

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

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Special Meeting

**Hybrid: In-Person at Verdant Community Wellness Center and via Zoom
December 7, 2022
5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.**

**Commissioners
Present**

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

Staff

Dr. Lisa Edwards, Superintendent
Leslie Silverman, Interim Director of Community Impact &
Grantmaking
Erin Boehm, Interim Grants Manager
Nancy Budd, Community Social Worker
Riene Simpson, Director of Finance
Kaysi Kelly, Executive Assistant/Office Manager

Guests

Bradley Berg

Call to Order

The special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Hospital District No. 2, Snohomish County, was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Distelhorst.

**Land and
Enslaved People's
Acknowledgement**

President Distelhorst read the acknowledgement.

**Avoiding Conflict
of Interest and
Understanding
Bias**

Mr. Brad Berg provided some legal background on the conflicts of interest and how to comply with these standards (E:146:22). He addressed what the state law requires as being the minimum guidance for conflict of interest. The Board can impose its own additional requirements if desired. Mr. Berg provided examples of "remote interest" which allows some exceptions for conflict of interest, so long as certain requirements are met. The Board adopted a Conflict of Interest policy in 2021 which captures all of the requirements Brad has presented today.

Commissioner Brennan clarified that, as a fulltime employee of University of Washington, would she need to simply abstain from any voting or scoring related to a grant or other financial interest of the District related to University of Washington?

- Mr. Berg answered yes, and disclosure is always the first step in identifying a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Brennan also asked if she would have a conflict for an organization in which she volunteers and/or gives her own personal money to support.

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- Mr. Berg answered that no, this would not be a conflict as she is not receiving any financial interest (she is volunteering her time and she is donating her money with nothing in return).

Commissioner Brennan asked if she is a vendor of an organization who is applying for a grant, would this be considered a conflict.

- Mr. Berg answered that if she is receiving payment as a vendor to this organization, there is no conflict as she is acting as a vendor and not a representative of the District.

Dr. Edwards asked if there is any potential conflict related to the District selling the Value Village property to South County Fire, who is also a grant recipient.

- Mr. Berg answered no, these conflict-of-interest rules are imposed for any financial interests the *Commissioners* have, not for a financial interest of the *District*.

Best Practices and Reviewers Toolbox (including scoring matrix)

Ms. Silverman spoke about how to recognize bias, how to mitigate it, and how to be aware of your blind spots (E:147:22). She encouraged Commissioners and staff who score grants to recognize their biases that may be lurking in the background and influencing decisions (examples include education, skin color, religion, etc.)

- Commissioner Knutsen commented that having bias isn't necessarily a bad thing and could increase your empathy toward a group. Ms. Silverman replied that yes, this is true, and we are not looking to *eliminate* bias. Rather, our goal is to be aware of how it can influence our thinking and decisions.

Commissioner Knutsen commented that she sometimes struggles with seeing the need of a particular grant applicant's educational program if it does not necessarily align with one of Verdant's priorities, but still the grant applicant has identified it as a specific need of its constituents. She is curious if this would be considered a bias in that she doesn't feel the need to approve a particular grant based on, perhaps, her own lack of understanding of the needs of that community/organization who made the request. There was discussion of how to consider community needs when making funding decisions.

The meeting participants watched a YouTube video about Implicit Bias (5 minutes) and gauged reactions to the video

- Commissioner Brennan responded that she thinks about when bias might come up in her own life and she thinks about any time that her children would be harmed would be a time that she certainly speaks up.
- Commissioner Knutsen responded that it was interesting to see the group in the video respond to the trigger words with

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the lowest common denominator. She herself thinks more positively about others so the biases are not as negative as the examples in the video.

- President Distelhorst commented that it is difficult to see what your own implicit biases are because you don't typically broadcast them, or even know they are there.

Grant Cycle Data and What Next? (Workflow and Timeline)

Ms. Boehm presented suggestions for the review process (E:148:22). She recommends scoring each application on its own, based on what they submitted for this particular application and not previously known background information. She added that it is important not to discuss applications with each other during the scoring process. Commissioners and staff will not see each other's scores before they submit their own score.

Ms. Boehm provided a brief demonstration of a Fluxx application and where to find helpful resources along the scoring process. The goal is for each application to have at least 3 staff scores and 2 Commissioner scores.

Ms. Silverman reported that there were 45 submitted applications, 8 of which were new applicants.

Commissioner Knutsen mentioned that in the past the commissioners would meet new applicants. Given the number of new applicants in this funding cycle, that may not be feasible to schedule.

Proposed Review Panel Approaches

Leslie and Lisa will review *all* applications. All other staff reviewers will split reviewing by priority area. Staff will meet on 12/19 and bring scores together to then assign Commissioners on 12/20 to score applications with a score of 70% or higher.

Dr. Edwards presented three different panel approaches for Commissioners to decide how they would like to proceed with scoring.

1. By Strategic Priority: repurpose committee meetings in January to review applications by priority in a panel discussion.
2. By Committee: each committee is given 15 applications to review across all priority areas.
3. Assigned applications: each application is reviewed by 2 Commissioners (pairs) and each Commissioner will be assigned

Commissioners agreed to score by priority area, using the existing 2022 committees as their scoring panels.

- Commissioner Knowles warns Commissioners about comparing applications in one priority with the other

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applicants in that priority and therefore not reviewing objectively.

- Dr. Edwards recommends extending the January committee meetings to over 1.5 hours each so there is sufficient time for panel discussion.

Ms. Simpson inquired with Ms. Silverman and Ms. Boehm how she should proceed if the applicant's financial reports do not meet our requirements.

- Commissioner Knowles responded that if applicants have submitted incomplete documentation, even after all the guidance that Verdant staff have provided, then they would be denied and provided reasoning on why they are not advancing to scoring.

Staff will communicate via email on Monday 12/19 when Commissioners are ready to begin scoring their assigned applications.

Mock Proposal Discussion and Questions

Mock grant application was not covered in this meeting, example is in PowerPoint presentation for Commissioners (E:149:22, slides 31-32).

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Knutsen thanked staff for their work in preparing this guidance and getting resources ready for Commissioners to use as they score.

Dr. Edwards thanked everyone for their work in preparing this guidance and she is happy we were able to provide so many communications to the public on our new priorities and technical assistance.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m. by President Distelhorst.

ATTEST BY:

DocuSigned by:
JSDistelhorst
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President

DocuSigned by:
Karianna Wilson
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Secretary