

PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT NO. 2 OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WASHINGTON
VERDANT HEALTH COMMISSION

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

**Hybrid: In-Person at Verdant Community Wellness Center and via Zoom
December 20, 2023
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.**

**Commissioners
Present**

Jim Distelhorst, MD, President
Karianna Wilson, Secretary
Deana Knutsen, Commissioner
Carolyn Brennan, Commissioner
Bob Knowles, Commissioner

Staff

Dr. Lisa Edwards, Superintendent
Riene Simpson, Director of Finance
Ceil Erickson, Director of Community Impact
Kaysi Caballero, Executive Assistant/Office Manager
Nancy Budd, Community Social Worker
Annika Sahota, Community Engagement Specialist
Humaira Barlas, Fiscal Specialist

Guests

Mary Davis	Daniel Johnson
Luke Lonie	Elizabeth Zeller
Lahai Health	Michelle Reitan
Leah Hammon	

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Hospital District No. 2, Snohomish County, was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by President Distelhorst.

**Land and
Enslaved People's
Acknowledgement**

President Distelhorst read the acknowledgement.

Oath of Office(s)

Ms. Mary Davis, City of Lynnwood, read the Oath of Office for Commissioner Deana Knutsen's re-election for a 6-year term for Position 1.

Ms. Mary Davis, City of Lynnwood, read the Oath of Office for Commissioner Karianna Wilson's re-election for a 6-year term for Position 4.

President Distelhorst congratulated both Commissioners on their re-election and thanked Ms. Davis and Mr. Lonie for administering the Oaths.

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

Consent Agenda ***Commissioner Knutsen made a motion to approve all items included on the consent agenda, Commissioner Brennan seconded. Motion passed.***

Consent Agenda (E:78:23)

1. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. November 15, 2023 Regular Board Meeting
2. RES 2023:10 Swedish Asset Disposal
3. Approval of 2024 Verdant Board Meeting Calendar

Public Comments None.

Executive Committee Report President Distelhorst reported that Executive Committee met on December 13th to approve the agenda for today's meeting. No action was taken at the Executive Committee meeting.

2024 Officer & Committee Nominations President Distelhorst requested that nominations for 2024 officers and committees shall be made at this meeting. Current Committee and Board assignments will be in place through January 31, 2024 and the new committee assignments and Board President will take effect February 1, 2024.

Commissioner Knutsen nominated Commissioner Karianna Wilson for Board President, Commissioner Brennan seconded. All others voted aye, motion passed.

Commissioner Wilson nominated Commissioner Carolyn Brennan as Board Secretary, Commissioner Knutsen seconded. All others voted aye, motion passed.

Commissioner Knutsen nominated Commissioner Karianna Wilson as Chair of Executive Committee and Commissioner Carolyn Brennan as second officer. All others voted aye, motion passed.

Commissioner Distelhorst nominated Commissioner Deana Knutsen as Chair of Finance Committee. Commissioner Karianna Wilson nominated Commissioner Jim Distelhorst as second officer. All others voted aye, motion passed.

Commissioner Knutsen nominated Commissioner Bob Knowles as Chair of Program Committee. Commissioner Karianna Wilson nominated Commissioner Carolyn Brennan as second officer. All others voted aye, motion passed.

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

Commissioner Distelhorst nominated Commissioner Karianna Wilson as Chair of Strategic Collaboration Committee and Commissioner Carolyn Brennan as second officer. All others voted aye, motion passed.

**Board Discussion:
2024 Community
Presentations and
Joint Study
Sessions**

Dr. Edwards asked that Commissioners discuss their desires to participate in community discussions and/or joint study sessions in 2024.

Commissioner Knutsen shared her concern after presenting at a couple community presentations in the last few months that the public does not know what a public hospital district does. She thinks it is very important to have these discussions in the community. She thinks it is not something that *all* commissioners have to do, just the ones that have time to make the presentations.

Commissioner Wilson agrees that we need to have these conversations to teach people about what we do. She does not think it is the best use of time for all five Commissioners to present at study sessions. She suggested Superintendent Edwards to set up a small meeting at the beginning of this school year with the Edmonds School District but not all Commissioners must participate. She does not feel Verdant should participate in joint study sessions with other municipalities as sometimes our priorities align and sometimes, they do not and Verdant should not mold our strategies to match with the Cities.

Commissioner Brennan agrees that Verdant needs to meet with some of the school district leaders to learn about their priorities. She added that it is difficult to schedule meetings with Cities.

Commissioner Knutsen spoke about the importance of going out in the community with the Superintendent to inform the public. There is a much wider group of people we should be communicating with, not just the school district.

Commissioner Knowles agreed to cancel the joint study session with the school district on August 27, 2024. He does not think these need to be formal conversations with entire boards and can be just a few key people.

**Community
Discussion: Warm
Meals**

Ms. Erickson introduced the topic and presenters for today's discussion about warm meals in the community.

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

Leah Hammon, Nutrition Director at Homage: She reported that 1 in 6 older adults face hunger. Food insecurity is a predictor in depression, disease, quality of life. Homage offers two major nutrition programs (1) Meals on Wheels to deliver food to elderly residents, which includes a wellness check by the delivery drivers who report back to Homage staff and (2) Community Table Dining Program is a hot meal program at 11 locations throughout Snohomish County. They provide the food, recipes, and anyone over age 60 can receive a nutritious hot meal free of charge and it also provides an opportunity for socialization. The two meal sites in south Snohomish County are Center for Healthy Living (Monday-Thursday and every other Friday) and Lake Ballinger Senior Center. Before COVID the Lake Ballinger Senior Center served 20-25 meals twice per week. During COVID they provided drive-up meals, served approximately 200 meals 3 days per week. Year-to-date in 2023 they have served 21,000 meals at these two sites in south Snohomish County. The challenges they face include funding, hiring a cook for the site, quality control for 11 different sites at different times and days of week, barriers to attendance, and meeting the growing dietary and cultural needs of the community. They hope to provide an additional day of service and provide an additional day per month for elderly Latino residents.

Elizabeth Zeller, Lake Ballinger Center: She said they started with 20 sack lunches on Thursdays during COVID. They partner with Homage, receive fruit and vegetable vouchers from Verdant, and get leftover food from food banks that they can distribute to their seniors. Finding a cook is challenging. The wellness checks they provided, even through the drive-up car windows as they distribute food, are invaluable. Now, after the pandemic, they are all in person congregate meals and the seniors are socializing again. The Verdant fruit and vegetable voucher program is helpful since fresh produce is often what people skip when they can't afford food, so they buy the cheaper shelf stable food instead. One of the challenges they face is staffing to recruit and retain volunteers to provide the lunches.

Daniel Johnson, CEO of Edmonds Waterfront Center: Among their 70+ programs, their lunch program is the most important. It has created socialization opportunities including a nutrition aspect. In 2019 when they demolished their building to rebuild the center, they continued to provide their meals programs offsite. During the pandemic they delivered meals seven days

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

per week via volunteers. After the pandemic they switched to a community cafe model where the public could come and order food off a menu, but the seniors would have a subsidized lunch. Starting in January 2024 there will be a hot lunch for seniors five days per week. What they are trying to figure out is how to involve the community. Ms. Michelle Reitan talked about the struggle for seniors to eat nutritiously. Some factors that inhibit healthy eating include immobility to get to grocery store, inability to stand and prepare meals, conflicting diseases that counter the nutrition needs of the another disease. They do nutrition education with Sound Dietitians once per month and Verdant provides the fruit and vegetable vouchers to attendees. Puget Sound Kidney Center also comes in and does workshops and cooking demos.

Commissioner Knutsen asked Homage if they are closing the center? She has concerns about their ability to provide meals if the center is closed.

- Ms. Hammon answered there are no plans to close the center. The building is being vetted to see if it is viable for them to remain in the center. They still hope to provide an additional service day at Lake Ballinger Center.

Commissioner Knutsen asked Mr. Johnson to explain why the Edmonds Waterfront Center is not receiving any federal subsidized services.

- Mr. Johnson answered they are talking with Homage to continue the partnership to benefit from their federal subsidies.

**Superintendent's
Report**

Dr. Edwards reported in November Verdant staff volunteered at WA Kids in Transition, Kirk Mathis and Annika Sahota presented at Homage to their volunteers, Verdant hosted a south Snohomish County meeting with social workers to determine the needs of the clients they serve. At the Verdant Community Wellness Center, we hosted a meeting for the Black Leaders Collective and CEO Roundtable. This week Dr. Edwards attended Edmonds Civic Roundtable. Verdant received a certificate of appreciation from WA West African Center. She thanked Leslie Silverman for grant coaching she offered to eight organizations. We can see much stronger proposals with this current cycle of funding applications. In January 2024 Verdant will present a report of facility use at the wellness center and the number of organizations served, etc.

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

**Program
Committee Report**

Conflicts of Interest None.

Spring 2024
Funding Cycle

Ms. Erickson reported the application period for Spring 2024 closed December 14th (E:79:23). There were 47 applications submitted for the Spring 2024 funding cycle. There were three brand new applicants and seven applicants who applied which have not been previously funded by Verdant. Right now, Verdant staff are working on their financial review of completeness. We will provide Commissioners with a bulk PDF of all applications received so they can begin reading through them before they are assigned for scoring.

Commissioner Wilson asked how many applications we had received in Spring 2023. She would also like to know how much we funded last year at this time. She reiterated that the Board's priority is to the hospital district and there may be some difficult decisions made about grant funding.

Dr. Edwards encouraged Commissioners to keep in mind that they heard from other funders at the November Community Health Networking Lunch that they are receiving a record number of grant applications. The cost of everything is going up and organizations are working on getting more funding from many places. She added that Verdant should discuss fine tuning its funding philosophy, not just our strategic priorities.

Commissioner Brennan asked how Verdant can deploy their resources and encourage organizations to apply for federal or other government programs for things like food security.

- Dr. Edwards answered that Verdant's grantwriting consultant, Leslie Silverman, does walk organizations through these other federal funding opportunities when she works with them.

Finance Report

Review Financial
Statements & Cash
Activity

Ms. Simpson presented the financial reports for November 2023 (E:80:23), noting any transactions out of the ordinary, compared to prior month periods.

Authorization of
Payments of
Vouchers and
Payroll

Authorization for payment of vouchers and payroll:
Warrant numbers 16286 through 16332 and J2337 through J2366 for November 2023 for total warrant payments in the amount of \$260,600.70 were presented for approval (E:81:23).

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

Motion was made by Commissioner Knowles, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and passed unanimously to approve the warrants.

Approval of 2024
Salary Schedule

Dr. Edwards presented the proposed 2024 salary schedule for Verdant staff (E:82:23). This is adjusted for 3% cost of living adjustment.

Motion was made by Commissioner Knutsen, seconded by Commissioner Brennan and passed unanimously to approve the 2024 salary schedule.

Public Comments

None.

Executive Session

President Distelhorst closed the meeting for executive session to begin at 9:25am after a short 2-minute break, and will continue through 9:58am. This executive session is to review and consider proposed sale of real estate and to review the performance of a public employee.

Executive session was extended to 10:15am.

Open Session

President Distelhorst reopened the public meeting at 10:15am. He presented Resolution 2023:11 to fix the compensation for Superintendent Edwards. Effective January 1, 2024, annual compensation for Verdant's Superintendent will be \$204,514.

Commissioner Knutsen made a motion to approve RES 2023:11, Commissioner Wilson seconded, Motion passed.

President Distelhorst and Commissioner Wilson will review the annual performance notes with Dr. Edwards sometime after the holidays.

**Commissioner
Comments**

Commissioner Knutsen wished everyone happy holidays.

Commissioner Brennan thanked President Distelhorst and Commissioner Wilson for their leadership over the past two years and looks forward to continuing to work with everyone in 2024. She congratulated the Verdant staff for a great year.

President Distelhorst wished everyone happy holidays. He congratulated Commissioners Wilson and Knutsen for re-election.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m. by President Distelhorst.

Commissioners Meeting
December 20, 2023

ATTEST BY:

DocuSigned by:
JSDistelhorst
483092731B124E1...

President

DocuSigned by:
Karianna Wilson
A28365545A4D4A8...

Secretary