations and current interim director of Cheyenne County Hospital, asked the New Light Healthcare representatives if they have the most recent cost report. He clarified that because that was not available when they did their analysis, there would be some changes to the numbers for this year.

Mr. Biederman said that they had reviewed figures from January of 2012 up until March of 2014. This gave them a good grasp of trends over the years.

Mrs. Bandel told the representatives that there have been rumors in St. Francis that several hospitals managed by New Light Healthcare have closed. She went on to say this is a small town, and close-knit, and asked how they would address the community when they are so far away.

Mr. Biederman and Mr. Hughes

said that no hospitals have closed under New Light Healthcare. They said the company has been in business four and a half years, and the hospitals under their management have had amazing turnarounds. They encouraged people to check their references.

Mr. Hughes said that with technology available there was no reason they could not communicate effectively. He is just a phone call away. He and Mr. Biederman said New Light would be at every board meeting and would fly in very often and be just as available as someone in Wichita.

After a few other questions, Mr. Lacy addressed the hospital employees. He said that there is another hospital in his region that is currently doing 'due diligence' and was asked to look into other management companies as well. He told them that no one goes out and buys the first car on a car lot, and he respects the board for what they are doing. He told the employees that they should show respect as well, and make sure the board has room to do what they need to do.

Mr. Biederman and Mr. Hughes told the hospital employees that they were available to answer any questions that the employees had. Their email addresses were made available to the employees so that they could email questions or concerns.

Mrs. Young and the hospital board made clear that this is still strictly a fact finding mission, and no decisions have been made.

Fairboard continues fair preparation

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The Cheyenne County Fair Board is busy getting ready for the county fair that will be held August 4 - 9. The board had a few business matters to discuss last Thursday before dispersing to begin preparations.

Sarah Kinzer, treasurer, had all bills prepared for payment, and brought one bill to the board's attention. The radio ad bill with Curtis Duncan was significantly more than what they had originally agreed to spend. The board held the \$525 bill until President Dick Bursch is able to talk to Curtis Duncan and adjust the bill or find out why it is so much.

Josh Moberly has asked the board for permission to park his Mobe's Archery trailer by the business booth section at fair. Inside the trailer he has a set up so that customers can try out the bows and arrows and shoot at a target within the trailer. The board agreed that if it was up to the safety standards he explained, they were ok with allowing customers to try them within the trailer.

President Bursch asked if there are volunteers lined up for the gates. Volunteers are still needed

to help at the gates on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The Cheyenne County Fair has a website that people can now visit at www.cheyenneksfair.com. The website manager has offered to sell tickets to Baxter Black ahead of time for a service charge of \$1.50. After some discussion, the board decided that the tickets can be sold on the website so people can make sure they have tickets to the event, however they cannot afford to take that service charge out of the ticket price. So they said if the website manager is willing to sell tickets for the \$15 and add the service charge the website manager would like of \$1.50 in addition, they will sell the tickets online. Baxter Black will be performing Thursday, Aug. 7 at 7 p.m.

The fair board had some discussion about the last clean up date, at which only two people showed up. Gary Cooper told the board he was disappointed that more did not come to help, as there is a lot that needs to be done. The next scheduled clean up and set up with the 4H students is July 29 at 6 p.m.

President Bursch told the board that he had received some

calls about the grass at the fairgrounds. He explained that he has seeded the grass and would prefer to wait to mow it so that the grass can thicken up. The board agreed to wait one to two weeks to let the grass grow.

The Cheyenne County Fair will be held August 4-9. The carnival rides and games will be open beginning Wednesday, August 6 through Saturday August 9. The rides will be open from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and 6 p.m. to midnight on Saturday.

The Red-Neck Olympics will be held on Wednesday. This night will be free admission, and will include events for the whole family. Entries begin at 6 p.m. and the Red-Neck Olympics be-

gin at 7 p.m.

Baxter Black will perform on Thursday at 7 p.m. Tickets will be \$15 at the door or at the fair's website www.cheyenneksfair.com.

The Tuff Truck Challenge will be held on Friday at 8 p.m. Admission will be \$10, and pit passes will be sold for \$20.

Saturday, August 9, crowd favorite the Team Demolition Derby will kick off at 7 p.m. Admission will be \$10, and pit passes will be sold for \$20.

Mark your calendars to come to the Cheyenne County Fair this year and enjoy all the events that are sure to entertain the whole family!

Bird City News

June 21st, Edna's daughter Audrey Evins of Oakley, daughter Amanda Evins, Tauscher of Shawnee, daughter Finley Tauscher and Cale Evins of Oakley stopped for a visit with Edna Roesener.

June 16th, Edna got word her older sister, Thelma James Fox, passed away. Her services were June 21st in Salt Lake City, Utah.

June 28th, Edna Roesener and Loren and Wendy White drove to Fort Collins, Colo. for Edna's grandson's wedding.

Grant Shrader and Christina Eslinger were married at the Providence Bible Church Saturday June 28th, with the reception following at the Hilton.

Other family members who were able to attend were: Aunt Jaylene Shrader, Sterling, cousins Mike and Danelle Rush, children Michael and Maely of Newalla, Okla. Jared and Colleen Shrader Cox, Mesa, Ariz.

July 2-5th guests of Paul and Edna Roesener were daughter and husband Dr. Doug and Sandra Fair of Oberlin. They were here to celebrate the July fourth activities in Bird City.

Sunday evening granddaughter and family Mike and Danelle Rush of Newalla, Okla. were over night guests of grandpa and grandma Roesener, after spending time at Larry and Cathy (Danelle's folks) in Hot Springs, after Grant and Christina's wedding.

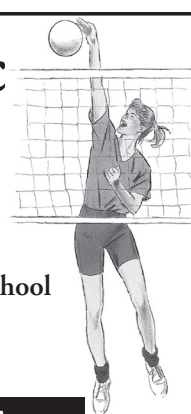
Volleyball Clinic

By Dani Bedore

Monday & Tuesday, July 14 & 15
Bird City High School Gym

Morning for Jr. High • Afternoons for High School
(Free for Cheylin students.)
Out-of-district students cost will be \$20/student for both days.

Call Tina @ 734-7141 for more information



Cheyenne County Fair Co-ed Mud Volleyball

Saturday, Aug. 9

13 years old & up

Pre-registration
deadline is
July 31

\$35 per team

More info & pre-registration, call Kelsey Andrist, 785-332-6025 or Dennon Fleming, 785-332-6126.



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Entrepreneurship Camp

Upcoming 2nd-4th Graders

July 21st & 22nd
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Upcoming 5th-8th Graders

July 23rd & 24th
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Meet at the Bird City Century II Development Foundation office.

For more information or to rsvp call
(785) 734 2556

PLEASE RSVP TO ENSURE THERE ARE ENOUGH SUPPLIES FOR ALL CAMPERS.