



AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF ROCK HAVEN

Minutes from November 8, 2023

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Mawhinney calls the hybrid Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Rock Haven meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Department of Public Works.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT – Chair Mawhinney, Supervisor Whitledge, Supervisor Homan, Community Member Casares, and Community Member Kolste

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT – Supervisor Leavy and Supervisor Rashkin

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT – Virginia Johnson, Administrative Secretary; Dave Froeber, Facilities Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT – Josh Smith, County Administrator; Amy Spoden, Director of Human Resources; Supervisor Mary Beaver

APPROVE AGENDA – Community Member Kolste moves for approval of the agenda, second Supervisor Whitledge. APPROVED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Supervisor Whitledge moves for approval of October 11, 2023 minutes, second by Supervisor Rashkin. APPROVED.

REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

DISCUSSION OF ROCK HAVEN RETENTION SURVEY RESULTS – Amy Spoden, Director of Human Resources shares the results of the survey.

Dave Froeber, Facilities Superintendent joins the zoom call at 3:04 p.m.

Amy states the survey went to all employees of Rock Haven. Community Member Kolste asks what percentage of employees responded. Amy confirms that of 120 FTE employees, 61 responded anonymously.

Supervisor Homan asks for clarification on overtime. Amy explains that employees who qualify can receive time and a half pay for pick up shifts and any hours over 8 in a day and over 40 in a week. Supervisor Homan states that some part time employees would make more money than full time if they picked up enough shifts. Amy confirms this is correct.

Dave Froeber leaves the zoom call at 3:12 p.m.

Community Member Kolste asks if we have seen employees disincentivized working full time since this resolution was passed. Amy confirms that some staff have reduced their FTE. Community Member Kolste asks if that contributes to the employee shortage. Amy states that employees are likely working the same amount. She clarifies that the current shortage and mandated shifts are a combination of employees with extensive benefit time and job vacancies.

Supervisor Homan asks why we are having difficulties retaining employees. Amy answers that it is a combination of factors. She continues that no single issue will solve our problem. Supervisor Homan asks what the standout issue is. Amy replies that if we wish to use our building and its staff as a recommendation to work at Rock Haven, we need to work on the morale within the building. Happy employees act as our best recruiters.

Chair Mawhinney asks how we can do that. Community Member Kolste notes that survey responses favored increased incentives. Amy cautions that if we continue to add or increase incentives, eventually they will pay more than agency staff. She continues that we pay the employment agencies roughly three times more for each employee they provide.

Community Member Kolste notes that staffing for nursing homes is a global issue. Amy confirms. She notes that we are in talks with Blackhawk Tech to allow Rock Haven to run a CNA class at the beginning of the year. Amy cautions that if they do not have positive interactions with other staff or management, these new hires will not stay. She continues that pay and morale must come together to retain employees.

Supervisor Homan states we need to make employees feel more appreciated for their time. He states that compensation is at least a part of that, and it should be reviewed. Amy states that department heads were involved in the wage study in October 2022 and provided their input. She states that wages will always be a conversation because they everchanging.

Community Member Kolste asks about the tax levy. Josh states if the recommended budget passes, the subsidy for the 2024 budget would be 4 million dollars after the rate increases. Josh notes that is still high compared to other nursing homes across the state.

Community Member Casares asks if recent immigrants with a visa could apply. Amy states they do not need a social security number to apply, however they must have authorization to work in the United States. Community Member Casares states that if we were able to inform immigrants of the CNA program, there would be a lot of interest. Amy states we can add them to the affirmative action contacts list if we have contact information. Josh and Community Member Kolste agree that is a good suggestion.

The committee discusses Rock Haven morale. Josh states morale and base wages have been long-standing issues. McGrath was brought in with the intention to remain objective in creating the new wage grid. Josh states that incentives are a third thing to consider. It's

important to identify what incentives the staff are interested in, and to focus on those incentives. Josh continues that the survey revealed that time and a half is popular with staff.

Supervisor Homan asks if there are any long-term employment rewards. Amy states there are no bonuses for employees over a year. Supervisor Homan suggests looking into that. Chair Mawhinney asks if other departments have any incentives for long-term employment. Amy states they do not. Josh reminds the committee that if only one group of employees are given a benefit, it creates a morale issue. He also reminds the committee that Rock Haven is a part of the county and there are employees with similar positions in other departments.

Supervisor Homan asks if we largely have difficulties with retaining hourly employees. Josh states that depends on the department. Nurse supervisors and managers at Rock Haven often need to pick up shifts. Amy confirms that nursing supervisors would be considered management and would normally be exempt, however the County has chosen to pay them similar to a floor RN. This includes time and a half for overtime and holidays. Amy states that we do not have unique job titles for Rock Haven employees; for example, there are nurse supervisors in other departments.

Community Member Kolste asks if the wage grid compared medical staff with staff elsewhere. Amy states the wage study looked at a number of different categories. McGrath compared those to the different jobs within the county and then to comparable jobs within the public sector. Amy notes that it was harder to compare it to private sector as that information is not freely available. Community Member Kolste asks how long the wage grid has been in effect. Amy states it went into effect on October 1st. We do not yet know the impact of the grid at this time.

Chair Mawhinney asks for next steps. Community Member Casares states that the flat rate increase may only create more issues. He notes that the survey shows referrals are not working. Chair Mawhinney asks how many CNA students are enrolled in the Blackhawk program. Amy states that the class maximum at Blackhawk Tech is 14 students. Community Member Casares asks if there would be a language barrier for any students whose first language is not English. Amy states she can reach out to Blackhawk Tech to see how they have handled that in the past.

Chair Mawhinney asks if the students who left gave a reason. Amy states that it is a combination of things. Some students do not complete the class or take the CNA test. She continues that some students graduate and work elsewhere. Josh confirms that there are some locations offering a \$10,000 signing bonus. Community Member Kolste asks what the cost of the CNA course is. Amy states that it is roughly around \$700.

Community Member Casares asks if our medical benefits are competitive. Amy confirms they are. Josh states that medical benefits are not a large draw for younger employees who are still on their parent's insurance. Amy confirms that is correct. Community Member Casares asks what the starting wage is for a CNA. Amy states she will get that information.

Supervisor Homan asks if the national cost of living is factored into wages. Josh states that there is a cost-of-living adjustment and step increases for employees every year. He continues that for most people, the new wage grid provided more step increases in wages than they had previously.

Chair Mawhinney states she would like teambuilding consultation to be added to next meeting's agenda.

Community Member Kolste leaves the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Chair Mawhinney asks if there are any other items to add for next meeting. Josh suggests adding incentives to the next agenda for discussion.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS –

NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME – December 13, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Department of Public Works.

ADJOURNMENT – Supervisor Whitledge moves to adjourn at 4:17 p.m., second by Supervisor Homan. SO ORDERED.

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Johnson

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.