

Board of Commissioner's Meeting

January 20, 2020

Superintendent's Report

State Legislature Capital Allocation

As I previously reported to the Board, the Department of Commerce has indicated to me that they are not able to contract with Sea Mar for capital dollars from the Legislature given that the clinic support agreement for operating the Vashon clinic is only a year-to-year agreement. I have shared this with Sea Mar and have proposed a meeting to discuss this. We have not yet met, but they have responded that they believe their advantages as the grant recipient are that they have in-house experience in design and construction of clinics and refer to themselves as community owned. Although Sea Mar is community-based, it is an independent, non-profit corporation. As such, I don't view it as community-owned in the same way that a public hospital district is community owned. A public hospital district has local governance, while Sea Mar is a regional organization with governance from a broad geographic area.

I have also shared with them my view that logically a community-owned facility, would be owned by VHCD. District ownership would allow us to pursue goals beyond just supporting Sea Mar's services, which may require physical space.

I spoke with Neighborcare Health's interim CEO, Meredith Vaughn, about the letter they sent to the State Dept. of Commerce saying they wanted to transfer the grant to Sea Mar. She responded to me very recently and is arguing that it should go to Sea Mar because it was a community health center grant. The Dept. of Commerce has indicated that they need to see a letter from them transferring the grant instead to the District.

King County Interfund Loan

Attached is my signature on the approved loan document with King County. I am awaiting the actual warrant from Brad Berg that also needs to be signed and go to King County.

Lease Payments

We have not been receiving an actual invoice from Sunrise Ridge so I have requested an invoice showing the monthly base rental amount and the fees and insurance amounts, which could vary from year to year. Greg Martin and I have spoken about this and he is attempting to get his bookkeeper to provide this for us.

Kaiser

A representative of Kaiser informed me that Sea-Mar Community Health Clinic is listed in their Provider Directory for our members to see and that their Customer Service department is doing

phone outreach to the small number of Virtual Plus members living on Vashon to make sure they understand their care options, unique to their plans.

Dr. Marc Mora described Kaiser's approach to educating members about primary care options across their organization as follows:

- Making sure their search engine/provider directory is up to date including the status of "open" panels. This is the principal way they communicate with members across the region and how members locate/search for clinicians
- Assuring that their member services teams, as well their 24-hour virtual care services team (care chat/texting with a doctor, consulting nurse services, etc.), access the provider directory often in real time, when a patient is looking for face-to-face care and needs a primary care md/clinician, etc.

Governance Education

The following complimentary WSHA & AWPMD Governance Education courses are available. The 3rd course is probably the least relevant for a District that does not operate a hospital.

Thursday, January 28 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm

Business is not as usual: Strategic planning during uncertain times

Presented by Kimberly McNally, McNally & Associates

[Register now](#)

Monday, February 22 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm

Open Public Meetings Act & Public Records Act

Presented by Oskar Rey, MRSC

[Register now](#)

Tuesday, March 2 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm

The 7 Deadly Sins of a Tax-Exempt Hospital

Presented by Kurt Bennion, CliftonLarsonAllen

[Register now](#)

Committee Reports

Administration and Finance

Wolczko

We are expecting year-end financials for the Vashon Health Care District no later than Jan. 31. Tom, Don and I communicated regarding committee membership. At this time, we don't believe that community representation on this committee is necessary given the subject matter and the fact that all key decisions and information comes to the Board.

Clinic Relations

Langland/Noble

Tom will be presenting the Committee's draft purpose statement at the meeting, which includes a statement regarding the committee's role in reviewing clinic operations. A review of clinic operations will include Sea Mar's clinic financial reports. I spoke with Sea Mar's CFO last week and given the start-up nature of the clinic, the November financial statement isn't an accurate reflection of performance given that contractual allowances, the amounts charged but not paid, aren't accurate. I agreed with him to wait until the December financials are available to share information with the Board. This will be after the first week in February.

Communications, Planning and External Relations

Pryne/Brown

Community members identified to date are Wendy Aman, Debby Jackson and Marcie Rubardt. Eric and LeeAnn will be presenting a progress report on marketing strategy.



King County DISTRICT APPLICATION FOR INTERFUND LOAN

DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

District name: Public Hospital District No. 5, King County, dba Vashon Health Care District
 Contact name: Eric P. Jensen Contact title: Superintendent
 Phone: 509-899-3655 Fax: E-mail: EricJ@vashonhealthcare.org
 District address: P.O Box 213
 City: Vashon ZIP code: 98070

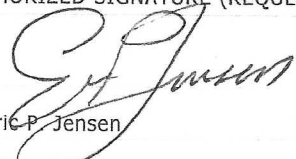
BORROWING REQUEST DETAILS

Fund name: Vashon Health Care General Fund Fund number: 140050010
 Term of loan requested (projected start and end date): **February 1, 2020 – January 31, 2027**
 Maximum negative daily cash balance during term of loan (estimated): \$ 1,071,000 **Requesting: \$1,500,000**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Why is this borrowing necessary? PHD #5, King County is a new district and tax receipts start in 2021
Why are the funds not being borrowed from another district fund (i.e., construction fund, etc)? There is no other fund.
Why is bank financing not being used? This is a modification to a current interfund loan
What will be the source of the funds to repay the interfund loan? Tax revenue
List the most recent district bond issue that has been rated by either Standard & Poor's, Moody's, or Fitch: NA

DISTRICT AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE (REQUESTING INTERFUND LOAN)

Signature: 
 Print Name: Eric P. Jensen
 Title: Superintendent
 Date: December 14, 2020

Please Include the Following Attachments:

- (1) Copy of monthly cash flow forecast showing district's cash needs over the expected borrowing horizon.
- (2) Copy of most recent financial statements and budget.
- (3) Copies of the two most recent Washington State Auditor's Office reports on the district.
- (4) Copy of the governing body's resolution approving and requesting the interfund loan from King County.

KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE REVIEW (COUNTY USE ONLY)

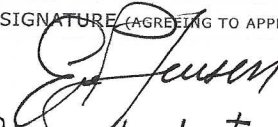
Interfund loan approved? Yes No Date Approved/Denied: 12/17/20 Loan rate: pool rate
 Maximum interfund loan amount approved \$ 1,500,000.00 Loan termination date: 1-31-27
 Other special loan terms or comments:

LOAN AGREEMENT

1. If the district believes it will exceed any of the terms approved by King County, they must notify King County and submit an addendum to the original loan request immediately.
2. King County may not approve an extension or modification of the original loan agreement and reserves the right to make the district's warrants interest bearing at anytime.
3. By signing below, the district's representative is accepting the terms of interfund loan approved by the Executive Finance Committee. After signing below, return by fax: 206-296-7345 or mail: Treasury Operations; 500 4th Ave, Rm 611; Seattle, WA 98104. (King County will return a signed copy to the district.)

DISTRICT SIGNATURE (AGREEING TO APPROVED LOAN TERMS)

KING COUNTY SIGNATURE


 Title: Superintendent
 Date: 1/19/2021

Title:
Date:

DEVELOPING A CLINIC MARKETING STRATEGY

PROGRESS REPORT TO COMMISSIONERS – Jan. 20, 2021

I. BACKGROUND

Recognizing that the Sunrise Ridge clinic's success – perhaps its survival -- hinges on attracting more patients, the newly established Communication, Planning and External Relations Committee has been working to develop a plan to market the clinic to islanders.

Before developing such a plan, committee members agreed they needed to first answer three fundamental questions:

- What keeps many Vashon residents from seeking care at the clinic – and what has caused many who once received care there to go elsewhere?
- What message or messages would be most effective in persuading those residents to switch their primary care to the clinic?
- What vehicles or media would be most effective in conveying that message to potential new patients?

Lacking time or money for formal public opinion research, the committee instead conducted extensive interviews with 24 knowledgeable islanders, selected because they represented a broad spectrum of island life – business owners, social service providers, commuters, artists, seniors, activists, parents of school-age children, members of the Hispanic community, medical professionals, elected officials, journalists, faith community leaders, marketing professionals. They spoke about the clinic both from personal experience, and based on what they have heard from other islanders.

The information obtained from these interviews was augmented by numerous informal conversations with islanders at the two island grocery stores on Saturday, Jan. 16, while committee members passed out informational flyers about the clinic. Commissioner Brown, who interacts with many island residents about health care on a daily basis through her work as a health insurance broker, also provided invaluable insights.

The results of our research follow.

II. RESULTS

A. WHAT KEEPS MANY ISLAND RESIDENTS FROM SEEKING CARE AT THE CLINIC?

Most frequent – and most emphatic – response: Many islanders don't get care at the clinic because it has a reputation for poor customer service that dates back many years. Most people with whom we spoke had personal stories of unsatisfactory service that, in some cases, had driven them to seek care elsewhere.

For the most part, people were satisfied with the care they received from clinic providers. The problems instead involved what happened before and after direct interactions with those providers, and were more institutional in nature:

- Very long waits on hold to reach the clinic by phone to schedule appointments, etc.
- Difficulty scheduling appointments in a reasonable time frame.
- Long waits in the lobby and/or exam room before seeing a provider for scheduled appointments.
- Long delays before receiving referrals to specialists, both on and off island.
- Poor coordination with other providers; difficulty sharing medical records, etc.
- Inability/refusal to serve walk-in patients or patients seeking same-day appointments for acute conditions.
- Unexpected, unexplained bills.

The situation has improved under Sea Mar, we were told by many, and community attitudes toward the clinic are improving as a result. But some problems persist, particularly long waits in the lobby/exam room and issues with online access to records.

Other reasons offered to explain why many Vashon residents don't go to the clinic included:

- Lack of basic knowledge about the clinic: Providers, services offered, hours, etc.
- For commuters, the convenience of seeing a primary care provider close to their off-island workplaces (NOTE: With more islanders working from home due to COVID, this currently has less appeal for some).
- For those with chronic conditions, the simplicity of having a primary care provider and specialists in the same system.
- Unwillingness to sever established relationships with off-island providers.
- Departure of long-term, popular doctors from the clinic; provider turnover.
- Lack of Spanish-speaking staff.
- Out-of-the-way location and, more importantly, condition/appearance of the clinic building – raises concerns for some about the quality of care offered inside.
- Concerns about reproductive health and end-of-life policies of former operator CHI Franciscan.
- Concerns about privacy/boundaries: Island residents know providers personally in settings outside the clinic (NOTE: For some, this is considered an advantage rather than a problem).
- Concerns about whether the clinic will survive long-term.
- Dissatisfaction with Health Care District for adopting levy that impacts Park District.

Some of these concerns are beyond our control. Others can be addressed. But, again, the clinic's reputation for poor customer service was by far the reason provided most often to explain why the clinic doesn't draw more patients.

B. WHAT'S THE MOST EFFECTIVE MESSAGE(S) TO INCREASE PATIENT NUMBERS?

Here's the suggested message we heard most often, distilled and paraphrased: "The clinic is under new management – give it a try. We recognize you may have had negative experiences there under previous operators. Sea Mar and the Vashon Health Care District are working to fix those problems. Some improvements already have been made. Things are looking up."

A collateral message – district as patient advocate/ombudsman: "This is YOUR clinic now, as it never has been before. Through the Health Care District, the island now has a say in how the clinic is operated, and a way to provide feedback and express concerns. We want to hear from you."

A second messaging suggestion we heard frequently: Provide basic information to make it easy for people to arrange care at the clinic and get their questions answered. Examples: Who are the providers? What are their backgrounds? To whom do they refer patients for specialty care? How do I establish care at the clinic? When are lab services available? Do I have to be an established patient to use the lab? Is the X-Ray machine running? Do they provide telehealth services? How do I make a telehealth appointment? How do I transfer my medical records? Can I sync/coordinate my Sea Mar records with those from my other providers?

An observation: Several interviewees cautioned that, if we're going to market a "new, improved" clinic, we'd better to certain it lives up to that billing. Don't over-promise!

Another observation: COVID-19 may provide opportunities to increase patient numbers. As mentioned previously, it's no longer as convenient for islanders who once commuted but now work from home to see off-island providers. Several of our interviewees had returned to the clinic as a consequence, or were considering doing so. Also, the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine at the clinic may provide an opportunity to introduce more islanders to Sea Mar.

C. WHAT'S THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO GET OUR MESSAGE OUT?

The people with whom we spoke were nearly unanimous on this: In-person (for now, however, mostly virtual) contact – one-on-one, or in small groups – and word-of-mouth communication are most meaningful and effective. In a small community like Vashon, folks value what they hear directly from their friends and neighbors.

Many we spoke with favored old-fashioned, low-tech, low-cost approaches. Some examples: A speaker's bureau – sending commissioners and/or Sea Mar representatives to speak at Rotary, PTA, Garden Club, Community Council, etc. Or passing out leaflets at the grocery stores or the Saturday Market (when it's back) and answering the questions that arise there.

Interviewees offered many suggestions for less personal, "mass" communication, but there was no consensus on one or two that should be prioritized. Among the communication vehicles they mentioned, in no particular order, were:

- Print media – Beachcomber, Loop.
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor. Island-wide Facebook groups, and groups that focus on such subpopulations as commuters and parents.
- Health Care District website.
- Sea Mar Vashon clinic web page (make it easier to find, we were told).
- Voice of Vashon.
- Flyers – placed in Food Bank and Senior Center food-delivery bags.
- Senior Center newsletter.
- Vashon Be Prepared Situation Report.
- Island "billboards," such as the Park District sign on the highway north of town.
- Promotional video at Vashon Theatre (when it reopens).
- Posters at public or semi-public locations that still are heavily trafficked: laundry rooms at Vashon Household and other apartment buildings, for example.
- A clinic "open house," when the time is right.

At this point, we're ready to consider most, if not all, of these. But we're not ready to throw all our eggs in one or two baskets.

Several interviewees suggesting using testimonials from patients – “third-party validators” -- who have had positive experiences with Sea Mar, or have returned to the clinic.

III. NEXT STEPS

With these answers to our fundamental questions, the Communication, Planning and External Relations Committee plans to next focus on developing a more comprehensive, detailed marketing plan for the board's consideration.

In the meantime, some near-term actions are in the works. As mentioned earlier, members of the committee already have leafletted at the two grocery stores. The response was positive, the interactions with islanders illuminating. We're making preliminary plans to do it again.

We're also printing more of the postcard-sized flyers we distributed at the grocery stores (basic information about the clinic – location, phone number, services offered, providers) to insert in food bags the Food Bank and Senior Center distribute to needy islanders.

We've received and accepted an invitation for representatives of the district to speak at the February meeting of the community council.

And, to address concerns about the clinic building's appearance, we're beginning to explore some simple, low-cost cosmetic efforts -- planting pansies outside the front door, for instance – that could be done quickly with volunteer labor. This, of course, would require coordination with Sunrise Ridge and/or Sea Mar.

Speaking more broadly, coordination with Sea Mar is essential to the success of any marketing plan. While we are willing to take the lead in this – we know Vashon and its health-care story better – Sea Mar needs to be made aware of the clinic's history and past shortcomings. It also needs to be told the importance of “selling” the clinic to the island to increase patient numbers, reduce the subsidy, keep the levy down and insure the clinic's long-term stability. Their partnership in this is vital.

Thanks for your attention to this.

Communication, Planning and External Relations Committee

Wendy Aman, Community Member
LeeAnn Brown, Commissioner
Debby Jackson, Community Member
Eric Pryne, Commissioner
Marcie Rubardt, Community Member