# RiverStone Health
## Board of Health Meeting Minutes
### December 5, 2024

John Dorr, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

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| **Members Present:** | John Dorr; Spencer Anderson; Carol Beam; Brent Cromley; Michael Dennis; Anne Giuliano; Jim Harris; Don Jones; Bea Ann Melichar; Lionel Tapia; Steve Wahrlich |
| **Members Absent:** | Debbie Davis; Casey Wheeler |
| **Staff Present:** | Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Jeff Hert, Vice - President Human Resources; Bob Janicek, Chief Information Officer; Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Eric Owen, Vice-President of Public Health, and Clinical Services; Ian Somers, Director of IT Infrastructure and Architecture; Shanna Zier, Chief Financial Officer |
| **Guests Present:** | Stewart Kirkpatrick, Legal Counsel – Crowley Fleck; Jeana Lervick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Derek Yeager – Yellowstone County DES Director |

## CALL TO ORDER
Chairperson Dorr called the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

## PUBLIC COMMENT
Chairperson Dorr invited members of the public to address the Board. Upon hearing no comment, Chairperson Dorr moved to the next agenda item.

## APPROVAL
**October 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes**: Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the October 24 2024 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

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### **M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Melichar), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED:**    **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 24, 2024, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

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**December 5, 2024 Consent Agenda:**  The consent agenda included the 2024 Annual Review of Home Care and Hospice Services, which was submitted for acceptance by the Board of Health as required by the Medicare Conditions of Participation and CHAP accreditation.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **CONSENT AGENDA** (copy on file) of the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting that was previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

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**M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Anderson), seconded (Wahrlich), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED:**     **TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2024, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

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## CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO "HELP" report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Homecare and hospice recently completed their periodic accreditation site visit by the Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP).  The site visit went extremely well with zero findings of deficiency and only a few minor recommendations for improvement.

- With several public health and healthcare policies set to expire at the end of 2024, we remain in a state of uncertainty as Congress progresses through the lame-duck session. Jon highlighted ongoing advocacy efforts to secure continued funding for community health centers and address public health needs in Montana. He emphasized the importance of engaging with local legislators to educate them on health policy priorities and encourage their participation in upcoming legislative days and advocacy events.

- RiverStone Health's new School-Based Health Center (SBHC) at Billings Senior High School began operations with a soft opening on November 4. The official grand opening celebration is scheduled for December 10 at 4 PM. This new SBHC was established through grant funding from the Montana Healthcare Foundation.

- As Medicaid redetermination efforts continue, fluctuations in the number of attributed Medicaid patients have been observed with enrollment decreasing significantly from approximately 49% to around 32%. Meanwhile, marketplace insurance coverage has risen from 21% to 30%, and the number of self-pay patients has increased by 5%. Medicare enrollment has stabilized, representing 22% of our patient population.

Jon provided a report of Health Officer-related activity in Yellowstone County:

- Reported influenza cases remain low in Yellowstone County, although Jon noted that a surge in reported cases typically occurs in late December and January.

- There was a slight uptick in COVID-19 cases reported in Yellowstone County. So far in 2024, there have been 15,387 confirmed cases, with 1032 hospitalizations, and 64 reported deaths.

- We have seen an increase in the number of pertussis cases reported in the last few weeks. 45 cases have been reported in Montana in 2024, with 28 of those cases occurring since September 1, 2024. We will continue to monitor the situation and encourage people to get vaccinated.

## CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT

Megan Littlefield provided updates on activity in the CHC and the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- We continue to struggle with recruiting and staffing issues. One physician assistant is leaving in December, and another left in October, while one has reduced their hours to part-time. A position was posted to replace the physician assistant who left in October; however, it has attracted little interest.

- Provider coverage has been challenging, impacting patient access and service delivery as staff are stretched across multiple responsibilities.

- Recruiting efforts are underway for the Montana Family Medicine Residency (MFMR) Class of 2028. 130 interviews have been scheduled beginning in November 2024.

- We are working to develop a plan to establish a structured residency program for Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) to better train new graduates and support their integration into the healthcare system. We continue to work to identify funding sources to offset the administrative costs associated with its setup and operation.

- A provider listening session was held to gather feedback from providers about their concerns regarding the amount of non-medical tasks that have been shifted back to them when some CHC support positions were eliminated during the RIF

- Exploring AI tools, including Freed, to support providers with note-taking and administrative tasks, reduce workload and enable them to focus more on patient care. An AI policy has been created, and providers have access to two systems: one integrated into the EMR, which is already in use, and an external service (Freed) scheduled for rollout in early December.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided a brief overview of the November 21, 2024 finance committee meeting, the September 2024 RSH financial statements, September 2024 YHP financial statements, and the September 2024 combined RSH + YHP financial statements, (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet, before Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to the financial statements and meeting notes.

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**M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Anderson), seconded (Wahrlich), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED:**      **TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 21, 2024, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED.**

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## M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Anderson), seconded (Melichar), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:** TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2024 RSH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED

## M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Wahrlich), seconded (Anderson), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:** TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2024 YHP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED

## M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Anderson), seconded (Dennis), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:** TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2024 COMBINED RSH/YHP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED

## SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Lionel Tapia, Committee Chair, provided an overview of Committee activity and the November 12, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting before Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the November 12, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

## M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Beam), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:** TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE NOVEMBER 12, 2024 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

## PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Bea Ann Melichar, Committee Chair, provided an overview of Committee activity and highlights of the November 12, 2024 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the November 12, 2024 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

## M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Melichar), and unanimously carried, it was

**VOTED:** TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE NOVEMBER 12, 2024 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AS PRESENTED

## YELLOWSTONE HEALTH PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Jim Harris provided an update of the YellowStone Health Partnership (YHP), and the September 2024 YHP financial statements that were included with the Board of Health finance committee materials in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

Jim discussed the September 2024 YHP balance sheet and current assets of YHP and answered Board members questions.

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dorr provided an overview of Committee activity, and the November 12, 2024 and December 3, 2024 meetings and requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the November 12, 2024 and December 3, 2024 meetings that were previously distributed in the December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

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**M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Melichar), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED:** **TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE NOVEMBER 12, 2024 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

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**M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Cromley), seconded (Wahrlich), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED:** **TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE DECEMBER 3, 2024 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

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Chairperson Dorr informed the Board the Governance Committee's proposed slate of officers for election to the Board of Health for a one-year term beginning January 1, 2025, including Jim Harris as **Chair**, Steve Wahrlich as **Vice-Chair**, and Spencer Anderson as **Secretary-Treasurer**. Jim Harris noted that Spencer Anderson agreed to fill the office of Secretary-Treasurer on a trial basis due to prior obligations.

Chairperson Dorr called for nominations from the floor and upon hearing no response, requested a motion to accept the Governance Committee's proposed slate of officers, as presented, for election to the Board of Health for a one-year term beginning January 1, 2025:

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**M O T I O N**

**Upon a motion duly made (Dennis), seconded (Tapia), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED:** **TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS AS PRESENTED, INCLUDING JIM HARRIS AS CHAIR, STEVE WAHRLICH AS VICE-CHAIR, AND SPENCER ANDERSON AS SECRETARY-TREASURER, FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH FOR A ONE YEAR TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2025**

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**OLD BUSINESS**

No old business discussed

**NEW BUSINESS**

**IT Cyber-Security Update:** Bob Janicek, Chief Information Officer, and Ian Somers, Director of IT Infrastructure and Architecture, provided a presentation (presentation on file) regarding cyber security risk and the progress RiverStone Health's Information Technology (IT) team has made towards implementing effective cyber security measures.

Bob discussed increasing concerns surrounding cyber security threats which impact not only healthcare organizations but also businesses and individuals globally. He highlighted the increasing value of healthcare data making it a prime target for cybercriminals. 90% of healthcare organizations experienced breaches over the last three years that compromised 41 million patient records. Bob added that cybercrime is an ongoing challenge, as cybercriminals employ increasingly sophisticated tactics.

Ian emphasized the importance of cybersecurity measures including staff training and awareness to recognize phishing attempts and other threats. A shared learning story demonstrated how a compromised email from a business associate was detected and shut down by our Security Operations Center (SOC), underscoring the importance of vigilance in cybersecurity practices. Overall, the presentation stressed the importance of remaining vigilant and proactive in addressing cybersecurity threats as technology evolves, especially with the rise of AI and deepfakes, to ensure access and continuity of operations for the organization.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:55 A.M. Chairperson Dorr announced that the Board would go into executive session to discuss personnel matters for which the individual's right to privacy supersedes the public's right to know. All staff and guests were excused from the executive session.

Chairperson Dorr ended the executive session at 9:04 AM and the Board returned to regular session.

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Health will be held on Thursday, January 23, 2025, starting at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

The December 5, 2024 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:05 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,


James D. Harris                                      Jonathan Forte
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health       President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2024\minutes\12.5.24 BOH Minutes