

1. 5:00 P.M. NW Board Meeting Agenda March 22, 2021
NW Board Meeting March 22, 20121

Documents:

[TNW BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA 2021_03_22.PDF](#)

- 1.i. NW Board Meeting Jan. 25, 2021 Draft Meeting Minutes
NW Board Meeting Jan. 25, 2021 Draft Meeting Minutes

Documents:

[TNW BOARD MINUTES 2021_01_25 VERSION 4.PDF](#)

- 1.i.i. TNW Board Meeting Minutes 012521 Approved

Documents:

[TNW BOARD MEETING MINUTES 012521 APPROVED.PDF](#)



The Nathaniel Witherell
TOWN OF GREENWICH
CONNECTICUT

**Board Meeting
Virtual Webinar
Monday, March 22, 2021, 5:00 PM**

ZOOM MEETING WEBINAR INFORMATION

Webinar Link:

<https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/86368873148?pwd=MjdXUnJreHZ3NEZlUzZ2dzRrS1ZyUT09>

To join by phone: 1-646-518-9805; Webinar ID: 863 6887 3148; Password: 5414267

AGENDA

1. Welcome to Paul Hopper, new Board Member
2. Medical Director's Report – Frank Walsh, MD
3. Review/Approval - Minutes January 25, 2021 – Chairman
4. Reports
 - a. Executive Director-John Mastronardi
 - b. Building Committee –Larry Vanterpool
 - c. Finance Committee-Nisha Hurst and Nunzio Raimo
 - d. Marketing-Chris Carter
 - e. Friends of Nathaniel Witherell – Scott Neff
5. Chairman's Discussion – Laurence Simon
 - a. Visitation Policy – Additional Discussion
 - b. Vaccination Status – Residents and Staff and next steps (if not previously discussed)
6. New Business
7. Adjournment

2021 Calendar of Board Meetings

April 26, 2021

June 21, 2021

July 26, 2021 September 13, 2021

October 18, 2021

Nov 15, 2021

cc: Town Clerk



The Nathaniel Witherell
TOWN OF GREENWICH
CONNECTICUT

**Board of Directors Zoom Board Meeting
Minutes
January 25, 2021**

Present: Laurence B. Simon, Chairman; Melissa Gibbons, Secretary; Suzanne Brown; Christopher Carter; Nisha Hurst; Richard Kaplan; Joan Merrill; Nirmal Patel, MD MPH

Absent: none

Staff: Michel Baptiste, Housekeeping/Laundry Supervisor; Chris Ann Bennett, Infection Preventionist; Nadia Benson, Deputy and Director of Nursing; George Cossifos, Director of Admissions; Linda Marini, Assistant to Executive Director; John Mastronardi, Executive Director; Elizabeth Mungai, Director of Utilization, Clinical Outcomes, Rehab Services; Scott Neff, FNW Executive Director; Nunzio Raimo, Director of Financial Operations; Carissa Ronish, Therapeutic Recreation Administrator; Glenn Siglinger, Building Maint. Mech. Supervisor; Justine Vaccaro, Director of Social Work; Larry Vanterpool, Facilities Director; Margaret Wayne, Associate Director of Nursing

Guests: Amy Badini; Elizabeth Franklin-Quigley; Paul Hopper; Carolyn Irwin; Jenny Larkin; Tom McGuire; G. Picone; Paul Scholtes; Sheilah Smith; Maria Spziak; Ellen Wolfson, Commission on Aging.

Mr. Simon opened the meeting at 5:03 PM.

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

Dr. Walsh reported that we have begun our COVID-19 vaccination program. He noted that he has received both of his shots as of today. He reported that 85% of the residents have been vaccinated and approximately 30% of the staff. Some staff are hesitant or reluctant to receive any vaccines, i.e. the flu vaccine. No residents or staff members have shown any severe side effects from the vaccine.

Dr. Patel stated that Mses. Benson and Bennett and staff are working very hard through information sessions and education to promote staff compliance with the COVID vaccine. Dr. Walsh has provided question and answer sessions for staff. More education helps to increase compliance. She suggested that conversation about mandating the vaccine for staff may prove

timely. Dr. Patel stated that although all of the staff are not vaccinated, with 80% of the residents vaccinated we have herd immunity, which is very helpful from a risk perspective. Mr. Simon noted that the Town of Greenwich has the ability to require a vaccination as a condition of employment at Witherell.

The next vaccination clinic at Nathaniel Witherell is scheduled for February 6, 2021.

Dr. Walsh stated that the census is currently at 163 and, judging by the number of admissions coming in, he believes things are improving; he completed 6 admissions this past Saturday. Admissions to the long-term care units are taking place following the proper quarantine period of new residents coming into the facility. We have admitted some short-term post-op orthopedic rehab patients, although not as many as in the past. We have also admitted residents for cardiac rehab.

Dr. Walsh stated that we have no residents ill with COVID at this time, although we do have some asymptomatic COVID positive patients in-house. These patients are isolated in a selected area of the facility. Mr. Simon noted that although it may be financially beneficial to admit COVID positive patients, it is unfortunate if it causes suspension of indoor visits. Ms. Benson received clarification from DPH today that accepting COVID positive patients who are here to receive treatment does not constitute a new "outbreak"; therefore, indoor visits can resume. Ms. Benson is looking into this for further clarification.

Mr. Simon introduced Mr. Paul Hopper who has been interviewed by the Board of Selectmen to become the 9th member of the NW Board. Mr. Hopper's appointment to the Board will go to the RTM on March 8th for approval. Mr. Hopper is an architect, born here in Greenwich and has lived in town for the last 20 years. His architectural practice is based in Greenwich. Mr. Hopper currently serves on the Building and Grounds Committee at the Greenwich Library and on the Facility Committee at the YMCA. Once his appointment to the Board is approved by the RTM in March, Mr. Hopper will assume the role of Building Committee Chairman.

Review/Approval of Minutes of Nov. 16, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of November 16, 2020 was made by Mr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Hurst. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Executive Director's Report - presented by John Mastronardi

COVID Vaccinations

As reported earlier by Dr. Walsh, Mr. Mastronardi reported that 85% of our residents and 30% of our staff have received both doses of the COVID vaccine. We are going to continue the educational sessions for staff in an effort to promote compliance. First dose clinics were held on Dec. 26, 2020 and Jan. 4, 2021; second dose clinics were held on Jan. 16, 2021 and today, Jan. 25, 2021; all clinics are held from 10 am until 4 pm. Additional 1st dose clinics are

scheduled for Feb. 6th and 15th; however, additional 2nd dose clinics have not yet been announced by DPH.

The Town Human Resource and Legal departments confirmed that NW has the ability to require vaccination as a condition of employment. We would need to choose an effective date by which staff would need to get vaccinated. Given that there could be vaccine supply issues, Mr. Kaplan is concerned if we give staff a timeframe, there may not be enough doses available for compliance. Ms. Hurst questioned whether other nursing homes, healthcare facilities, schools, etc. are mandating the vaccine; Mr. Kaplan responded that NY nursing homes are not. Ms. Benson suggested that once we have 2nd dose clinic dates firmly set, we may be able to set an 'expectation date' by which we would expect all staff to be vaccinated. Ms. Brown noted that at this time the vaccine has been approved by the FDA for emergency use only which makes it difficult to mandate.

Dr. Patel stated that the risk of infection decreases significantly after an individual receives the 1st dose of the vaccine. With 15% of our resident population still not being vaccinated, we are working hard toward promoting the health and wellbeing of the community by insisting that all staff be vaccinated.

Ms. Benson reported that all staff, approximately 280 employees, are getting tested twice weekly, per DPH mandates, due to the increase in positivity rates in Fairfield County. PCR tests have a 48-hour turnaround for results; rapid test is 15 minutes.

Dr. Patel shared that there is data now on the Pfizer vaccine that shows it not only decreases the severity of the disease, but it also helps prevent the recipient from getting the disease by lowering the levels of the virus in the nose, oropharynx, etc., which is the main cause of infection. For these reasons, Dr. Patel would be a strong proponent of making sure that our staff get vaccinated since some of our residents are not.

Mr. Simon concluded that by means of this discussion, it does not appear that we should mandate staff to get vaccinated; we should be educating and encouraging staff to get vaccinated.

For the next Board meeting, Ms. Hurst asked 1) if we could speak with a labor attorney about mandating employees to get vaccinated, and 2) what are the legal ramifications/liabilities of a staff member infecting a resident?

Visitation

Visitation has been taking place using the heated pods. We had 3 Resident Transporters who withdrew from service due to COVID concerns; the Town will post the position. DPH requires that we have monitors to assure adherence to all proper infection control measures and social distancing protocols. The Volunteer Office is also reaching out to the Fairfield University nursing students who have shown an interest in working as Resident Transporters. The Board discussed that if an individual committed to 8 hour/week for three weeks, that

individual could receive the vaccine. That person should complete 24 hours of volunteer services before receiving the 2nd dose. Ms. Hurst stated that although these individuals are volunteers, they are still “jumping the line” to receive the vaccine. There is an order and a priority list for a reason and she believes they should commit to enough volunteer time to legitimately earn it.

Mr. Mastronardi announced that Ms. Ann Callahan, Admissions Representative, has accepted an Administrator’s position at Edgehill Skilled Nursing Facility and will be leaving Witherell on February 12, 2021. He stated that she has been a pleasure to work with and thanked her for her contributions to Witherell. He wished her well in her new role. Mr. Mastronardi intends to leave this position vacant.

Cost Control and Revenue generation

Our focus continues on overtime as a way of cost savings and creating efficiencies. Year to date we are under the Overtime budget in several of the larger departments such as Nursing, Facilities, Housekeeping/Laundry. Dietary continues to present a challenge, particularly with overtime.

Mr. Mastronardi met last week with Morrison, our food service contractor, to discuss cost savings options. The discussion focused on aligning our cost per meal per day with the rest of the industry: ours is currently \$11.94/meal/day (including labor and overtime); industry standard is \$7.50-8.50/meal/day (including labor and overtime). Mr. Mastronardi requested Morrison present their plan to reduce that cost and the associated overtime by February 28th and be able to implement the plan with us by April 30th to get those costs under control. For context, Witherell serves 180,000 patient meals per year.

Mr. Mastronardi noted that we’re looking at all vendor contracts and having the vendors justify the cost of their services. We will go out to bid on contracts where the current vendors cannot bring costs down and be competitive. Incumbent vendors will be given the last chance to offer their cost savings before we would go out to bid.

CMS continues to put downward pressure on traditional rehab therapies: in 2020 it was an 8% reimbursement reduction in traditional rehab therapy services; projection is that there will be an additional 9% reduction in reimbursement for those services in 2021. Mr. Mastronardi stated that this is why we are diversifying our service portfolio and moving toward more clinically complex cases (i.e. sepsis management, cardio/pulmonary therapy). These more clinically complex residents would be managed here at a higher skill level and therefore a higher reimbursement rate; we become a value-added partner to hospitals as a step-down facility, shortening the hospital’s length of stay. After safely discharging patients to their homes from here, we will be able to follow their care, offering skilled nursing/therapy at home – 7 days of nursing, 5+ days of therapy/week, in-home aide coverage and meals.

Inventory management system – we are going to initiate a system to manage our supplies. Mr. Mastronardi stated that we could benefit from \$100K - \$150K in annual savings if we were to manage inventory properly.

Right-sizing – Mr. Mastronardi plans to right-size staff by 10%. Staff leaving by attrition will not be replaced; most staff cuts will occur in the nursing department. Reviews will be done of all departments to assure we have the right people in the right positions at the right salaries. This could be as much as \$1.1 million annual savings. Mr. Mastronardi has asked the Business Office to run the staffing models through our PBJ submission service to see if the changes will affect our 5-star rating. If there is a negative effect on the star rating, we can adjust the model.

Continually managing overtime will save approximately \$100K annually by Mr. Mastronardi's projections.

We will have standardized pharmacy drug formularies, resulting in a \$50K savings annually.

Managing vendor contracts could conservatively save \$550K per year.

We will be buying through a group purchasing agent which will save approximately 15% overall annually on our supplies.

Building Committee Report - presented by Larry Vanterpool

Mr. Vanterpool reported that the Building Committee met on Jan.19 2021 and discussed the following:

Tower Electrical Panel replacement

- TNW along with Stantec completed the drawings which were reviewed and verbally approved by DPH.
- The TOG purchasing department will be responsible for the development of the RFB. The goal is to issue the RFB in the month of February 2021.

Pavilion Exterior Renovation - CDBG Block Grant

- Mr. Mastronardi signed the contract with the CDBG office for the project.
- The pre-bid conference took place on January 14, 2021 and was attended by 19 contractors.
- Bid submissions are due on Thursday January 28, 2021. Mr. Vanterpool expects 8-10 bids to be submitted.

Mr. Vanterpool reported that there was also discussion on the NW proposal for capital improvement projects for FY 2022 totaling \$576,000: 1. Nursing capital; 2. General capital; 3. Interior maintenance plan; 4. Water backflow preventer 5. Tower A/C replacement. This will go before the BET Budget Committee on Monday, Feb. 8, 2021.

Finance Report – presented by Nunzio Raimo

Mr. Raimo reported on FY 2021 for the six months ending December 31, 2020:

- NW Census by payer class for December 2020: total days billed in December 2020 were 4,663, outpacing November by 110 in-house days. Payer numbers are showing a better trend over the previous month and are in the correct class with increases in private pay and Medicare Part A.
- Along with Nursing, Mr. Raimo has implemented the 'triple check' meeting which will ensure that we are getting the highest reimbursement rates we possibly can for our Med A patients.
- Occupancy Percentage in December 2020 compared to December 2019 shows a negative variance of 18%.
- Revenue by Payer Class: December Revenue was \$1.92M and reflects our revenue sources. YTD overall, Private Pay, Med A and Commercial Insurance have all shown slight increases.
- Two efficiency metrics: 1.) Revenue per FTE (full time employee), which is an indicator of staffing efficiency. For December 2020 it was higher at \$6,304 with keeping overtime down. 2.) Revenue per billable day which shows the efficiency of our revenue stream from operations. This is at \$414 for the month of December 2020, which is better than November at \$406.
- Mr. Raimo noted that as per Governor Lamont's press release, we are anticipating further COVID money of \$186K in retro Medicaid adjustments for Nov/Dec 2020, and \$90K in for Jan/Feb 2021.
- Revenue December 2020 YTD Actual was \$12,042,530 compared to budget of \$14,136,000, resulting in a negative variance of \$2,093,470.
- Expenses December 2020 YTD Actual were \$9,846,606 compared to budget of \$10,566,769, resulting in a positive savings year to date of \$720,160.
- We have additional savings in Allocations, Fringe Benefits, tax assessments, of \$230K.
- December 2020 YTD Margin Before Debt & Capital was (\$476,555) compared to budget of \$665,921 resulting in a variance of (\$1,142,476).
- Net Revenues/(Expenses) after COVID monies are in a favorable position of \$892,418. If the \$186K in retro COVID monies are received, it will leave us with a favorable variance of over \$1.1M.
- Benefit Summary for YTD December 2020 variance to budget was a savings of \$225,664.
- For December YTD 2020 Salaries & Wages were under budget by \$578,848. Mr. Simon noted that this was in part due to the "dramatic improvement" in the management of overtime costs over the last two years.
- For December YTD 2020 OTPS were slightly over budget by \$19,633. With an overall budget of over \$1M, being over budget by \$19K six months into the year, it should be considered 'at' budget.
- For December YTD 2020 Supplies & Materials were below budget by \$130,352.
- For December YTD 2020 Maintenance expenditures were below budget by \$30,593.
- Gain/loss per resident results are trending back down and as noted by Mr. Raimo, they are showing the efficiencies we are making.

- The December YTD 2020 Net Revenue/Expense figure of \$612,924, including the addition of the COVID monies from CT Dept of SS and CMS, is better than we have done in the last 10 years.
- Total December YTD Revenue 2020 compared to December YTD 2019 shows a loss of \$2.5M. This illustrates how we have directly suffered on the Revenue side due to COVID; the COVID money becomes a grant instead of a loan.
- Mr. Raimo noted that January 2021 is shaping up to be a very good month on the Census side (currently averaging about 157); it will also match correspondingly on the Revenue side.

Marketing – presented by Christopher Carter

Mr. Carter reported that the CY 2021 advertising plan has been approved and Harrison Edwards has been creating targeted digital ads that align with the strategies articulated above. Those themes are: short-term rehab; skilled nursing; cardiac, pulmonary; sub-acute and step-down care.

There has been very good engagement in terms of internet interaction and click-through rates – better than the typical healthcare norms.

There was a ‘brainstorming’ session in late November regarding upgrading the website. Mr. Carter stated that they want to make sure the website will provide essential information, and that it has the right components and answers for all those who visit the site. They are also reviewing the site’s design and finalizing the copy with Harrison Edwards. A virtual tour will be included; the exterior is completed but the interior tour has been on hold because of COVID restrictions.

There were two articles last month in US News:

1. *Does your loved one need care urgently?*
2. *Having the Conversation with a Loved One About Senior Living.*

An article appeared in Greenwich Time, *Visitation Innovation*, about the visitation pods.

On the blog there were postings on the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra performance in the courtyard, on the new visitation pods, and on celebrating the holidays with a loved one in skilled nursing.

Mr. Carter reported that on Facebook we are averaging a post every 2 days, providing information on senior care, health and news. Our followers have now surpassed 1,560.

Mr. Simon asked Mr. Carter to report on the issues/concerns sent to him by the Family Council concerning the website at the March Board meeting. He would also like to discuss whether to have part of the website for the general public and another specifically for family access.

Friends of Nathaniel Witherell (FNW) – presented by Scott Neff

Mr. Neff reported that the Community Appeal has received an average gift of \$354 from 360 donors.

On Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 the Nathaniel Witherell will participate in the Fairfield County Community Foundation Online Day of Giving. This event is an online activity with approximately 350 non-profits in Fairfield County participating. All of the proceeds raised by FNW during that event will go to the Resident Life Fund.

Chairman's Discussion – presented by Laurence Simon

RFP for TNW as posted by the Office of the First Selectman - Mr. Simon reported that the evaluation committee for the RFP for TNW Management Services has met and evaluated the proposals. They will meet with sub-sets of the proposers on February 1st and 4th. The proposals have included bids to provide management services, as well as lease and/or buy options

NW has a meeting with the BET Budget Committee on Feb. 8th, at 9 am. Mr. Simon invites and encourages all Board members to attend via zoom. Ms. Marini will circulate the Zoom information to the Board when it becomes available. Our budget was approved by the First Selectman as submitted.

Ms. Gibbons has agreed to assume the role of Board Secretary.

Mr. Simon thanked the Family Council for their letter of Sunday night. He requested that if they would like to have input into the meeting agenda that they would need to submit information to him at least 5 days in advance of the meeting.

New Business - none

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Brown seconded by Mr. Carter and the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Marini
January 31, 2021



The Nathaniel Witherell
TOWN OF GREENWICH
CONNECTICUT

**Board of Directors Zoom Board Meeting
Minutes
January 25, 2021**

Present: Laurence B. Simon, Chairman; Melissa Gibbons, Secretary; Suzanne Brown; Christopher Carter; Nisha Hurst; Richard Kaplan; Joan Merrill; Nirmal Patel, MD MPH

Absent: none

Staff: Michel Baptiste, Housekeeping/Laundry Supervisor; Chris Ann Bennett, Infection Preventionist; Nadia Benson, Deputy and Director of Nursing; George Cossifos, Director of Admissions; Linda Marini, Assistant to Executive Director; John Mastronardi, Executive Director; Elizabeth Mungai, Director of Utilization, Clinical Outcomes, Rehab Services; Scott Neff, FNW Executive Director; Nunzio Raimo, Director of Financial Operations; Carissa Ronish, Therapeutic Recreation Administrator; Glenn Siglinger, Building Maint. Mech. Supervisor; Justine Vaccaro, Director of Social Work; Larry Vanterpool, Facilities Director; Margaret Wayne, Associate Director of Nursing

Guests: Amy Badini; Elizabeth Franklin-Quigley; Paul Hopper; Carolyn Irwin; Jenny Larkin; Tom McGuire; G. Picone; Paul Scholtes; Sheilah Smith; Maria Spziak; Ellen Wolfson, Commission on Aging.

Mr. Simon opened the meeting at 5:03 PM.

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

Dr. Walsh reported that we have begun our COVID-19 vaccination program. He noted that he has received both of his shots as of today. He reported that 85% of the residents have been vaccinated and approximately 30% of the staff. Some staff are hesitant or reluctant to receive any vaccines, i.e. the flu vaccine. No residents or staff members have shown any severe side effects from the vaccine.

Dr. Patel stated that Mses. Benson and Bennett and staff are working very hard through information sessions and education to promote staff compliance with the COVID vaccine. Dr. Walsh has provided question and answer sessions for staff. More education helps to increase compliance. She suggested that conversation about mandating the vaccine for staff may prove

timely. Dr. Patel stated that although all of the staff are not vaccinated, with 80% of the residents vaccinated we have herd immunity, which is very helpful from a risk perspective. Mr. Simon noted that the Town of Greenwich has the ability to require a vaccination as a condition of employment at Witherell.

The next vaccination clinic at Nathaniel Witherell is scheduled for February 6, 2021.

Dr. Walsh stated that the census is currently at 163 and, judging by the number of admissions coming in, he believes things are improving; he completed 6 admissions this past Saturday. Admissions to the long-term care units are taking place following the proper quarantine period of new residents coming into the facility. We have admitted some short-term post-op orthopedic rehab patients, although not as many as in the past. We have also admitted residents for cardiac rehab.

Dr. Walsh stated that we have no residents ill with COVID at this time, although we do have some asymptomatic COVID positive patients in-house. These patients are isolated in a selected area of the facility. Mr. Simon noted that although it may be financially beneficial to admit COVID positive patients, it is unfortunate if it causes suspension of indoor visits. Ms. Benson received clarification from DPH today that accepting COVID positive patients who are here to receive treatment does not constitute a new "outbreak"; therefore, indoor visits can resume. Ms. Benson is looking into this for further clarification.

Mr. Simon introduced Mr. Paul Hopper who has been interviewed by the Board of Selectmen to become the 9th member of the NW Board. Mr. Hopper's appointment to the Board will go to the RTM on March 8th for approval. Mr. Hopper is an architect, born here in Greenwich and has lived in town for the last 20 years. His architectural practice is based in Greenwich. Mr. Hopper currently serves on the Building and Grounds Committee at the Greenwich Library and on the Facility Committee at the YMCA. Once his appointment to the Board is approved by the RTM in March, Mr. Hopper will assume the role of Building Committee Chairman.

Review/Approval of Minutes of Nov. 16, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes of November 16, 2020 was made by Mr. Kaplan, seconded by Ms. Hurst. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Executive Director's Report - presented by John Mastronardi

COVID Vaccinations

As reported earlier by Dr. Walsh, Mr. Mastronardi reported that 85% of our residents and 30% of our staff have received both doses of the COVID vaccine. We are going to continue the educational sessions for staff in an effort to promote compliance. First dose clinics were held on Dec. 26, 2020 and Jan. 4, 2021; second dose clinics were held on Jan. 16, 2021 and today, Jan. 25, 2021; all clinics are held from 10 am until 4 pm. Additional 1st dose clinics are

scheduled for Feb. 6th and 15th; however, additional 2nd dose clinics have not yet been announced by DPH.

The Town Human Resource and Legal departments confirmed that NW has the ability to require vaccination as a condition of employment. We would need to choose an effective date by which staff would need to get vaccinated. Given that there could be vaccine supply issues, Mr. Kaplan is concerned if we give staff a timeframe, there may not be enough doses available for compliance. Ms. Hurst questioned whether other nursing homes, healthcare facilities, schools, etc. are mandating the vaccine; Mr. Kaplan responded that NY nursing homes are not. Ms. Benson suggested that once we have 2nd dose clinic dates firmly set, we may be able to set an 'expectation date' by which we would expect all staff to be vaccinated. Ms. Brown noted that at this time the vaccine has been approved by the FDA for emergency use only which makes it difficult to mandate.

Dr. Patel stated that the risk of infection decreases significantly after an individual receives the 1st dose of the vaccine. With 15% of our resident population still not being vaccinated, we are working hard toward promoting the health and wellbeing of the community by insisting that all staff be vaccinated.

Ms. Benson reported that all staff, approximately 280 employees, are getting tested twice weekly, per DPH mandates, due to the increase in positivity rates in Fairfield County. PCR tests have a 48-hour turnaround for results; rapid test is 15 minutes.

Dr. Patel shared that there is data now on the Pfizer vaccine that shows it not only decreases the severity of the disease, but it also helps prevent the recipient from getting the disease by lowering the levels of the virus in the nose, oropharynx, etc., which is the main cause of infection. For these reasons, Dr. Patel would be a strong proponent of making sure that our staff get vaccinated since some of our residents are not.

Mr. Simon concluded that by means of this discussion, it does not appear that we should mandate staff to get vaccinated; we should be educating and encouraging staff to get vaccinated.

For the next Board meeting, Ms. Hurst asked 1) if we could speak with a labor attorney about mandating employees to get vaccinated, and 2) what are the legal ramifications/liabilities of a staff member infecting a resident?

Visitation

Visitation has been taking place using the heated pods. We had 3 Resident Transporters who withdrew from service due to COVID concerns; the Town will post the position. DPH requires that we have monitors to assure adherence to all proper infection control measures and social distancing protocols. The Volunteer Office is also reaching out to the Fairfield University nursing students who have shown an interest in working as Resident Transporters. The Board discussed that if an individual committed to 8 hour/week for three weeks, that

individual could receive the vaccine. That person should complete 24 hours of volunteer services before receiving the 2nd dose. Ms. Hurst stated that although these individuals are volunteers, they are still “jumping the line” to receive the vaccine. There is an order and a priority list for a reason and she believes they should commit to enough volunteer time to legitimately earn it.

Mr. Mastronardi announced that Ms. Ann Callahan, Admissions Representative, has accepted an Administrator’s position at Edgehill Skilled Nursing Facility and will be leaving Witherell on February 12, 2021. He stated that she has been a pleasure to work with and thanked her for her contributions to Witherell. He wished her well in her new role. Mr. Mastronardi intends to leave this position vacant.

Cost Control and Revenue generation

Our focus continues on overtime as a way of cost savings and creating efficiencies. Year to date we are under the Overtime budget in several of the larger departments such as Nursing, Facilities, Housekeeping/Laundry. Dietary continues to present a challenge, particularly with overtime.

Mr. Mastronardi met last week with Morrison, our food service contractor, to discuss cost savings options. The discussion focused on aligning our cost per meal per day with the rest of the industry: ours is currently \$11.94/meal/day (including labor and overtime); industry standard is \$7.50-8.50/meal/day (including labor and overtime). Mr. Mastronardi requested Morrison present their plan to reduce that cost and the associated overtime by February 28th and be able to implement the plan with us by April 30th to get those costs under control. For context, Witherell serves 180,000 patient meals per year.

Mr. Mastronardi noted that we’re looking at all vendor contracts and having the vendors justify the cost of their services. We will go out to bid on contracts where the current vendors cannot bring costs down and be competitive. Incumbent vendors will be given the last chance to offer their cost savings before we would go out to bid.

CMS continues to put downward pressure on traditional rehab therapies: in 2020 it was an 8% reimbursement reduction in traditional rehab therapy services; projection is that there will be an additional 9% reduction in reimbursement for those services in 2021. Mr. Mastronardi stated that this is why we are diversifying our service portfolio and moving toward more clinically complex cases (i.e. sepsis management, cardio/pulmonary therapy). These more clinically complex residents would be managed here at a higher skill level and therefore a higher reimbursement rate; we become a value-added partner to hospitals as a step-down facility, shortening the hospital’s length of stay. After safely discharging patients to their homes from here, we will be able to follow their care, offering skilled nursing/therapy at home – 7 days of nursing, 5+ days of therapy/week, in-home aide coverage and meals.

Inventory management system – we are going to initiate a system to manage our supplies. Mr. Mastronardi stated that we could benefit from \$100K - \$150K in annual savings if we were to manage inventory properly.

Right-sizing – Mr. Mastronardi plans to right-size staff by 10%. Staff leaving by attrition will not be replaced; most staff cuts will occur in the nursing department. Reviews will be done of all departments to assure we have the right people in the right positions at the right salaries. This could be as much as \$1.1 million annual savings. Mr. Mastronardi has asked the Business Office to run the staffing models through our PBJ submission service to see if the changes will affect our 5-star rating. If there is a negative effect on the star rating, we can adjust the model.

Continually managing overtime will save approximately \$100K annually by Mr. Mastronardi's projections.

We will have standardized pharmacy drug formularies, resulting in a \$50K savings annually.

Managing vendor contracts could conservatively save \$550K per year.

We will be buying through a group purchasing agent which will save approximately 15% overall annually on our supplies.

Building Committee Report - presented by Larry Vanterpool

Mr. Vanterpool reported that the Building Committee met on Jan.19 2021 and discussed the following:

Tower Electrical Panel replacement

- TNW along with Stantec completed the drawings which were reviewed and verbally approved by DPH.
- The TOG purchasing department will be responsible for the development of the RFB. The goal is to issue the RFB in the month of February 2021.

Pavilion Exterior Renovation - CDBG Block Grant

- Mr. Mastronardi signed the contract with the CDBG office for the project.
- The pre-bid conference took place on January 14, 2021 and was attended by 19 contractors.
- Bid submissions are due on Thursday January 28, 2021. Mr. Vanterpool expects 8-10 bids to be submitted.

Mr. Vanterpool reported that there was also discussion on the NW proposal for capital improvement projects for FY 2022 totaling \$576,000: 1. Nursing capital; 2. General capital; 3. Interior maintenance plan; 4. Water backflow preventer 5. Tower A/C replacement. This will go before the BET Budget Committee on Monday, Feb. 8, 2021.

Finance Report – presented by Nunzio Raimo

Mr. Raimo reported on FY 2021 for the six months ending December 31, 2020:

- NW Census by payer class for December 2020: total days billed in December 2020 were 4,663, outpacing November by 110 in-house days. Payer numbers are showing a better trend over the previous month and are in the correct class with increases in private pay and Medicare Part A.
- Along with Nursing, Mr. Raimo has implemented the 'triple check' meeting which will ensure that we are getting the highest reimbursement rates we possibly can for our Med A patients.
- Occupancy Percentage in December 2020 compared to December 2019 shows a negative variance of 18%.
- Revenue by Payer Class: December Revenue was \$1.92M and reflects our revenue sources. YTD overall, Private Pay, Med A and Commercial Insurance have all shown slight increases.
- Two efficiency metrics: 1.) Revenue per FTE (full time employee), which is an indicator of staffing efficiency. For December 2020 it was higher at \$6,304 with keeping overtime down. 2.) Revenue per billable day which shows the efficiency of our revenue stream from operations. This is at \$414 for the month of December 2020, which is better than November at \$406.
- Mr. Raimo noted that as per Governor Lamont's press release, we are anticipating further COVID money of \$186K in retro Medicaid adjustments for Nov/Dec 2020, and \$90K in for Jan/Feb 2021.
- Revenue December 2020 YTD Actual was \$12,042,530 compared to budget of \$14,136,000, resulting in a negative variance of \$2,093,470.
- Expenses December 2020 YTD Actual were \$9,846,606 compared to budget of \$10,566,769, resulting in a positive savings year to date of \$720,160.
- We have additional savings in Allocations, Fringe Benefits, tax assessments, of \$230K.
- December 2020 YTD Margin Before Debt & Capital was (\$476,555) compared to budget of \$665,921 resulting in a variance of (\$1,142,476).
- Net Revenues/(Expenses) after COVID monies are in a favorable position of \$892,418. If the \$186K in retro COVID monies are received, it will leave us with a favorable variance of over \$1.1M.
- Benefit Summary for YTD December 2020 variance to budget was a savings of \$225,664.
- For December YTD 2020 Salaries & Wages were under budget by \$578,848. Mr. Simon noted that this was in part due to the "dramatic improvement" in the management of overtime costs over the last two years.
- For December YTD 2020 OTPS were slightly over budget by \$19,633. With an overall budget of over \$1M, being over budget by \$19K six months into the year, it should be considered 'at' budget.
- For December YTD 2020 Supplies & Materials were below budget by \$130,352.
- For December YTD 2020 Maintenance expenditures were below budget by \$30,593.
- Gain/loss per resident results are trending back down and as noted by Mr. Raimo, they are showing the efficiencies we are making.

- The December YTD 2020 Net Revenue/Expense figure of \$612,924, including the addition of the COVID monies from CT Dept of SS and CMS, is better than we have done in the last 10 years.
- Total December YTD Revenue 2020 compared to December YTD 2019 shows a loss of \$2.5M. This illustrates how we have directly suffered on the Revenue side due to COVID; the COVID money becomes a grant instead of a loan.
- Mr. Raimo noted that January 2021 is shaping up to be a very good month on the Census side (currently averaging about 157); it will also match correspondingly on the Revenue side.

Marketing – presented by Christopher Carter

Mr. Carter reported that the CY 2021 advertising plan has been approved and Harrison Edwards has been creating targeted digital ads that align with the strategies articulated above. Those themes are: short-term rehab; skilled nursing; cardiac, pulmonary; sub-acute and step-down care.

There has been very good engagement in terms of internet interaction and click-through rates – better than the typical healthcare norms.

There was a ‘brainstorming’ session in late November regarding upgrading the website. Mr. Carter stated that they want to make sure the website will provide essential information, and that it has the right components and answers for all those who visit the site. They are also reviewing the site’s design and finalizing the copy with Harrison Edwards. A virtual tour will be included; the exterior is completed but the interior tour has been on hold because of COVID restrictions.

There were two articles last month in US News:

1. *Does your loved one need care urgently?*
2. *Having the Conversation with a Loved One About Senior Living.*

An article appeared in Greenwich Time, *Visitation Innovation*, about the visitation pods.

On the blog there were postings on the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra performance in the courtyard, on the new visitation pods, and on celebrating the holidays with a loved one in skilled nursing.

Mr. Carter reported that on Facebook we are averaging a post every 2 days, providing information on senior care, health and news. Our followers have now surpassed 1,560.

Mr. Simon asked Mr. Carter to report on the issues/concerns sent to him by the Family Council concerning the website at the March Board meeting. He would also like to discuss whether to have part of the website for the general public and another specifically for family access.

Friends of Nathaniel Witherell (FNW) – presented by Scott Neff

Mr. Neff reported that the Community Appeal has received an average gift of \$354 from 360 donors.

On Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 the Nathaniel Witherell will participate in the Fairfield County Community Foundation Online Day of Giving. This event is an online activity with approximately 350 non-profits in Fairfield County participating. All of the proceeds raised by FNW during that event will go to the Resident Life Fund.

Chairman's Discussion – presented by Laurence Simon

RFP for TNW as posted by the Office of the First Selectman - Mr. Simon reported that the evaluation committee for the RFP for TNW Management Services has met and evaluated the proposals. They will meet with sub-sets of the proposers on February 1st and 4th. The proposals have included bids to provide management services, as well as lease and/or buy options

NW has a meeting with the BET Budget Committee on Feb. 8th, at 9 am. Mr. Simon invites and encourages all Board members to attend via zoom. Ms. Marini will circulate the Zoom information to the Board when it becomes available. Our budget was approved by the First Selectman as submitted.

Ms. Gibbons has agreed to assume the role of Board Secretary.

Mr. Simon thanked the Family Council for their letter of Sunday night. He requested that if they would like to have input into the meeting agenda that they would need to submit information to him at least 5 days in advance of the meeting.

New Business - none

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Brown seconded by Mr. Carter and the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Marini
January 31, 2021