



*The Nathaniel Witherell*  
TOWN OF GREENWICH  
CONNECTICUT

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
February 22, 2016**

**Present:** Laurence Simon, Chairman; Karen Sadik-Khan, Vice Chairman; Louise Puschel, Secretary; Lloyd Bankson; Frank Ennis

**Absent:** Stephen Soler

**Staff:** Christopher Alexander, Director of Financial Operations; Lynn Bausch, Deputy & Director of Nursing; Allen Brown, Executive Director; Jack Hornak, Facilities Director; Linda Marini, Admin. Asst.; Scott Neff, FNW Development Director; Dr. Frank Walsh, Medical Director

**Also:** Mary Anne Chiappetta, Family Council; Steve Katz, Commission on Aging; Elizabeth Siderides, MD, guest

Mr. Simon noted a quorum was present and opened the meeting at 5:33 PM in the TNW Board Room.

**Medical Director's Report – presented by Dr. Frank Walsh**

Dr. Walsh reported that there continues to be a large patient turnover in the short-term rehab unit - he himself had 12 admissions this past Saturday.

Dr. Walsh reported that the flu has hit the community, though we have no cases currently in our facility. He also noted that he has not seen one case in someone who has received the vaccine. All of our residents and approximately 50% of staff have received the flu vaccine this year. Dr. Walsh noted that over the last several years the flu virus has been appearing later, closer to March and April. Because the vaccine's effectiveness lasts approximately 6 months, we now begin administering the vaccine in mid to late October, so that it remains effective through the March/April timeframe.

New admissions to the Witherell are often administered the flu vaccine before they leave the hospital. All new residents are screened upon their admission, and we maintain an immunization log (flu, pneumonia, shingles, tetanus, etc) for each resident.

## **Medical Director's Report – (cont'd)**

All patients and new admissions (long-term and short-term) are educated about and offered the flu and pneumonia vaccines upon admission.

We have started the protocol for the new pneumonia vaccine, Pevnar13, which covers more organisms than the original vaccine. This is a large project undertaking because its administration relies on individual patient vaccination history.

## **Review/Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2016**

After review by the Board, a motion to approve the minutes of January 25, 2016 was made by Ms. Sadik-Khan, seconded by Mr. Bankson, and approved unanimously.

Mr. Simon requested that, going forward, Board meeting minutes be drafted and circulated to Board members for review within 48 hours of the Board meeting.

## **Executive Director's Report – presented by Allen Brown**

Marketing – Mr. Brown shared copies of the *Senior Go To Guide*. The Nathaniel Witherell has an ad in this publication, as do many other facilities that we consider competitors. This guide (along with the Seniors Bluebook) is an important advertising spot because of its use as a reference guide, a publication that people hold onto for informational purposes.

### **Mr. Brown shared 2 reports he received this afternoon:**

1. A report that tracks our quality measures (each of the clinical measures that Medicare tracks for facilities) in comparison to State and National averages. In almost all categories TNW rates better than the National average. Our quality measures are a definite strength of this facility.
2. A report that shows re-admission rates tracked by quarter. The re-admission rate (the number of times that a person discharged from the hospital returns to the hospital within 30 days) is an important factor used by hospitals to select sub-acute providers.

Mr. Brown will email copies of these reports to the Board.

Mr. Brown noted that there was an article introducing our new Board Chairman, Laurence B. Simon, on both our Facebook page and on the Witherell blog.

Annual State Survey Our informal dispute resolution (IDR) conference with DPH on January 28<sup>th</sup> did not prove favorable; neither of the deficiencies were removed or reduced. Our attorney is still in conversation at the supervisory level with DPH, and at this time there is no final resolution on this matter.

## **Executive Director's Report – (cont'd)**

FY 2016 – 2017 Budget – The primary focus of the budget discussions has been on the allocation of cost for in-kind services, fringe benefits, and attention to our request for increased part-time hours (related to adding 5 additional rehab beds). Further discussion will take place during the Chairman's Report.

MDI Matrix – Mr. Brown reported that we've begun the implementation of the MDI Matrix module for Electronic Health Records. Updates to the facilities Wi-Fi capabilities have been completed, supervisory nursing staff is currently involved in online training, and training of staff will begin next month. We anticipate being up and running by May 2016.

## **Building Committee Report – provided by Jack Hornak**

The TNW Building Committee met earlier today. Discussion included the following:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Tower room renovations are complete and were finished within budget. All resident rooms in the Tower have now been renovated.
- Garden level rehab 5 room renovation – the RFP went out last Friday; there is a contractor walk-through this Thursday, 2/25/16, at 10 am; bids are scheduled to be submitted to the Town by March 9<sup>th</sup>; renovation could possibly be completed by July 1, 2016 if permitting, inspection, etc. are timely.
- Tower common area renovations – the architects are currently doing the design work for renovations to be done, including: carpeting; painting; ceiling replacement; furniture; dining room floors and furniture; and updating of the shower rooms. Their design recommendations will be presented for approval when complete. Mr. Hornak is hopeful to start these renovations by Aug. 1, 2016, with a 4-8 month timetable for completion.

Mr. Simon requested that Mr. Hornak distribute the Building Committee minutes to all Board members so they may review the status of all projects in detail.

## **Finance Committee Report - presented by Lloyd Bankson**

Mr. Bankson reported the following:

January 2016 Total Occupancy of 89.8% Vs. a Budget of 95.2% (5,624 days Actual Vs. Budget of 6,005 days).

January 2016 TNW Net Revenue of \$2,277,123 Vs. \$2,340,352 resulting in an unfavorable Variance of (\$63,229).

YTD January 2016 TNW Net Revenue of \$15,441,768 Vs. \$16,029,568 resulting in a Variance of (\$587,800).

Mr. Bankson noted that Mr. Cossifos, Director of Admissions, is encouraged by the recent, increased number of long-term, private-pay admissions.

## **Finance Committee Report - (cont'd)**

Mr. Bankson reported that if our Budget is approved by the Town, we will have made great progress in two areas: in-kind services, reducing our Expense line by \$ 800,000; and Pension, which would also reduce our Expense line by approximately \$900,000. These are two major, beneficial changes for the Witherell.

## **Chairman's Report – presented by Laurence Simon**

Mr. Simon reported that after several meetings with the BET, the result is that they are considering approving our 2016-2017 Budget with minor adjustments. We have managed to eliminate approximately \$1.4 million in fringe benefits and \$780K in Indirect allocations. The current total subsidy to the Town is \$3.2M, which includes \$1.96M worth of debt and \$425K of Capital. Current Operating Loss is approximately \$800K/year (per the Budget), considered to be within a tolerable range.

The Debt will be reconfigured, and subsequently decreased, because it excludes the \$9M that was raised and TNW is paying the full interest and principal on the total amount of bonds issued by the Town, without any credit for that \$9M raised.

It was also determined during discussions with the BET, that over the last 3-4 years, the Town has been allocating more costs in Fringe Benefits than we were incurring, as well as allocating Indirect Costs that had no practical basis.

Mr. Simon requested that the Town give us 1 full year with the following: all 46 short-term beds in service; a 3<sup>rd</sup> full time Admissions staff member in place; all room and common area renovations complete; and, determining after that year, whether or not the Witherell is on the right track. The BET agreed and he predicted our Budget will be approved as presented, with slight adjustments.

Mr. Simon reported that there is discussion with the BET as to whether or not TNW should be a Revolving Fund, separate from the General Fund. The original reason for being a Revolving Fund was to allow TNW to use its profits to reinvest in the facility; this does not seem likely to happen in the near future. Mr. Simon would prefer to see TNW in the General Fund, thus being treated as any other Town Department.

During the next 2-3 months, Mr. Simon said his objective will be to make sure that the Board is focused strategically on where TNW is going, what the trends are in the industry, and where we should position the Witherell.

Mr. Simon spoke with Mr. Bobby Walker, Chief Executive Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich, who is interested in restarting a relationship with TNW and having members of the club become lifetime volunteers. Ms. Mary Bruce, Therapeutic Recreation Director will follow-up with Mr. Walker.

FNW/TNW has engaged Sundberg Associates for redesign of the Witherell's website. Mr. Brown reported that we should have a new website up by early summer.

## **Chairman's Report – (cont'd)**

With no opposition from the Board, Mr. Simon rescheduled the Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> Board Meeting to Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Ms. Puschel, Ms. Sadik-Khan, and Mr. Simon are being interviewed this month by the Health and Human Services Committee of the RTM concerning their re-appointments to the Witherell Board. Nisha Hurst will also be interviewed regarding appointment to the Board. Mr. Soler will not be accepting a reappointment to the Board at the completion of his tenure in March 2016. Three (3) Board vacancies remain.

## **Friends of Nathaniel Witherell (FNW) - presented by Karen Sadik-Khan**

Ms. Sadik-Khan reported that the Annual Appeal to date has attracted 363 donors.

For the second year, FNW is registered for "Fairfield Giving Day", taking place on March 10. This online event, initiated by Fairfield County's Community Foundation, allows individuals, families, clubs and companies to donate to Fairfield County non-profits during the course of 24 hours. The emphasis is on the number of participants/donors, not on the size of their gifts.

This 2016 golf tournament is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

FNW anticipates sponsoring another fundraising luncheon during the Spring of 2017.

## **Resident Life Committee – presented by Lynn Bausch**

Ms. Bausch reported that our Short-Term Satisfaction Surveys continue to be extremely favorable. The 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2015 Report was included with Board materials. She's very pleased with these results, especially considering that we've taken many more clinically complex admissions, as opposed to orthopedic and cardiac rehab, which can be much more difficult to care for. Ms. Bausch noted that we are also seeing many more admissions with behavioral issues in long-term and short-term, often dementia with aggressive behaviors.

Ms. Bausch reported that the following is just a sampling of events that took place over the last month:

- Super Bowl party
- Chinese New Year party and food demonstration
- Ash Wednesday service
- Valentine's Day Edition of Pooches on Parade
- Swedish ICEHOTEL presentation

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Louise Puschel*

Louise Puschel, Board Secretary, Feb. 24, 2016

*These minutes were approved at the  
March 28, 2016 meeting of  
The Nathaniel Witherell Board of Directors.*