



*The Nathaniel Witherell*  
TOWN OF GREENWICH  
CONNECTICUT

## **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 26, 2017**

**Present:** Laurence Simon, Chairman; Karen Sadik-Khan, Vice Chairman; Louise Puschel, Secretary; Lloyd Bankson; Frank Ennis, MD; Suzanne Hogan; Nisha Hurst; Richard W. Kaplan; Elizabeth Siderides, MD

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** Christopher Alexander, Finance Director; Lynn Bausch, Deputy Director & Director of Nursing; Allen Brown, Executive Director; Jack Hornak, Facilities Director; Justine Vaccaro, Social Work Director; Dr. Frank Walsh, Medical Director

**Also:** Patricia Burns, Commission on Aging; Mary Anne Chiappetta, Family Council; Gloria Guise, Family Council; Carol Lindstrum, Family Council; Paul Scholtes, Family Council

Mr. Simon noted a quorum was present and opened the meeting at 5:30 PM in the TNW Board Room.

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

Dr. Walsh reported that recently we have had a number of open long-term beds due to deaths. He questioned the logistics concerning a recent long-term admission whom is receiving rehab services. Ms. Bausch stated that rehab services are defined as 'skilled services' and are covered by Medicare. They will discuss this particular patient's case during tomorrow's Medicare meeting.

There was a recent outbreak of gastroenteritis and Dr. Walsh reported that it was handled extremely well by all staff involved. By isolating residents on the floor, the outbreak was contained very well. He credited Carol Kellogg, Special Services RN, for doing a wonderful job and keeping these small outbreaks under control.

## **Review/Approval of Minutes of May 22, 2017**

A motion to approve the minutes of May 22, 2017 was made by Ms. Sadik-Khan, seconded by Mr. Bankson and the minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

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

**Quarterly 5 star analysis** – The most recent CMS 5 star reports, including an overall analysis and a trend report, were attached to Mr. Brown's written report for the Board's information and review. Although the reports are a calendar year behind, they present information that was compiled from publicly available state and national data sets and are useful in comparing Witherell to other facilities and identifying areas for clinical improvement. Mr. Brown noted that we should be very proud of the long-term consistency in our 5-star rating, both as it reflects upon overall performance and clinical excellence, and as we remain committed to continuous quality improvement and focus on areas where the potential for improvement is indicated.

**Diet Program Changes** – Witherell implemented changes in its diet program this week in order to become consistent with the ASHA (American Speech and Hearing Association) guidelines. The new program converts the food consistency designations from a 3 level diet to a 5 level diet. This change, requiring a collaborative effort of our Speech Pathologists and our dietary and nursing departments, will improve the plate presentation and enhance the ease of eating for residents who have difficulty with swallowing and/or maintaining their independence in feeding themselves.

Mr. Brown noted that our contract with Morrison Senior Living has come to the end of its 5<sup>th</sup> year. As a result, the bid for the food services management contract will be going out after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.

**Electronic Health Record (update)** - The EHR conversion continues to progress very smoothly and the next enhancement to the Matrix EHR conversion will be to incorporate the therapy notes into the record. That step requires integration of Rehab Optima, which incorporates the therapy department notes into Witherell's Matrix software. That process has been initiated and we expect the integration to proceed seamlessly over the next month or two.

**Witherell at Home** – The committee evaluating the four proposals received in response to Witherell's RFP has narrowed its consideration to two finalists and will formalize its final selection this week. Mr. Brown noted that most likely there will be a start-up period where we will need to work collaboratively with the provider to get this new joint venture 'off the ground'. By late fall or early winter, Witherell at Home should be up and functioning with the ability to service referrals for non-medical homecare, that are discharged from TNW, are private duty care in the facility, or private pay patients in the Greenwich community.

**Tower/Auditorium renovations** – Contracts for the Tower renovation has been awarded to Wernert Construction and the Auditorium renovation to Wellbuilt of CT. The renovations will begin after receipt of building permits and CT DPH approvals and is expected in early September.

**Building Committee Report – presented by Louise Puschel**

The TNW Building Committee met prior to today's Board meeting at 3:30 PM. Discussion included the following:

- A third RFP had been reissued for the Tower project and resulted in a successful bidder, Wernert Construction. Due to DPH requirements and information they are requesting, the project will most likely not begin until September.
- Greenhouse – the committee has received two bids for the greenhouse but both bids exceeded available funds. This project remains on hold for the time being.
- Pavilion – the committee is developing a schedule of long-term improvements for the building. The painting of the building's common spaces is finished and new carpeting for the common areas on the first and second floors will be installed. Mr. Hornak will schedule the painters to come back and correct/repair the areas that have already started to peel. The next projects on the schedule will be replacement of windows and a new boiler.

**Finance Committee Report - presented by Lloyd Bankson and Christopher Alexander**

Mr. Bankson reported the following:

YTD May 2017 Net Facility Operating Results were \$4,639,510 compared to a Budget of \$4,451,585 resulting in a favorable variance of \$187,924. This is Operating Profit before Fixed charges.

YTD May 2017 Total Occupancy was 63,641 days (94.0%), compared to a Budget of 62,304 days (92.1%) resulting in a positive variance of 1,337 days. The major negative item is that Medicare is behind budget and not likely to meet budget before the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2017).

May 2017 Personal Services was unfavorable to budget by \$260,771.

Per Mr. Alexander, the Personal Services monthly deficit was primarily due to a directive by the Town of Greenwich Finance Department requiring Witherell to encumber additional Full-Time wages owed for the current fiscal year, but held until the completion of open labor contract negotiations in the Fall 2017. This money was budgeted for FY17.

Combined Service Expense, Supply Expense, Maintenance Expense, and Direct Insurance were unfavorable to budget by \$7,733 in total.

Benefits, Town Cost Allocations and Debt for May 2017 were favorable to budget by \$50,280 in total.

May 2017 Net Facility Operating Results were \$191,494 compared to a Budget of \$408,768 resulting in a variance of (\$217,273).

### **Marketing and Website Development – presented by Suzanne Hogan**

Ms. Hogan distributed to the Board the monthly Harrison Edwards report on the activities which they are involved in for us, such as media coverage, advertising, etc.

Ms. Hogan reported that in the last marketing meeting, it was decided that they would take a “refresh” or “re-look” at our positioning strategy. The original strategy Harrison Edwards developed was based on how to position the facility to the Town to ensure that people understood the value of this organization, particularly those who give us license to operate through budgeting, etc. The question is now, how do we position the organization more broadly in terms of filling beds, getting people to think of NW in advance, and to include business extensions such as Witherell at Home?

There is a meeting planned for July 12th to begin to lay the ground-work for positioning strategy as we move into 2018. The topics to be discussed will include trends in the marketplace, the threats and opportunities that come along with that, and possible new audiences. Mr. Simon noted that moving forward, more emphasis will now be placed on Nathaniel Witherell as the ‘the nursing home’, and Nathaniel Witherell in conjunction with Witherell at Home, rather than on FNW fund raising.

Ms. Puschel made a suggestion to the Board of an advertising campaign for Witherell at Home. Mr. Brown noted that one of the home health companies who responded to the bid, included placing a market representative based here at NW and another in the community, who would float among doctor offices, attorney offices, assisted living facilities, etc., and would promote the use of the home healthcare service as well as the nursing home.

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

Ms. Sadik-Khan reported that the results from the Friends’ spring luncheon, with guest speaker Jane Bryant Quinn, were ‘spectacular’! It was the largest single fundraising event held to date by the Friends. Ms. Sadik-Khan thanked everyone involved for their generous support. More than \$96,000 was raised.

The planning for the Walk for Witherell, scheduled for Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>, is underway. Threads and Treads of Greenwich has agreed to help us execute that event.

**Clinical Update** - Ms. Bausch reported that Carol Kellogg, Infection Control/Staff Development nurse is retiring effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, after 22 years at Nathaniel Witherell. We will miss her greatly. Recruitment for this position has already begun.

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

Our Summer Barbeques began on June 7<sup>th</sup>. They are held every Wednesday at noon throughout the summer in the Rose Garden. Again, Board members are encouraged to attend.

The Recreation Department will be sponsoring their biennial Tag Sale on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Item donations are welcomed. All proceeds go directly to resident life activities.

Some local music talent showcased here at Witherell this past month for the first time, as well as several students from Greenwich High School. We also had one of our own short-term residents perform.

## **Update on Payment Bundling – presented by Frank Ennis, MD and Richard Kaplan**

Dr. Ennis reported that Greenwich Hospital, as part of the Yale New Haven system, is entering into the bundled payment model for total hips and total knees sometime in the near future. He feels this will have a large impact on rehab payments here at Witherell. The money for the total hips/knees will be bundled as a single payment and given to the hospital, which in turn will pay Witherell; Witherell will no longer be paid directly by Medicare. Under a bundled payment model, providers and/or healthcare facilities are paid a single payment for all the services performed to treat a patient undergoing a specific procedure. Mr. Kaplan noted that Medicare patients will still have the ability to choose any facility they want to go to, though the hospital will attempt to drive them to their preferred providers. He also explained that providers who exceed the pre-arranged reimbursement for the procedure will be held responsible for overages. If the cost of the procedure is less than the bundled payment set price, then providers can keep the difference. However, if the cost is more, participating parties lose the difference. In the end, the 'winners' for getting more patients will be the homecare agencies.

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

Mr. Simon commented that this Friday is the last day of the fiscal year. According to this months' financials, we should be very close to attaining our Revenue budget and under our Expense budget for the year. Next year our budgeted Revenues are projected to increase and our expenses are budgeted correctly. FY 18 will still be a challenge to make our overall loss target.

We will stay on the path to increase our marketing, increase our outreach, improve the physical facility, and work with the Town to assure them that we provide a valuable service to the Town. The non-medical home healthcare business will begin in the fall; the winner will be announced within the week. Mr. Simon thanked the members of the evaluation committee for their time and effort: Mr. Brown, Ms. Hurst, Mr. Alexander and Ms. Vaccaro.

**New Business** - none

A motion for the Board to enter Executive Session at 6:37 pm was made by Mr. Bankson, seconded by Ms. Sadik-Khan and approved by a vote of 9-0-0. The purpose of the Executive Session was to discuss pending litigation.

The Board voted to leave Executive Session at 6:50 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Louise Puschel, Board Secretary  
July 5, 2017

Subject to Approval