



The Nathaniel Witherell
TOWN OF GREENWICH
CONNECTICUT

**Board of Directors Zoom Board Meeting
Minutes
November 15, 2021**

Present: Laurence B. Simon, Chairman; Melissa Gibbons, Secretary; Suzanne Brown; Christopher Carter; Paul Hopper; Nisha Hurst; Richard Kaplan; Kate Tabner

Absent: Nirmal Patel

Staff: Michel Baptiste, Housekeeping/Laundry Supervisor; Chris Ann Bennett, Infection Preventionist; George Cossifos, Director of Admissions; Nicolle Cucco, Clinical Nutrition Manager; Linda Marini, Assistant to Executive Director; John Mastronardi, Executive Director; Elizabeth Mungai, Director Of Utilization, Clinical Outcomes and Rehab Services; Scott Neff, FNW Executive Director; Nunzio Raimo, Director of Financial Operations; Carissa Ronish, Therapeutic Recreation Administrator; Kimberly Schupp, Clinical Dietician; Ai Linh Tu, Rehab Manager; Justine Vaccaro, Director of Social Work

Guests: Andy Duus, BET Liaison; Beth Krumeich, BET Liaison; Paul Scholtes; Sheilah Smith; Ellen Wolfson, Commission on Aging; Debbie Wortman

Mr. Simon opened the meeting at 5:01 PM via Zoom Webinar.

Medical Director's Report – Dr. Frank Walsh

Dr. Walsh reported that there are currently no positive COVID-19 cases among residents or staff. All staff, vaccinated or not, must continue to wear masks when in the facility; all visitors must also continue to wear a mask while visiting.

NW began our onsite flu vaccine clinics at the end of October. We have not experienced an overwhelming response from staff, but the flu vaccination rate is increasing. We are providing plenty of opportunities for them to receive the flu vaccine. Historically, on average, we have had about 50% of staff vaccinated for flu.

NW held an onsite COVID-19 vaccine clinic two weeks ago which was very well attended. Staff are continually encouraged to become fully vaccinated, including the booster. CDC has stated that boosters can be mixed and matched; it is not necessary to receive a booster of the same maker as you received for 1st/2nd doses. The Department of Health (DPH) has mandated that

all staff must sign an attestation to accompany a copy of their COVID-19 vaccine card. Failure to do so will result in a \$20,000/day fine for non-compliance. In response to Ms. Gibbons' question, Dr. Walsh stated that our residents appear to be tolerating the booster shot very well, with no harsh side effects.

Current census today is at 171. There were 9 admissions over this past weekend.

Mr. Simon commented that there are consistently 4-6 residents, predominantly short-term patients, per day in the hospital. Dr. Walsh responded that we now admit sicker patients into short-term rehab. In the past, many short-term rehab patients were orthopedic patients with fewer medical conditions. Mr. Kaplan noted that often when someone is sent out to the hospital, it may be because of a gradual change in condition that goes unnoticed or not noted over a period of time; consequently, leading to the patient having to be hospitalized.

Ms. Brown asked if there is any correlation between which hospital patients are coming from and those patients being readmitted. It is her understanding that when people are discharged, the hospital does not always provide a complete, comprehensive report of the patients' condition. Ms. Brown also questioned whether those patients being readmitted are being discharged from primarily one hospital. Dr. Walsh stated that the reports he receives are generally complete, no matter which facility is discharging the patient. He also does not see that one single hospital is responsible for the majority of readmissions. Mr. Simon noted that the possible correlations being suggested by Ms. Brown are worth researching further.

Review/Approval of Minutes of September 13, 2021 and October 18, 2021

A motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2021 was made by Ms. Brown, seconded by Mr. Kaplan. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 7-0-0. Ms. Hurst had not yet arrived at the time of this vote.

A motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2021 was made by Ms. Brown, seconded by Mr. Carter. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 7-0-0. Ms. Hurst had not yet arrived at the time of this vote.

Executive Director's Report - presented by John Mastronardi

Concerning Mr. Simon's previous comment regarding hospital readmissions, Mr. Mastronardi noted a recent example of a resident who was readmitted to the hospital for high potassium levels. This resident spent a day in the hospital receiving the same treatments we could have provided in-house. Mr. Mastronardi would define this as an unnecessary and avoidable admission to the hospital; it was also very costly. We have the data in Real Time to assess these types of situations but have not analyzed the data and; we should improve the ways we use the data available to help guide our decisions and actions.

Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) Training – TPN is a process of infusing a specialized form of food intravenously to correct or prevent malnutrition. Our nursing staff will be trained the first week of December and topics will include: how to order TPN from the pharmacy; what to

expect as far as the delivery of TPN; labs that will be required; how to prepare for TPN administration; what filter tubing to be used; primary programming for the infusion pumps; and, assessment of the patient and the IV site. Most of the patients involved are already on TPN from the hospital and would be admitted for short-term rehab. The average per diem increase would be from about \$670/day to \$800/day per patient; this is easily achievable with the proper training for nursing staff.

Inventory Management – The inventory management of medical/surgical, nursing, housekeeping and laundry supplies (not including capital expenses or office supplies), for the 4-month period July 2021 – October 2021, totaled an actual expense of \$124,420, compared to a budget of \$193K. This result is a positive variance of approximately \$69K. Mr. Mastronardi is conservatively projecting an annual savings of \$150,000.

Pharmacy Formulary – The pharmacy formulary savings, which substitutes name brands with generics whenever possible, and using less expensive alternatives, has saved NW \$91K fiscal year to date, which projects to \$273,000 in annual savings. Taking a more conservative approach to predictive analysis, Mr. Mastronardi anticipates between \$150,000 and \$180,000 in annual savings.

RFP's – Mr. Mastronardi reported that RFP's have been issued for TNW's three major outsourced services, including food service management, pharmacy and rehab. This follows leaderships' original plan, allowing for market competition, and effectively helps us to renegotiate better terms and pricing. Mr. Mastronardi projects that the annual savings will be between \$350,000 and \$500,000 annually.

Therapeutic Recreation – Mr. Mastronardi reported for Ms. Ronish:

- Last month residents and staff attended a "Think Pink" event for Breast Cancer Awareness and raised over \$400.
- 16 Nathaniel Witherell Veterans were honored last Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021, Veterans Day, with certificates of appreciation and a music celebration.
- Some upcoming events include a Teaching Kitchen, Italian Music Concert, Holiday Crafts and a Resident Poetry Reading.
- With the most recent guidance released from CMS we will be foregoing the Holiday party in December. We do have several holiday-themed activities planned which will be published in next month's calendar on our website.

Mr. Simon questioned our current star rating. Mr. Mastronardi explained that we experienced a 1-2 star decrease in our rating based on weight loss and catheter metrics. Mr. Mastronardi explained that some weights were incorrectly entered into the Electronic Medical Records, MatrixCare. The length of time the 4 foley catheters we had were also part of the rating decline, as CMS required clearer justification. NW was also cited during 2 of 11 COVID-related surveys that took place during the height of the pandemic.

Mr. Simon stated that the Annual Report for the Nathaniel Witherell was submitted to the Town. This report will be circulated to the Board at the January 24, 2022 Board meeting.

Building Committee Report - presented Paul Hopper

Tower Electrical Panel Upgrade – Mr. Hopper reported that we received the two-week advisory notice that they are ready to switch to the temporary power, scheduled for November 30th between the lunch and dinner hours. NW has also engaged an engineer to look at replacing, repairing or upgrading some of the other panels in the upper floors of the facility.

The Building Committee had an engineer come and evaluate the roof-top units and the chiller. The engineer will provide us with his recommendations in terms of how we might be able to upgrade the units or replace those that need to be replaced; and determine which ones can be retrofitted to increase our filtration rates.

Mr. Simon stated that it is our plan to apply some of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to improve/increase our levels of air filtration within the building. The other item put before the ARP panel was the \$100K needed to replace the galvanized pipe from Parsonage Road to the water pit in the front yard. When the pipe from the pit to our building was replaced, it was our understanding that Aquarion was responsible for the section from the street to the pit, but this proved not to be true.

Mr. Simon noted that the Capital projects mentioned last month have been accepted by the Town and will be in the 2023 Budget Capital Plan.

The Pavilion External Renovations – This work order is now complete. It is still to be determined if any of the remaining funds can be used for other projects at the Pavilion.

Finance Report – presented by Nunzio Raimo

Pavilion Rent Increases – After Board discussion, Mr. Simon made a motion to increase Pavilion apartment rents 3%, effective February 1, 2022; Ms. Tabner seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Unit	Monthly Rent Effective Feb. 1, 2021	3% increase Effective February 1, 2022	Monthly Rent February 1, 2022
A	\$ 845.36	\$ 25.36	\$ 870.72
B	\$ 1,010.53	\$ 30.32	\$ 1,040.85
C	\$ 845.69	\$ 25.37	\$ 871.06
D	\$ 878.22	\$ 26.35	\$ 904.57
E	\$ 1,040.85	\$ 31.23	\$ 1,072.08
	\$ 4,620.65		\$ 4,759.27
Annualized	\$ 55,447.80		\$ 57,111.23

Private Pay Room and Board Rate Increases – After Board discussion, Mr. Kaplan made a motion to increase Private Pay Room and Board Rates 3%, effective January 1, 2022; Ms. Hurst seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

NATHANIEL WITHERELL			
ROOM AND BOARD CHARGES			
EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2022			
MONTHLY COST PROJECTION			
		Rate per diem	Monthly amount
SINGLE ROOM		\$613 X 30 Days	\$18,390.00
		\$613 X 31 Days	\$19,003.00
SINGLE ROOM		\$628 X 30 Days	\$18,840.00
SPECIAL DEMENTIA CARE		\$628 X 31 Days	\$19,468.00
TWO BED ROOM		\$572 X 30 Days	\$17,160.00
		\$572 X 31 Days	\$17,732.00
TWO BED ROOM		\$592 X 30 Days	\$17,760.00
SPECIAL DEMENTIA CARE		\$592 X 31 Days	\$18,352.00
ANNUAL ESTIMATED COST PROJECTION (365 DAYS)			
SINGLE ROOM			\$ 223,745
SINGLE ROOM SPECIAL DEMENTIA CARE			\$ 229,220
TWO BED ROOM			\$ 208,780
TWO BED ROOM SPECIAL DEMENTIA CARE			\$ 216,080

Mr. Raimo reviewed the Financial Statement and Operating Results for the period ending October 31, 2021:

- Total days billed for October 2021 were 5,456.
- Occupancy Percentage for October 2021 was 87%; average beds per day for October 2021 was 176.
- October 2021 revenue from operations was \$2,452,358; budgeted target revenue is \$2,430,520.
- Two efficiency metrics: 1.) Monthly revenue per FTE (which is an indicator of staffing efficiency) for October 2021 was \$11,149; 2.) Revenue per billable patient day (which shows the efficiency of our revenue stream from operations) for October 2021 was \$449.
- Revenue October YTD Actual was \$10,030,385, compared to budget of \$9,722,079, resulting in a positive variance of \$308,306. All categories except Private Pay were above budget.
- Expenses from Operations for October 2021 YTD Actual were \$7,016,560 compared to budget of \$7,454,174, resulting in a variance of (\$437,614).
- October 2021 YTD Margin Before Debt & Allocation of \$3,013,824, \$745,920 over Budget.

- October 2021 YTD Margin Before Debt & Capital was \$1,233,988 compared to our budget of \$154,867, resulting in a variance of \$1,079,122. Actual Capital Expenditures were \$347,124.
- October YTD 2021 Operating Profit Before Debt Service was \$886,864.
- Net Revenues October 2021 FYTD were (\$7,581).
- For October YTD 2021 Benefits were under budget by \$328,718.
- For October YTD 2021 Salaries & Wages were under budget by \$331,468.
- For October YTD 2021 OTPS were \$8,512 over budget.
- For October YTD 2021 Supplies & Materials were under budget by \$185,208.
- For October YTD 2021 Maintenance expenditures were under budget by \$14,568.

Mr. Mastronardi explained that one of the pillars of his revenue generation plan is to hire a Nurse Liaison. The hiring of this individual will be budget neutral because of some of the rightsizing that took place earlier in the year. This person will be responsible for identifying new referral sources and for performing outreach to develop and increase the census. We will look for someone to fill this role who has an existing network from which to pull new referrals; one who will perform outreach to our existing referral sources and maintain professional relationships with these sources to build the census. This individual will collaborate with the leadership team to optimize our clinical quality outcomes, increase the associated reimbursement with those quality outcomes, and ensure a continued desirable payer mix.

During review of the Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget by Mr. Raimo, Mr. Simon noted that once we have submitted our proposed Operating Budget for FY 2023 to the Town, they will most likely return it to us for adjustments. When we have more information and data available (through December 2021) at the January 2022 meeting, the final budget we will submit to the Town at that time will likely be different than what the Board is voting on tonight. The goal is to have a budget which is breaking even, except for Debt Service, without using a contribution from the General Fund. On Thursday, February 10, 2022, 9-11 AM, NW will meet with the BET Budget Committee to present and discuss our capital and operating budgets.

Following Board discussion, Ms. Hurst made a motion to submit the FY 2023 Operating Budget to the Town as presented; Mr. Kaplan seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Marketing – presented by Christopher Carter

Mr. Carter reported that Harrison Edwards is planning to present a review of 2021 advertising and their initial recommendations for 2022 in early December. Those details for next year will be discussed at the January Board meeting.

For paid advertising that ran this past month, Google ads had over 94,000 impressions and over 1700 visits to the site; this led to 89 calls. On Facebook we had over 3,200 impressions of our posts and over 74 engagements.

Mr. Carter reported that on the social front, we did 13 Facebook posts since the last board meeting, including one with Colleen Hayden of Art Master Silvermine, who led our seniors in

an arts and crafts project. We also had Pooches on Parade where our community residents brought their dogs to visit, and the story appeared in the Greenwich Time.

Our website had a very good month during October, with over 3,500 visits to the website. This number is up over 4% since September. Year over year, our website users are up 154%. Sessions are up 161% with nearly 94,000 sessions in this past month. Page views are up almost 90%. Mr. Carter reported that we are seeing positive results from the changes and updates made to the website.

The website is continually updated to reflect the latest COVID-19 information within the family update section, which is in the top right corner of the website.

One blog was posted in October titled *Take Heart, Cardiac Rehab is a Surefire Way to Speed Recovery*. For November, a blog will be posted about *Healthy Eating During the Holidays* and another becoming a Volunteer at the Witherell.

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

Mr. Neff reported that the FNW direct mail appeal that was mailed on October 4th to Greenwich households has received contributions from 132 donors to date. This appeal has reached approximately 31% of the goal for the year, which runs through June 2022.

Mr. Neff will once again be registering FNW for the Fairfield County Giving Day. This annual, countywide giving day event is scheduled for February 24, 2022.

Chairman's Discussion – presented by Laurence Simon

Murtha Cullina, Conflict of Interest Waiver Request – Mr. Simon explained that NW uses the Murtha Cullina law firm in our relationships with the Department of Public Health (DPH) and regulatory affairs. Murtha Cullina has hired an attorney who is going to do property appeals to the Board of Assessment Appeals on behalf of Greenwich homeowners. They asked for a conflict of interest waiver which was approved by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Krumeich noted that the 2021 revaluation came out in November, and many Greenwich homeowners who are going to be questioning their new valuation may go to the Board of Assessment Appeals; they would be asking for legal representation. Mr. Simon made a motion to give Murtha Cullina the Conflict of Interest Waiver; the motion was seconded by Mr. Kaplan; a vote was taken, and the motion was approved by a vote of 7-0-0 (Ms. Hurst had left the meeting).

Mr. Simon thanked our BET liaisons, Beth Krumeich and Andy Duus, for being very helpful and supportive to NW and for their attendance at many NW Board meetings. They both will now be leaving the BET. Mr. Duus commented that NW has been doing a fantastic job this past year during such difficult times. He stated it has been an honor to attend these Board meetings. Beth Krumeich agreed with Mr. Duus' statements, and stated that she is thrilled with the work that has been done these past two years under Mr. Simon's leadership. She expressed that she was delighted that Mr. Mastronardi has come on board, and she hopes the community

recognizes the work that is being done here at this outstanding facility. She said from her personal knowledge and as a representative and elected official in Greenwich, she sees the hard work that gets done every day to ensure that we are taking care of our seniors. She thanked everyone for that.

New Business

Mr. Kaplan stated that we will be receiving the report from the RFP committee sometime soon; with that comes the Board's responsibility to discuss it and determine what will be done. Mr. Kaplan proposed that the NW Board should develop a strategic plan for the Witherell to do some long-range planning and determine its' direction. He suggested the Board should discuss if they want to develop a strategic plan on their own or perhaps consult with someone to assist. Mr. Simon agreed and noted that this discussion could take place in a special, in-person, Board meeting in March 2022, perhaps with a facilitator. The agenda should review some of the important issues and current trends that are happening in health care. He stated that we are in a very dynamic environment now, and there are a lot of changes occurring. The Board needs to have a better understanding and strategic direction of where they want NW to go.

Mr. Duus stated that the RFP evaluation committee concluded its work this past week and submitted their report to the First Selectman. Any changes can be initiated by this Board or by the Office of the First Selectman. Any proposed changes will ultimately have to go through the Representative Town Meeting (RTM). He agreed with Mr. Kaplan that the NW Board's role is very important in this instance, and it is important to think about the strategic challenges and how NW will deal with them.

Mr. Simon wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays. The next Board meeting is January 24, 2022. In the meantime, Mr. Simon will keep the Board apprised via email of the status of the RFP's for Food Service, Rehab and Pharmacy Services and Hemodialysis, and on our efforts to treat in place to provide care for people stay in-house and not be discharged to the hospital.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 PM was made by Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Hopper and approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Marini
November 22, 2021