

Minutes

Point Roberts Public Hospital District

Wednesday October 12, 2022

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Stephen Falk, Commissioner (via Zoom)

Attending:

Commissioners: Stephen Falk, Sara Oggel, Noel Newbolt
Superintendent: Barbara Wayland
Financial Advisor: Paulette Ladner
Recording Secretary: Farrah Carsten

Introduction of Guests:

Dr. Sean Bozorgzadeh, Virginia Lester, Alexandra Wiley, Bill Zidel, Vic Riley, Patrick Grubb – APB

Public Comment: Vic Riley (one of the founding commissioners of the Point Roberts Public Hospital District), read in this month's paper that there was an operating deficit at the clinic. PRPHD is almost 20 years old and the clinic has been here a little longer than that. PRPHD never had doctor's staffing the clinic until SuperTrack started doing that recently. A survey was done within the community about the services that were provided by the prior clinic operator, Unity Care. The district wanted to find out what people thought about the services, why they were using it or why they were not. One of the most common reasons for not using the clinic was that people needed a primary care doctor and the clinic was only being staffed by nurse practitioners. One of the most common complaints about the services was that Unity Care was very reluctant to provide urgent care. With SuperTrack there is more access to additional and better services, expanded hours for urgent care and telemedicine. Vic stated in his opinion the clinic has three of the best doctors in the region. Given that the clinic is giving a lot more and better services recently he feels that the hospital district should be willing to pay for it if need be. If SuperTrack is running a deficit and taxes need to be raised a little bit to make sure the level of service is sustained, he hopes the district is willing to do that. Vic is also in support of the Super Track suggestion for a 2-year contract period because he feels having that stability and predictability is important for the level of services SuperTrack is providing.

Approval of Prior Minutes:

Approval of minutes from previous PRPHD Regular Meeting (September 14, 2022)

Motion: To approve minutes as presented. **Motion carried.**

Financial Report:



Financial Report:

Paulette Ladner presented the financial report. Current month payables \$16,484.47 / Payroll is \$3,233.00

There are no items to note.

Bills presented for approval as follows:

Bills paid:

- 10/03/22 – SuperTrack Urgent Care PLLC = \$16,000
- 09/30/22 – Point Roberts Bookkeeping = \$224
- 09/30/22 – Bellingham Business Machine = \$65.94
- 10/04/22 – Whatcom County FD #5 = \$107.01
- 10/01/22 – Whidbey Telecom = \$37.52
- 09/30/22 – Point Roberts Press = \$50

Payroll as follows:

- Heather Dixon – Cleaner = \$560
- Barb Wayland – Superintendent = \$1,827
- Farrah Carsten – Secretary = \$504
- Stephen Falk – Commissioner = \$114
- Sara Oggel – Commissioner = \$114
- Noel Newbolt – Commissioner = \$114

Motion: To approve warrants and payroll for prior months' expenditures as presented. **Motion carried.**

Paulette received the PO Box invoice (\$106 for 6 months or \$112 for a year) and is prepared to issue payment by the end of October. Approved to pay for the full year = \$112

Clinic Medical Director Update:

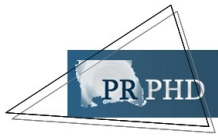


| DATE | OP | LABS | PTNS | EXAMS | PTVS | GEN | HEALTH | STAFF | TOTAL |
|-------|----|------|------|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
| 8 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 9 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 10 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 11 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 12 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 13 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 14 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 15 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 16 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 17 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 18 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 19 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 20 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 21 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 22 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 23 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 24 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 25 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 26 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 27 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 28 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 29 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| 30 | 22 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 24 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 720 |

| DATE | OP | LABS | PTNS | EXAMS | PTVS | GEN | HEALTH | STAFF | TOTAL |
|----------|-----|------|------|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
| January | 28 | 28 | 28 | | | | | | 84 |
| February | 28 | 28 | 28 | | | | | | 84 |
| March | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| April | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 90 |
| May | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| June | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 90 |
| July | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| August | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| TOTAL | 243 | 243 | 243 | | | | | | 720 |

| DATE | OP | LABS | PTNS | EXAMS | PTVS | GEN | HEALTH | STAFF | TOTAL |
|-----------|-----|------|------|-------|------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
| January | 28 | 28 | 28 | | | | | | 84 |
| February | 28 | 28 | 28 | | | | | | 84 |
| March | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| April | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 90 |
| May | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| June | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 90 |
| July | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| August | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| September | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 90 |
| October | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| November | 30 | 30 | 30 | | | | | | 90 |
| December | 31 | 31 | 31 | | | | | | 93 |
| TOTAL | 365 | 365 | 365 | | | | | | 1095 |

September numbers were higher than last year. Overall, still on track for growth.



Dr. Bozorgzadeh and Dr. Evans went through the entire pandemic taking care of patients, often with or suspected Covid. Not once did they themselves become infected. Dr. Bozorgzadeh was exposed to Covid by his seatmate on his return flight from California on Wednesday. The seatmate was not masked and obviously ill and coughing. Dr. Sean was masked and fully vaccinated, but still contracted Covid. Dr. Evans was not on the flight but she contracted Covid after Dr. Bozorgzadeh. Both were treated with Paxlovid and recovering at the time of the meeting. Virginia Lester, ARNP, covered the clinic during their illness.

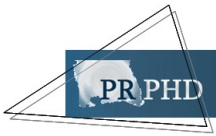
Covid is a very serious illness but Dr. Bozorgzadeh noticed within hours that Paxlovid was working and he had zero side effects. The clinic is approved for free Paxlovid. Covid is highly contagious and Dr. Bozorgzadeh stated we are not done with Covid, in his conclusion. He advised for everyone in the community to be cautious especially the elderly and people with multiple comorbid conditions. Dr. Bozorgzadeh will be back at the clinic on Tuesday and Dr. Evans will return on Wednesday.

The clinic has received the flu vaccines and will start administering to the high-risk patients first. Two more flu clinics will be coordinated with the team when Dr. Bozorgzadeh returns on Tuesday.

Noel asked if the flu vaccines were the higher doses for the elderly patients. Dr. Bozorgzadeh said it is not the Quadrivalent flu vaccine. The vaccine the clinic ordered has the broadest range of patients, basically the youngest to the oldest. It is recommended by the CDC for the geriatric population. The one issue with the vaccines and the clinic is that it is hard to bring in multiple different vaccines because it is expensive and it is hard to determine how many are needed.

Logistically it is much more difficult to manage. For patients that feel more strongly towards receiving the Quadrivalent vaccine, they can get it in Blaine or at one of the pharmacies in Bellingham.

Stephen sent a note to Dr. Bozorgzadeh and Alex about a resident that was becoming ill and wanted to receive confirmation that Paxlovid was on hand at the clinic but he did not receive a response. Dr. Bozorgzadeh said the clinic does have it and they are prescribing it patients that meet the criteria. He asked that everyone spread the word and if anyone needs it, he would rather start the medication early. The reason being is because of the way the virus behaves. Once you become infected it replicates and by day 5 or 6 the virus is at the maximum peak and causes a lot of damage to the lungs. Paxlovid interferes with the replication of the virus so it reduces the load and works very fast. Alex added that if anyone gets information from the public, to have them call the clinic directly so they can address their needs. Stephen readdressed his issue about not receiving a response to his email. Dr. Bozorgzadeh found the email which was still marked unread and apologized stating it was an oversight. He recommended that if an email is sent and there is no response to call the clinic directly, if still no response call the Bellingham clinic directly so that things do not fall through the cracks. Email is not reliable for Dr. Bozorgzadeh.

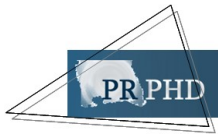


Superintendent's Report:

- Barbara posted a notice regarding the clinic hours and services provided (approved by Alex), on Point ePost and Next Door. Shivé updated the outgoing message on the clinic voicemail to reflect the clinic hours and how to access urgent care through SuperTrack Lakeway when the Point Roberts clinic is closed. The PRPHD website has been updated to reflect the changes as well.
- Next month the Budget needs to be approved for 2023 (deadline is end of the month of November). Barbara just received the pertinent documents from the county and she will send them out as soon as possible for everyone to review and hopefully it can be approved at the regular November 9th meeting and not have to set up a special meeting for the approval.
- The large insurance check that was cashed by the wrong company has been resolved. It took many months but the county working with Key Bank was able to get the money refunded back and it is in the account. It did not appear that there was any open attempt at fraud. It simply went to a mailbox that is for another big company that processes all their checks through that PO Box and it was put in the batch, run through, and deposited.
- This weekend the Fire Department in cooperation with the clinic will be providing the Bivalent booster to members of the community. Per Chief Carleton approximately 200 people are expected. It starts at 1 pm on Saturday and it will be on a first come first serve basis.
- Barbara received a call from Shannon earlier this week to say the same things Vic Riley mentioned and how pleased they are. One thing she mentioned was that unlike so many places in the county you can get an appointment quickly if you need to see a doctor at the clinic.
- Emily at the Parks Board did a huge favor by setting up the same ZOOM meeting links for every meeting thru to next year.

Other:

Request by SuperTrack to amend contract rollover clause to two years (tabled previous meeting): Stephen started off by saying that there was a brief discussion at last month's meeting but Noel was not present so it was tabled for today's meeting when all 3 commissioners were present. The issue that Dr. Bozorgzadeh described a few months ago was a contracting issue from SuperTrack's point of view. It would be awkward if the agreement was being terminated and would be out of sync with the contractual obligation that SuperTrack would have with the people that are contracted by SuperTrack to provide services.



Stephen expressed again that going from a 1-year contract to a 2-year contract would only slightly mitigate that issue. It would come up again in the second year of the cycle as it would in the first year. The extra year would give some breathing room but Stephen feels it would not actually solve that problem. It is beneficial to have flexibility for both sides not that the district would do anything with that flexibility most likely. One could argue the opposite that both sides would have benefit for being tied in together subject to some gross event that would be grounds for a termination for cause. Stephen's position remains the same and he proposes that the district sticks with the current arrangement.

Noel stated that her position the last time was keeping things status quo however after listening to Dr. Bozorgzadeh she has second thoughts. If it's easier for the clinic to propose to employees coming in that they have a 2-year contract versus the 1-year contract it made more sense because of the difficulty in finding people to work.

Stephen explained the concern from SuperTrack's perspective is not so much the length of the contract it's more that they're on a yearly basis and could be left holding the contract with someone that they can't make use of if for some reason the district or SuperTrack were to choose not to renew the 1-year agreement.

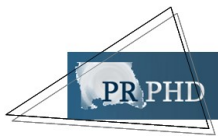
Noel felt that if it gives SuperTrack the comfort level they need, she is willing to go for that because her viewpoint is shifting. She understands how hard it is to get staffing needs met.

Sara has given much thought about it and her opinion is to leave things the way they are currently and assess it next year.

Dr. Bozorgzadeh stated that whatever is decided he will respect the decision. He did want everyone to know that the decision being made will have consequences. He feels it sends a message to the team about how SuperTrack is being viewed. Is it a partnership and do you respect that they do things to try and make things easier so that the staff can do their work. The doctor said Stephen has said several times that for him it does not really matter and it's SuperTrack asking for it because it makes a difference for them. Stephen interjected and stated that was not his point and asked Dr. Bozorgzadeh to proceed.

Dr. Bozorgzadeh asked Stephen what his reservation or objection is, how would it hurt the commission if the contract were to be for 2 years.

Stephen said the primary issue is that it made sense the way the contract was originally negotiated, the initial period of 2 years to make sure that the provider has time and commitment to get fully engrossed in the system, get set up and not have to worry about anything happening.



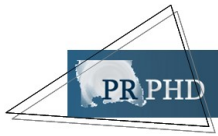
After that, the 1-year renewal would be kept in place for many years as it was with the previous provider as well as the current one. It provides the flexibility for both sides, there is absolutely no threat of trying to terminate.

Dr. Bozorgzadeh asked again what the hesitation is of having a 2-year term. Stephen responded he has not heard an explanation yet as to why a 2-year arrangement ultimately solves the problem that SuperTrack is concerned about. Stephen thinks that if it is changed to a 2-year term SuperTrack will have the same issue in the second year of the 2-year arrangement as they would have in the first year.

Dr. Bozorgzadeh felt that Stephen answered his question with a question, which he acknowledges. SuperTrack is the provider of the service and the district is the receiver of the service. SuperTrack must put in capital budget; they must ensure they have staff and they do have staffing shortages. They do know it is difficult to find staff especially for Point Roberts, it is very challenging. They must entice people to make sure they are secure, if staff are told in their contract that if SuperTrack loses its contract with Point Roberts that they would lose their job, they may choose a more attractive option. It has a significant impact on SuperTrack's ability to budget further along and to be able to attract more people and frankly to feel more secure in the relationship with the district.

The district did not know SuperTrack and they had to come in to prove themselves to the district and the community. SuperTrack's opinion is that there is a right way to do medicine and every other way. They have taken the initial hits and absorbed the extra costs to get the clinic up and running with the help of everybody. They have gone through a pandemic and pulled things together and the doctor feels like this is sending a message back to them that the district is still on the fence with SuperTrack and do not want to make a longer commitment. Dr. Bozorgzadeh understands the district has other options and so does SuperTrack. If the district takes this path, his takeaway is that this is a business relationship for the commission and is not a partnership or relationship that goes beyond that. He feels that the commission could do better for the community because it is hard out there and SuperTrack has overdelivered based on their agreements that they have. If the commission decides they are comfortable with the way things are, SuperTrack will accept that but perhaps they will explore other opportunities closer to home especially in regards to dealing with the commute and going through two borders. He does not think that would be good for the residents in Point Roberts. It is more about the message they are receiving.

Stephen responded that he is not threatening SuperTrack in anyway but he felt that Dr. Bozorgzadeh issued one. Dr. Bozorgzadeh stated it is not a threat but he felt that if he is saying it makes their life easier and better to try to staff the clinic and Stephen's response is it does not matter and to leave things how they are it tells him that the district believes SuperTrack is doing just fine.

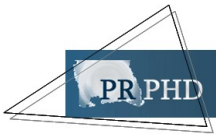


Stephen made clear the point he was addressing about the staffing issue is the one the doctor originally mentioned as the rationale for his proposal for the contract term to change. Dr. Bozorgzadeh said all he hears is that Stephen does not believe it affects them and he stops at that because he spoke the truth and he does not need to convince Stephen. Stephen answered that the doctor does need to convince him in the way that Stephen himself has tried to make the point on each time he has brought this up over the last three meetings he believes.

What Stephen took from his comment several months ago is that the reason why the doctor was proposing this was because the current arrangement creates the automatic problem that the doctor was describing as that he could be left with stranded costs essentially because of a contract that he would enter into with a provider for the clinic. Dr. Bozorgzadeh agreed with Stephen's understanding of the issue but said Stephen followed up with that he did not believe it was a problem. Stephen clarified that he does believe it is a problem but he does not believe this is the solution or at least that it is a partial solution. Technically a 10-year contract would be much better because the doctor could do 1-year contracts with the providers and it would only become an issue at the 10th year. By changing it from a 1 year to a 2 year it does diminish it somewhat but it only delays the problem until the next year. The same conceptual issue exists and the reason why Stephen prefers the current arrangement is because it essentially keeps the pressure on both sides to provide good service. The district needs to pay their bills, SuperTrack provides great medical service.

Dr. Bozorgzadeh pointed out that Stephen stated he wants to maintain pressure on SuperTrack to provide good service. The doctor compared it to investing in property investments to lease and how one would want a longer term in order to get some of the investment back. If they are given a 2-year contract it does help their situation although in the 2nd year there might be some synchrony but it still makes it better for them. He mentioned that the district did not have to pressure SuperTrack to bring out three doctors and the contract did not enforce SuperTrack to do that. SuperTrack did that because they felt it was the right thing and they wanted to give good service. Dr. Bozorgzadeh reiterated that having a 2-year contract does help them and instead of implying they need to be kept on their toes he pointed out that they have done better than what was expected of them and what they were contractually obligated to. The doctor apologized if he came across argumentative but he had to honestly present SuperTrack's side of it. He restated that he does respect whatever the decision is.

The way the contract is written is for the end of the year per Sara. It is a hot topic and has been discussed for several months and she would like to reassess it next year. No one is looking at making changes with SuperTrack, at least on her part. The commissioners like what SuperTrack has done but the way the contract is written it should be looked at next year and see if the commission would like to make a 2-year or even a 3-year term.



Noel had no other comments except that she reaffirmed that if it gives SuperTrack the feeling of comfort in having the 2 years then she would be for it. She questioned when the contract starts next year. Stephen replied it is on a calendar year basis but during the middle of the year the opportunity comes up for either side to give a 6 month notice to terminate but the issue can be revisited at any time because it is only a proposed amendment. Noel feels as though it is just being kicked down the road. Per Stephen if the commissioners approved it, they would stick with it for a long time unless SuperTrack asks for something different later or if the commission thought of some reason why it should be longer or shorter. If it does not get approved now it would be a reasonable thing to reconsider as Sara was saying for next year. Sara wants to reassess this topic in the Spring or Summer of next year.

Stephen said there is no action to take if there is no change to be made currently unless the commissioners want to make a binding or nonbinding decision that it will be considered again in a certain amount of time and it would definitely be considered at any time that SuperTrack brings it up as a topic. A motion could be passed to maintain the contract as it is with the intention of reviewing the term in the contract and possibly any other contract provisions that SuperTrack or the Hospital District think needs to be addressed at the appropriate time next year (Q2) so that it does not bump up against the term of the deadline.

Motion: Postpone discussion of the SuperTrack contract renewal term formally until next year (first half of 2023) so that the commission has made a decision before the next non-renewal deadline of June 30.

2:1 in favor of approval. Noel voted against.

Motion carried

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday November 9th, 2022 @ 7:00 pm via ZOOM

Meeting adjourned: 7:52 p.m.

Minutes approved verbally at the following month's ZOOM meeting

Stephen Falk

Sara Oggel

Noel Newbolt

Farrah Carsten