



# Hôpital général de Nipissing Ouest West Nipissing General Hospital

725, chemin Coursol Road, Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 2Y6

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 18:30 (Boardroom / Zoom)

- MINUTES-

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Present:

Barry Bertrand, Chair  
Jamie Restoule, Vice-Chair  
Fern Crépeau, Treasurer  
Chris Wielusiewicz  
Ginette Gagnon  
Renée Ragnitz  
Robert Sutherland  
Dr. Ben Lalonde  
Dr. Yves Vaillancourt  
Shelli Fielding-Levac\*  
Sue LeBeau\*  
Steffi Wittmaack\*  
Lynn Perreault, guest  
Megan Lacelle, Recorder\*

Regrets:

Eric Stevens  
Kimberley Lachapelle-Palamar

### 1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 18:30 hours.

### 2. **Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair noted that we would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Nipissing, Temagami and Dokis people and we pay our respect to the elders both past and present.

### 3. **Education Session/Presentation: Healthbox**

Lynn Perreault shared a new partnering project, the “Healthbox” with the Board. This project is supported by the Health Unit, including the costs which are covered by grants received by the Health Unit. The idea of the Healthbox is to partner with community organizations and to house this project in the community for easy access to those in need. The Healthbox would contain HIV testing kits, infant supplies such as, formula, diapers, wipes, etc., harm reduction supplies, and more. Lynn explained that the project is currently paused due to the being unsure on which organization would be responsible for the housing and the maintenance of the Healthbox. However, the community partners will continue to work on this project.

Lynn Perreault also shared with the Board of Directors the programs and services that the Alliance Centre offers, which includes:

- Mental Health Counselling and Treatment Program;
- Substance Abuse/Addictions Assessment and Treatment;
- Addictions Medicine Program;
- Needle Syringe Program;
- Intensive Case Management Program;



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- Walk-In Clinic;
- Psychiatric Consultation;
- Crisis Intervention Program;
- Mobile Crisis Response Team; and
- Community Wellness Program.

#### 4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest / Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

No conflicts of interest or pecuniary interest were declared.

#### 5. Approval of Consent Agenda

Moved by Robert Sutherland and seconded by Fern Crépeau

«THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, INCLUDING MINUTES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BE ACCEPTED AS PRESENTED,

##### **WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

- .1 PRESIDENT & CEO NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2024
- .2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES – JULY 8, 2024
- .3 FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES – **NONE**
- .4 HEALTH CARE QUALITY MINUTES – **NONE**
- .5 ETHICS COMMITTEE MINUTES – **NONE**
- .6 ALLIANCE CENTRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES – **NONE**
- .7 WNGH FOUNDATION BOARD MINUTES – **NONE**
- .8 CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE MINUTES – **NONE**
- .9 MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES – **NONE**
- .10 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY RESULTS – JULY 8, 2024
- .11 PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS – AUGUST, 2024
- .12 CORPORATE SCORECARD REVIEW – **Q1**. »

**Carried M-24-67**

#### 6. Approval of Regular Agenda

Moved by Chris Wielusiewicz and seconded by Renée Ragnitz

«THAT THE REGULAR AGENDA FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE:

- REMOVING ITEM 7.7;
- ADDING ITEMS
  - 8.2 – BOARD SELF ASSESSMENT TOOLS
  - 8.3 IPADS OR OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION
  - 8.4 NAME TAGS;
- 7.13 – PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT POSITION. »

**Carried M-24-68**

#### 7. Regular Agenda

- .1 President & CEO Update

Sue LeBeau shared with the Board the following:



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## Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Recruitment

- Recruitment for the new CEO is at the first interview phase; interviews will start in mid-October.
- Richard Beauchamp, the new interim CEO, will arrive on September 23, 2024. There will be two days of overlap, with an option to add some days until the morning of September 27, 2024. Sue will remain available for support should there be an Emergency Department closure.

## Emergency Department (ED) Physician Staffing

- ED physician staffing remains a challenge. There are several shifts in the next few weeks that have no physician coverage. Sue will remain available to provide support/advice if a closure occurs.
- There are a couple of future physicians interested in working in our community. Sue will be convening the local recruitment committee to solicit support to fund return of service agreements, to ensure that primary care continues and that there is hospital coverage for the deserving citizens.

## Press Release on Hospital Finances

- CBC Matin du Nord and CBC radio ran stories on the local impacts of systemic hospital underfunding, here are the links:
  - [La crise financière de l'Hôpital général de Nipissing Ouest \(radio-canada.ca\)](#)
  - [Des hôpitaux en crise dans le Nord de l'Ontario | Radio-Canada](#)
- A Tribune story will follow in the next two weeks.
- The goal is to add the West Nipissing General Hospital (WNGH)'s voice to that of other hospitals, particularly in the North, to highlight that WNGH is essential to the community and system, and to flag northern and rural hospitals' ongoing and pervasive challenges with underfunding while meeting increasing patient care needs.

## Operating Plan

- The operating plan is drafted, and will be refined and validated by the Senior Team.
- The operating plan will be driven by the strategic plan goals and objectives.

## Sprinkler Project

- The sprinkler project is well underway; it will include the Emergency Department, the Administration department, the Laboratory department, the Diagnostic Imaging department, the Health Records department and some hallway areas.
- It is funded by Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund (HIRF) dollars (over 2.5 million dollars).
- The most challenging part will be the Emergency Department, which is anticipated to have to move to the Operating Room (OR) for up to 8 weeks starting in early January. Physicians have been advised that the OR will be closed at that time.



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## **Farewell**

- Sue shared with the Board that this will be her last Board meeting and that it has been a privilege and pleasure to serve as the CEO with such a supportive, knowledgeable and wise Board of Directors. She thanked the Board for their remarkable dedication to WNGH. Sue looks forward to continuing to serve patients and the healthcare system and will continue to passionately convey the value that the rural and northern hospitals add to the communities and healthcare system as a whole.
- Sue also shared that it has been a joy to serve with the current Senior Team. Sue stated that they are very capable, knowledgeable, experienced and kind leaders. Sue appreciates the involvement they have enabled them to have in their short but significant time at WNGH and is grateful the Hospital team is in their good hands.

## .2 Chief of Staff Report

Dr. Ben Lalonde shared with the Board the following:

### **Opportunities**

- There are two medical students from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) University that began their placement at the West Nipissing General Hospital (WNGH) in early September. Both students have full intentions of coming back once they are finished school, said Dr. Lalonde. Dr. Lalonde thanked Dr. Yves Vaillancourt for his help to organize WNGH to become a placement site for NOSM University.
- There is a resident that started on July 1, 2024 who also has intentions of returning to WNGH after her residency.

### **Challenges**

- There are still challenges with physician coverage in the Emergency Department (ED). There are local physicians who have been working at their maximum capacity. There are also locum physicians who have been covering shifts and that enjoy working with the WNGH team, however, they find that the ED is busier than they expected, shared Dr. Lalonde.
- The volume of patients is still high in the ED.
- Dr. Lalonde shared that he will start speaking with the Ministry and the Family Health Team (FHT) regarding the FHT to provide physician coverage at the hospital as it is a contractual obligation. Dr. Lalonde explained that he may need the Board to write a letter to the Ministry if he is unable to contact them; Steffi Wittmaack and Shelli Fielding Levac offered their help as well.

## .3 Medical Advisory Committee Recommendations – **NONE**

## .4 Finance Update

The Chief Financial Officer update and the financial reports were provided in members' packages for review. Steffi Wittmaack highlighted the following updates:

### **Financial**



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- The WNGH's financial position as of July 31, 2024 shows a global operating deficit of \$755,655. The current year-end projection is a deficit of \$1,813,572, however there is still work to be done around validating this projection.
- The Capital Project spending for 2024-2025, including leasing equipment.
- Nursing Agency costs for April 2022 through July 2024. The average monthly costs took a drastic dive in May 2024. The current monthly spending is slightly less than half of the monthly average cost in 2023/2024. The spending levels are expected to begin rising in August 2024 given the addition of a new, temporary full time Registered Nurse shift to support temporary patient surge in the hospital. The financial impact of this staffing increase could reach as high as \$250,000 every three months.
- Northeast Hospital Financial performance for 2024/2025. The results are based on review of 23 of 24 Northeast hospitals' audited financial statements and show 20 hospitals in an operating deficit and 19 hospitals in a working funds deficit.

## Cash Flow

- The cash flow statement through to March 31, 2025 has been updated based on most recent funding announcements. The projected cash deficit is (\$1,877,504) after using the full \$1,200,000 line of credit available. Even if a loan is secured in 2024/2025, with minimal recovery of payables to the Ministries, a cash flow shortfall can reasonably be expected for 2024/2025.
- Assumptions include the following:
  - Full receipt of \$2,000,000 cash advance in July;
  - Planned loaned of \$2 million from Ontario Financing Authority (OFA) has not been included; and
  - Does not include any repayment of the nearly \$4.2 million owing to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-term Care.

## Audit

- The audit for 2023/2024 has not been completely finalized. Steffi provided the draft financial statements to the Board members for last review. The final financial statements will be sent by BDO once ready.

## Budget

- The development of Draft 2 of the 2024/2025 budget continues. Steffi has met with all the managers to review the staffing schedules. There are a significant number of adjustments required, with many of them still needing to be entered in the Budget system.
- An external consultant has agreed to support for an additional period of time, however she is only available one day per week.
- Three Finance staff have received training on the budget tool during the last week of August. The time available to support budget work is limited as all Finance staff have expressed workload issues.

## Other



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- Meditech Expanse implementation has gone well in payroll. Implementation of a module for the Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable has gone very poorly. They are working with OneHits to correct issues.
- An external consultant was brought in for three days in early August to review processes and workflows for Accounts Receivable.
- A contract with collections agency has been initiated and Steffi and her team are working to send them claims.
- A new Accounts Payable Clerk started on September 9, 2024, at which time the WNGH Finance department will be fully staffed for the first time in one year.
- In discussions with North Bay Regional Health Centre for a temporary contract for financial analyst support to complete analysis on numerous financial pressure points identified by the Chief Financial Officer, which include:
  - Overtime;
  - Nursing staffing mix full-time vs. part-time;
  - Review of eligible oncology services;
  - Housekeeping staffing levels;
  - Food services model delivery; and
  - Cafeteria services.

## .5 Clinical Update

Shelli Fielding-Levac shared with the Board the following:

- The Lab Accreditation was completed on August 16, 2024.
- The Pharmacy Accreditation (OCP) was completed on August 22, 2024. There were 96 out of 98 standards that were met. The pharmacist is working to meet the other two standards.
- During the period of August 6 – August 23, 2024, there was a COVID-19 outbreak in the Nursing Care Unit. During the period of August 8 – August 13, 2024, there was a COVID-19 outbreak on the Interim Long-term Care department. During the period of August 11 – August 20, 2024, there was a suspected COVID-19 outbreak in the Complex Continuing Care Unit.
- During the month of August, there were concerns on the amount of no-bed admissions in the Emergency Department. During the period of August 12 – August 16, 2024, WNGH experienced a surge and utilized the hallways to create space for more beds. Shelli would like to thank the discharge planning team for their hard work; during that time, they were able to discharge 14 patients in only three days.
- Shelli, the Long-term Care Manager and the Purchasing Agent applied for funding for the Long-term Care Unit to support the costs of equipment and staffing.
- Shelli shared a nursing toolkit that helps drive staff to be happy. Shelli will share this link with the Board members.

## .6 Board Members to Sign Annual Declaration and Consent Form

Board members took the time to sign the annual director's declaration form.

## .7 Approve Board Work Plan



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Moved by Jamie Restoule and seconded by Chris Wielusiewicz

«THAT THE ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND PLANNING CYCLE POLICY #730-23 BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. »

**Carried M-24-69**

.8 Review Corporate Communication Plan – **DEFERRED**

.9 Contingency Plans

The index of contingency plans was included in members' packages for review.

.10 Ontario Financing Authority (OFA) Loan

The Board members had a discussion regarding the Ontario Financing Authority (OFA) loan. Steffi Wittmaack expressed that the cash flow will not get through the year if this loan is not taken and that WNGH probably would not receive pressure funding if the loan is not taken.

Moved by Chris Wielusiewicz and seconded by Fern Crépeau

«BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE WNGH BOARD OF DIRECTORS SUPPORTS ATTAINING A LOAN WITH THE ONTARIO FINANCING AUTHORITY (OFA) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,047,150 TO COVER THE TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP (TOC) RELATED TO THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT TO IMPLEMENT MEDITECH EXPANSE. »

**Carried M-24-70**

.11 Draft Strategic and Operational Plan

A discussion was had regarding the wording of the values statements as well as the level of importance of our priorities.

Moved by Chris Wielusiewicz and seconded by Robert Sutherland

«THAT THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027 BE ACCEPTED AS AMENDED TO INCLUDE:

- MODIFYING THE ACCOUNTABILITY VALUES STATEMENT TO READ "FOSTERING FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY, ETHICAL CARE AND INTEGRITY"
- ADDING THE WORD "PROMOTING" IN THE FRONT OF THE TEAMWORK VALUES STATEMENT
- MODIFYING THE FINANCES PRIORITY STATEMENT TO READ "STRIVE FOR FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY"
- ADDING A QR CODE THAT LINKS TO THE OPERATIONAL PLAN. »

**Carried M-24-71**

.12 Review Policies

Moved by Robert Sutherland and seconded by Chris Wielusiewicz

«THAT THE FOLLOWING POLICIES BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED:

- 730-09 – MEDIA POLICY
- 730-17 – EXECUTIVE DIRECTION
- 730-22 – BOARD CHAIR ROLE DESCRIPTION
- 730-60 – RELATIONSHIP WITH NIPISSING FIRST NATION
- 730-62 – PHYSICIAN ASSISTED DEATH
- 730-66 – GIFT ACCEPTANCE & DONATIONS



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- 730-70 – ACCREDITATION
- 730-80 – VIRTUAL MEETING POLICY
- 730-39 – BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY ACT
- 730-41 – NAMING OPPORTUNITIES. »

**Carried M-24-72**

.13 Physician Assistant Position

Moved by Chris Wielusiewicz and seconded by Renée Ragnitz

«THAT THE PERMANENT FULL-TIME PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT POSITION BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. »

**Carried M-24-73**

## 8. Correspondence

.1 Reminder: OHA – Hospital Governance Essentials for New Directors

Sue LeBeau reminded the directors about the OHA Hospital Governance Essentials education sessions. Sue let the directors know to reach out to Megan Lacelle if they would like to sign up for any of the sessions.

.2 Board Self-Assessment Tools

Barry Bertrand expressed that this tool would be very beneficial to the Board members. Megan Lacelle will send the link to Board members.

.3 IPads or Other Forms of Communication

There was a short discussion regarding Hospital owned IPads for Board members or personal devices. The Board members are welcome to use whichever device works best for them.

.4 Name Tags

Barry Bertrand suggested that all Board members get their picture taken at the Human Resources department to add to their name tag.

## 9. Adjournment

The Meeting Effectiveness Survey will be provided to members via Survey Monkey.

Moved by Jamie Restoule and seconded by Fern Crépeau

«THAT THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 BE ADJOURNED AT 20:45 HOURS. »

**Carried M-24-74**

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Barry Bertrand, Chair

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Megan Lacelle, Recorder