

**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 17, 2010 @ 6:30 PM
LIBRARY MEETING ROOM
MINUTES**

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Timothy L. Joyce called the Council Special Meeting to order at 6:30 pm on February 17, 2010 in the Library Meeting Room.

B. ROLL CALL

Present for roll call were *Mayor Tim Joyce*, Council members *Robert Henrichs*, *David Allison*, *EJ Cheshier*, *Jim Kacsh*, *James Kallander*, and *David Reggiani*. Council member *Bret Bradford* was absent. Also present were City Manager *Mark Lynch* and City Clerk *Lila Koplín*.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

M/Reggiani S/Henrichs to approve agenda.

Vote on motion: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent (Bradford). Motion carried.

D. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST- None.

E. COMMUNICATIONS BY AND PETITIONS FROM VISITORS

1. Audience comments regarding agenda items.

Phil Hess stated that he lives in Cordova Alaska, and works at the Ilanka Community Health Center and the Cordova Community Health Center. He stated that the special meeting with this agenda undermined the unanimous resolution of the Health Services Board that was made in December that supported an objective evaluation process for the CEO. While there has been a small group of detractors, Mr. Bryant's performance has not been formally re-evaluated since April 2009. Since that time, the Board has been split on Bryant's performance. They finally agreed on a set of performance measures that could be used to objectively measure his performance, and that re-evaluation is to be done in the near future. *Hess* urges the Council to allow the established process to continue, with perhaps the removal of two of the Council members from the hospital board.

Sherie Stramecki stated that she lives in Cordova and is the Nursing Director at CCMC. She is concerned about the direction a minority of the Hospital Board members are heading. For example last week at the Board meeting, two recently dismissed staff members, with active grievances were allowed to speak during the public comments period. While the reasons of their dismissal may have been clear in the executive

session, the failure of the Board to follow their own existing bylaws regarding human resources and grievance issues ultimately allowed for the open expression of personal animosity and injection of general negativity into the discussion. Board members that have selected to follow their own bylaws, negatively affects clinical and administrative morale. The hospital's team of professionals have worked hard to improve the quality of services at CCMC. For example, in early 2009, the hospital's rating was two-stars. Yet, working together as a team, including Dave Bryant, CCMC now has a four-star state rating. She urged people to talk with her about the changes they have made, and the direction they are moving.

John Renner, 6 mile, CRH, stated that he supports Dave Bryant's retention as the CEO of CCMC. He is a current Health Services Board member. He would like the Council to give CCMC's new direction a chance. He stated that the Hospital Board has been micro-managing the hospital. They voted Monday night that the Board's direction to the CEO must come with majority vote or consensus. The Board upheld the decision. The majority of the Board has felt that there has been too much interference with Bryant's ability to effectively manage CCMC. The Board also voted on performance standards with a six-month time frame. They have set measurable goals and he feels that they are heading in the right direction. He stated that any further information would be provided in executive session, if given that opportunity.

Chris Stramecki stated that he is a PA at CCMC and also a resident of Cordova. He stated that in the three years he has been here, he has seen tremendous improvements at the hospital. He is very concerned as a provider, and as a resident, that the actions undertaken by select members of the Board will do nothing to improve the hospital's reputation across the state.

Bill Crawford stated that he works at the hospital and lives in Cordova. He has been here five months and has tried to make it to most of the Hospital Board meetings. He stated that he has worked many places, but nowhere that is as completely divided in the administrative staff as Cordova. He stated that he does not know why Bryant continues to stay, as half of his staff continually works against him, rather than to support the administration and the hospital. The staff is divided, and it's not a healthy environment. He stated he's never heard anyone on the Board too concerned about patient care, they are just focused on one topic. There are too many other requirements Bryant is forced to accomplish other than focusing on making this a hospital, instead of trying to get friends hired on.

Chris Johnston 903 Le Fevre, stated that she has worked at the hospital since 2002. She has seen many CEO's come and go, but it would be nice to have stability. She questions why the Board is divided; whether it's lack of training, unclear job duties, or the policies. She stated that there are many things that are not followed. Having been on a Board herself, she knows the procedures, and she does not see that happening within this hospital. Lately, the staff has been increasingly happy, but there is still a lot of tension because of the administration. Bryant needs to be able to do his job, and have his evaluation done properly.

Robin Lydecker stated that she works in radiology at the CCMC. She stated that she bought a house last year because she felt she would stay in Cordova a while longer, because the hospital seemed to be doing well, and under stable leadership. The hospital's new four-star rating has been a lot of work for everyone. She thinks that stability is important. She stated if Bryant needs a little more training on how to be a CEO, then that's what the City should do. Furthermore, she was in Cordova in 2005-2006 when the State came in and told the Board that they were micro-managing, and that was not the thing for them to do. **Lydecker** stated that atmosphere of the hospital has improved since Bryant has been there. The City should give Bryant their support, and pull together to work as a team.

Bill Brown stated that he has been an RN for almost 30 years. He was terminated from CCMC for substandard nursing performance, and was not informed as to what that performance was, or was not. He has asked for documentation concerning that, and for copies of notes from Mary and Bryant when he complained of the on-going harassment by Sherie Stramecki. He stated that Mary and Bryant are incompetent when it comes to personnel management. They have done damage to the community and the hospital. He stated that both of them need to be relieved.

Dawn Renner stated that she is the administrator's assistant and Human Resources for the hospital. She stated that Bryant has been doing a great job bringing in providers. So far, he has brought in a new provider when the others quit, as well as two great PA's, a psychiatrist, a Sound Alternatives director, IT equipment, and grant money. He works very hard, does everything fairly, and investigates any complaint thoroughly. He has brought back the credibility with the State, which the hospital didn't have for quite a while. The billing process is starting to turn around, and should continue with Bryant instead of hiring someone new. The long-term care beds have been full. **Renner** states that she believes Bryant is headed in a positive direction, and the City should give him a chance.

Tess Ritter stated that she was employed at CCMC. She stated that they need to keep Bryant because he is doing a good job, and they are happy. They are working as a team and would really like the City to give him a chance.

Rebecca Shortman stated that she was the grant-proposal coordinator at CCMC. She just moved here from Anchorage. She stated that she is not completely aware of all the political situations going on, but does know that Bryant is a very compassionate leader and good guy. She supports him.

Annalyn Mapili stated that she worked at CCMC as the Unit Coordinator. She is here to tell the Council that Bryant is a good administrator and good at his job. She has been there three years; and thinks that Bryant should keep his job.

Cynthia Ebb stated that she was a recently terminated employee. She filed a grievance and asked for an investigation. She was not afforded it. She agrees with Mr. Brown in

that there is harassment going on, and there are clicks between the PA's and Bryant, and his wife. She stated that she has been harassed by Sherie Stramecki for the past twelve months, and she voiced that concern to Bryant. She stated that Bryant ignored it. *Ebb* stated that if the hospital is hiring for a Director, it needs to be an open process. She stated that Stramecki is not qualified for that position. Most of what Bryant relies on is what she says, and he does not thoroughly investigate the situation.

Pam Crawford stated that they moved from Georgia five months ago on a leap of faith. She stated that everything that has been stated about Bryant that is positive is true. They are happy here under his leadership. They stated that if the leadership changes, they may have to look into something else because the political atmosphere at the hospital is difficult to deal with. They have never experienced the same thing anywhere else.

Mayor Joyce asked if there were any more comments. Seeing none, he stated that they would be going into executive session to discuss some processes and procedures with their attorney. Afterwards, they would come back into session under new business.

F. EXECUTIVE SESSION

2. Attorney-Client communications regarding evaluation of Health Services Administrator

M/Henrichs S/Cheshier to go into executive session, subjects which may be discussed are matters which by law, Municipal Charter or Code are required to be confidential, specifically to discuss Attorney-Client communications regarding evaluation of the Health Services Administrator.

Vote on motion: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent (Bradford). Motion carried.

Mayor Joyce convened the executive session at 6:55 pm and reconvened the Special Meeting at 7:15 pm.

G. NEW BUSINESS

3. Evaluation and continued employment of Health Services Administrator

Mayor Joyce brought the session into order, and stated that there was a request by the Health Services Administrator that the session be open.

M/Cheshier S/Kacsh to accept the March 2009 evaluation of the Hospital Administrator as the evaluation of the Council.

Allison stated that in support of the Health Services Board evaluation process, and just for the record, he would like to read 3.9 of the City Charter, which is regarding the hospital. After reading that section, he stated that the administrator does not work for the Council on a day-to-day basis, but instead the Hospital Board. Therefore, their evaluation as a group should be accepted by the Council, and he will support it.

Vote on motion: 6 yeas, 0 nays 1 absent (Bradford). Henrichs – yes; Kallander – yes; Allison – yes; Cheshier – yes; Reggiani – yes; Kacsh – yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Joyce stated that the next issue under new business is continued employment of the Health Services Administrator. He stated that at the current time, the Administrator is working month to month, as his contract is up, which allows for a thirty day notice. It's up to the Council to decide if they want to continue that, terminate that, or negotiate a new contract.

M/Cheshier S/Kallander to terminate the current Health Services Administrator without cause, effective today, which would include severance pay at the current salary rate through April 30, 2010.

Allison stated that he does not support the motion. In his opinion, the Council does not have a current representative on the Health Services Board. About two years ago, the Mayor appointed Mr. Kallander and Mr. Cheshier as additional representatives to sit on the Health Services Board (HSB). However, the City Code is clear that there should be at least one designated Council member on the Board, and it has never been changed. Secondly, it's on the agenda to get a report from the HSB at each Regular Meeting. Both of the two representatives have been giving these reports, and have given no report to lead the Council to believe that there is a problem with the Health Services Administrator. As a unit the HSB supports the Administrator, and has an evaluation scheduled for next month. He doesn't think it's proper to look at a year old evaluation that's mostly positive, and make a motion for termination with no cause. He thinks it's irresponsible of the Council, and he would not support that motion.

Henrichs stated that recently the hospital, the Council, and the NVE agreed on a MOU to have everyone work together on health care. He thinks the City needs to give it a chance. He is willing to let the process unfold with the HSB's evaluation next month.

Kacsh stated that he agrees with Mr. Allison, in that he cannot terminate without reason. He would need more input from the HSB and a current review. He does not support the motion.

Mayor Joyce stated that Bryant could make a comment if he wished to do so.

Bryant stated that given the motion he needed to say something. He felt that the HSB violated his due process rights, and he requests a fair hearing on the issue if it's going to move towards termination. Furthermore, the initial evaluation that was done was four months late. Then the HSB met one time after that, and then did not meet again for four more months despite a City ordinance requiring a monthly meeting. He has been given contradicting directions by members on the HSB, particularly the HSB president. Since some of the directives come from the individual rather than the Board, he was unsure if they were even lawful. He stated that he believes his due process rights have been violated, and is not an appropriate direction of the Board. He is requesting a fair hearing with the Council, as well as a legal representative.

Kallander stated that he was not going to support this motion, in view of the comments from the Council. He wishes to proceed to the evaluation on March 1st, 2010.

Cheshier stated that he agreed with Kallander to go through with the evaluation on March 1st, 2010.

Bryant stated that he had an additional comment. He stated that after his contract expired in November, the Board stated that he would be going month to month, then every three months, and then every six months. They finally voted for every six months. He would like to know for certain what kind of extension he has been given based on the minutes and the procedures. *Mayor Joyce* said that they would look at those minutes, and run everything by the attorney.

Vote on motion: 0 yeas, 6 nays, 1 absent (Bradford). Kallander – no; Allison – no; Cheshier – no; Reggiani – no; Kacsh – no; Henrichs – no. Motion failed.

H. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Kacsh stated that a future solution would be to empower the Health Services Board. This means that they are elected, similar to the School Board. The downside would be that they are still getting tax payer dollars, so they would still have to answer to the Council. It's something to look into.

Allison stated that he echoes Kacsh's comments. The community needs to do something to remove health services from under City control. He thinks it would be better run by a private organization or private electorate board by people who really care about health care. He would support whatever it would take to go along those lines. He would also like to see the minutes from the past year from the Health Services Board in a packet.

Henrichs stated the medical center has been a huge problem for many years, for many reasons. He stated that everyone is at fault, including the Council and the City Manager. He explicated that future evaluations of the City Manager would look at how well he is handling the mess at the hospital. *Henrichs* cited that Petersburg and Wrangell can run their hospital on patient revenues, and if they can do it, Cordova can do it.

I. ADJOURNMENT

M/Reggiani S/Kacsh to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:26 pm.

Vote on motion: 6 yeas 0 nays 1 absent (Bradford). Motion carried.

Approved: April 7, 2010

Attest:


Erika Empey, Deputy City Clerk

