



The Nathaniel Witherell
TOWN OF GREENWICH
CONNECTICUT

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2019**

- Present:** Laurence B. Simon, Chairman; Louise Puschel, Secretary; Nelson Bonheim, MD; Suzanne Hogan; Nisha Hurst; Richard Kaplan; Joan Merrill; Nirmal Patel, MD MPH; Elizabeth Siderides, MD
- Absent:** none
- Staff:** Allen Brown, Executive Director; Kyle F. Cimiotti, Director of Dining Services; Jack Hornak, Facilities Director; Linda Marini, Assistant to Executive Director; Scott Neff, Executive Director FNW; Edward Omondi, Deputy and DON; Justine Vaccaro, Director of Social Work
- Guests:** Elizabeth K. Krumeich, BET Liaison; Paul Scholtes, Family Council; Ellen Wolfson, Commission on Aging

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

Medical Director's Report – presented by Edward Omondi, Director of Nursing

Mr. Omondi reported that the facility has had no outbreaks for the past three months. There have been scattered incidences of respiratory illness, mostly with staff, less among the residents. Our residents have been in general good health. We are in total compliance with the flu vaccine for our residents; all residents have received the vaccine unless medically contraindicated, or for religious reasons. We were almost 97% compliant with staff, having either accepted or declined the flu shot.

Dr. Josh Shajan is currently covering for Dr. Walsh during his absence. He has been very involved and easy to communicate with. Facility medical issues remain under control to date.

Mr. Omondi reported that in anticipation of the reimbursement model changing to the Patient Driven Payment Model (PDPM), as of October 1, 2019, we are putting several things into place:

- Enhancing respiratory therapy program
- Staff education, in-services on coding
- Efficiencies in supply inventory cycles
- Vitals machines that integrate with the Electronic Health Record system (EHR)
- Integrating doctor's orders and notes into the EHR system
- Collaborating with Matrix for physician training

Mr. Kaplan invited Board members to view a webinar on PDPM, to be held in his office on Tuesday, February 5, 2019, 1pm – 3pm.

Review/Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2018

A motion to approve the minutes of November 19, 2018 was made by Mr. Kaplan, seconded by Dr. Bonheim, and the minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

Executive Director's Report – presented by Allen Brown

Mr. Brown introduced Witherell's new Director of Dining Services, Mr. Kyle Cimiotti. Mr. Cimiotti comes to TNW from Health Care Services Group. He has also worked for Morrison in the past. His background has been in food service management; he has also been an executive chef in the restaurant, nursing home, and assisted living businesses. Previous to going into food service, Mr. Cimiotti was a homicide detective in Washington DC. Mr. Cimiotti explained that his first two agenda items for TNW include raising prices in the café to at least break even, and opening the café earlier in the morning to offer breakfast.

Press coverage – Many are aware of last week's press coverage regarding Dr. Walsh and his failure to document specifically the need for opiate prescriptions in 2015-2016. The sanctions imposed do not impact Dr. Walsh's status as TNW's medical director nor his practice at Nathaniel Witherell. Opiate prescriptions at Witherell are monitored closely by a pharmacy consultant from Omnicare; similarly, the facility's Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee oversees the appropriate use of all medications at Witherell. Sanctions imposed by the Medical Review Board were limited to Dr. Walsh's private practice.

Mr. Brown explained that opiate pain medications are typically prescribed by physicians while the patient is hospitalized and subsequently transferred to Witherell by virtue of mandated interagency transfer documentation. There is a State of CT required "W-10" form that must be completed when a patient transfers from one level of care (hospital) to another (SNF). This ensures continuity of care from one facility to another. Once a resident has been admitted to a nursing home, physicians are required to limit prescriptions to a defined period of time and to document the reason a medication is ordered; such documentation may include, for

example, reference to a patient's magnitude of pain or documentation regarding the ineffectiveness of other pain medications.

PDPM Update – the Patient Driven Payment Model (PDPM) will replace Medicare's RUG reimbursement system in October 2019. PDPM will shift payment emphasis from therapy based services to nursing services. Medical conditions will then generate higher reimbursement by Medicare than orthopedic conditions. This is a 180 degree shift from the RUG reimbursement system. While orthopedic cases will continue to represent a significant source of revenue, our focus on medical services will ensure maximum reimbursement from Medicare. We are in the process of enhancing our respiratory therapy coverage, allowing us to improve services to patients with COPD, pneumonia, asthma, bronchial infections and heart related conditions, and enabling Witherell to better market those services to hospitals that focus on these services as part of their bundled payment programs.

Post discharge satisfaction reports – The December WeCare Connect reports were attached to the written Executive Director's report for the Boards review. The reports identified very high levels of satisfaction with our service. This month, satisfaction levels were especially positive as Witherell's ratings exceeded peer group averages in every category.

Building Committee Report - presented by Louise Puschel

The TNW Building Committee met at 4:30 today, January 28, 2019, and discussion included the following:

- **Tower renovations:** the renovations on the 3rd floor are approximately 85% complete with an anticipated completion date of mid-February 2019. Upon final completion, the CT State Department of Public Health will do a final inspection.
- **Pavilion** – there are 3 windows being installed this week, which will complete the new window installation project. Touch-up painting around the new windows will be done after the final installation.
- **Greenhouse/Rehab Expansion:** The Building Committee has received a bid of \$163,894 for this renovation. Total cost of this project including contingency is estimated at \$213K. Friends of Nathaniel Witherell has contributed \$30K, and the Committee is waiting for re-confirmation from the State that the STEAP Grant funds (\$182K) remain available for this project. Estimated start date is mid-March with a 5 to 8 week completion timeframe (mid-May).
- In the FY 20 Capital Plan, TNW had submitted to the Town a request for funding to replace the 14 domestic hot water heaters. However, due to recent mechanical issues, we are requesting the funding immediately. We should know within 1-2 weeks if we can move forward with the replacement and when the funds will be available.
- **Review of the 2019 CIP items:**
 - 19 beds were ordered, delivered and installed last week
 - Kitchen equipment has been delivered and installed
 - 22 new units have been ordered as part of the Tower A/C system replacement program

- General Capital – various projects throughout the facility have been completed, with an approximate \$80K balance on hand for next year
- Medical equipment, such as new lifts, are on the floors and installed

Finance Committee Report - presented by Nisha Hurst

The TNW Finance Committee met Wednesday, January 23, 2019.

Referencing the 2018-2019 Financial Results as of December 31, 2018, Ms. Hurst reported the following:

YTD December 2018 Margin Before Debt and Allocation Actual was (\$1,956,506) compared to a Budget of (\$2,754,759) resulting in a negative variance of (\$798,253).

YTD December 2018 Revenues were \$12,976,863 compared to a Budget of \$14,257,487 resulting in a negative variance of (\$1,280,624). Ms. Hurst noted that much of this is attributable to the 1st Quarter 18/19 when 14 short-term beds were used for long-term residents during renovations. Although Census was lower during those first 3 months, Census was over 90% for October 2018, November 2018 and December 2018, with December 2018 having the most days at 5,737.

YTD December 2018 Expenses were (\$11,020,357) compared to a Budget of (\$11,502,728) resulting in a positive variance of \$482,371.

Mr. Omondi explained how ONSHIFT allows them to manage Overtime Expense, enabling them to make informed decisions when staffing. We continue to have an extensive number of call outs (367 in the last 60 days), which tends to be the norm throughout the healthcare industry, including part time and full time, CNAs and nurses, which presents a challenge for staffing. The question becomes whether staffing with overtime, or staffing with part timers who will require paid medical insurance, is the most economical and efficient way to run the facility.

YTD December 2018 Management Operating Target Actual was (\$875,924) compared to a Budget of (\$385,666) resulting in a negative variance of (\$490,258).

Additional items being reviewed by the Finance Committee:

- Medicaid rates and the impact for FY2019. That rate has increased to \$279.78/day, which equates to approximately \$11/day (\$400K - \$500K annually). This increase was effective 11/1/18.
- Processing patient payments through patient trust accounts
- Whether or not to increase the bad debt allowance
- Matrix/Munis compatibility

Mr. Simon reported that NW will present to the BET Budget Committee for FY 20 budget and operating capital on Wednesday, February 20, 2019, at 9:00 AM.

Marketing - presented by Suzanne Hogan

November 2018 and December 2018 Harrison Edwards marketing reports were distributed as part of the Board packet; hardcopies were also available at the meeting.

Ms. Hogan reported that the only new marketing activity since the last Board meeting is that they have cut back a bit on the publishing budget and repurposed it to begin advertising with Google and Google pop-up ads. In just the first month there was a good deal of interest and activity generated that has come through this source.

As Mr. Brown reported during his Executive Director's Report, Mr. Simon commented that we are going to change the focus of our marketing toward the medical side. We will need to reinvent ourselves in that regard to acquire the reimbursements. We will be discussing this extensively during the March Board meeting.

In response to Dr. Bonheim's question of whether or not we do direct marketing to physicians, Mr. Kaplan explained that it's now the Social Workers and Discharge Planners in the hospitals, and even insurance companies, that recommend facilities.

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

The Community Appeal, mailed on Tuesday, October 30, 2018, has received contributions from 363 donors to date, compared to 430 last year at this point, having raised about 80% of last years' total thus far.

On behalf of the Board, Mr. Simon thanked the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell for their \$30K gift toward the rehab expansion project. These funds will cover the costs of building contracts and contingency. Mr. Neff also noted that the STEAP Grant was originally spearheaded by the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell.

Chairman's Report – presented by Laurence Simon

Mr. Simon noted two important meeting dates:

Wednesday, February 20th, 9 am, Town Hall, Cone Room (2nd floor) – BET Budget Committee Hearing for TNW

Monday, March 18th, 4:30/5:00 pm - Joint BET / Board of TNW Meeting to review HDG Report. We will forward exact time and location of this meeting when available. A copy of the report will be distributed before this meeting.

Mr. Simon explained that the March 25th Board meeting will have a different format. The focus at this meeting will be on what we, as an institution, have to do to make sure that we're ready when PDPM takes effect in October 2019. We will review what the HDG report says,

what kinds of admissions we should be able to handle, what marketing should be pursued, and how we will position ourselves to take advantage of the change in the Medicare reimbursements.

There will be a meeting with Al Cava, Director of Labor Relations, this week, to discuss any Union issues to be included with labor negotiations.

Mr. Brown reported that the Pharmacy Contract was officially awarded to Omnicare. We received 5 proposals from pharmacy providers. The committee, consisting of Ed Omondi, Margaret Wayne, Tom Ellis, Joan Merrill, and Allen Brown, chose Omnicare, based on cost, their quality of service, their history here at TNW, and their dominance in the industry.

Mr. Simon concluded stating that it's a very busy time going forward, focused on the budget, labor contracts coming up for renewal, the HDG Report, making changes in Medicaid rates and continuing to file the appeal.

Resident Life - presented by Edward Omondi

Mr. Omondi mentioned several events, which were part of the resident recreation program during the months of December and January:

- December 15th – the Resident and Family Holiday Party had over 300 attendees and was a huge success.
- Many schools visited during December: Glenville School 5th Grade class sang for our residents, as did the Waterside School; Cos Cob School delivered cards to our residents and helped with some 'memoir writing'.
- The St. Mary sponsored Ice Cream Social was held on Sunday, January 27th
- Casino Day, sponsored by the Junior League, was held on Saturday, January 26th

For 2019, our Therapeutic Recreation Director, Ms. Carissa Ronish, now has activities scheduled every weekend, and weekend staff to help with the events.

The February calendar will be out shortly, and some events will include the Superbowl Party on Sunday, February 3rd, a Valentine Day Party, and Chinese New Year Celebration. Also, on February 8th the Glenville School Kindergarten Class will be coming to distribute Valentine Cards to our residents.

Mr. Neff noted that the Superbowl and other parties are funded through the Resident Life Fund of the FNW.

Mr. Simon introduced Nirmal Patel, MD, MPH, attending her first meeting as a TNW Board Member.

New Business – none

A motion was made by Ms. Hogan to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Hurst, and Mr. Simon adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Marini for Louise Puschel, Board Secretary
February 1, 2019

Subject to Approval