

**Utah State Veterans Nursing Home  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 2:00. The minutes for the meeting of August 26th, were approved. A quorum was present.

In attendance: Lloyd Barker, Sandford Rosenthal, David Phillips, Bart Davis, Loren Miller, Ron Olson, Dennis McFall, Todd Hansen, Noralyn Snow and Jason Halley. Gary Harter came for the end of the meeting  
Excused: Tonya Hales and Frank Murdock

**State Officer's Report**

Todd reported that all of the contracts between the Department and Avalon have been completed, signed by all parties and distributed. We signed a contract amendment to change the ending date of the old management from Oct 31<sup>st</sup> to Sep 30<sup>th</sup>. This brought the contract dates in line with the Federal fiscal year. There were some significant changes with the new contract. First, the overhead margin that Avalon can collect was moved from 5% of revenues to 6%. Within this 6 percent, Avalon will now pay for Kelly Snowball, the Avalon director of the Veterans Homes. A second big change is the mechanism to allow Avalon to hold 35 days of cash needs in reserve so that they do not get in a cash crunch when payments are delayed or other conditions arise. On a semi-annual basis, cash holdings beyond this limit must be returned to the Department for other uses to benefit veterans. Thus, there is no incentive for Avalon to cut corners or try to save a lot of money by reducing staff or providing lesser quality service. This has been a long process to complete all of the contracts and both sides are glad it is done.

We took our residents, along with staff and volunteers, to Wendover for a gambling junket, as we do every year. Everyone had a good time and we had a lot of winners. We also took our residents to Hogle Zoo for a day. These are just some examples of the special activities that we provide for the veterans. These special activities are funded either out of the regular Recreation budget or from the dedicated donation funds that the Resident Council controls. The resident council can vote to approve special activities such as symphony tickets, Jazz tickets, the Wendover bus, etc.

A new interpretation of an existing rule is mandating that we get new openers on all of our exit doors so that they will open and alarm when pressed and held for 20 seconds. We are working with specialists, architects and planners to make sure we do this right. Kim Wixon, the State Officer in Ogden, is heading up the project.

Our kitchen remodeling project is nearly complete. This is being funded by our capital replacement fund and overseen by the state Department of Facilities and Construction

Management (DFCM). We tore out all of the equipment and walls in our dishwashing area to get at a persistent mold problem. We discovered a leak in our disposal line inside of the wall that was spraying gunky water and continuing the moldy conditions. This was replaced, the walls were replaced with concrete based sheetrock and the entire section was wrapped in stainless steel so that it is much more easily cleaned. We also replaced the floor and mop sink in the area.

We next replaced all of the cabinets in the dining room, enlarging and upgrading them and adding a new ice machine that will be accessible from the dining room side. The next piece was to tear out the old draw curtain where food is passed from kitchen to dining. This was reframed to take a new fire rated steel roll-down curtain. We also had to construct a fire wall between the kitchen and dining room to come into code compliance. We also replaced the door into the kitchen with a fire rated door.

To complete the project, we need to install the new roll-down curtain and replace the wallpaper where the construction has torn it up.

Next summer we are hosting the conference of the National Association of State Veterans Homes right here in Salt Lake City. The national officers were here recently to tour the different venues and options. They were very impressed with what they saw and what opportunities they will have in Utah. They were given a tour of this veterans home as well as many parts of the valley.

We continue to have important visitors to the facility. Recently Congressman Chris Stewart came to visit with our veterans. He brought a cameraman from Fox 13 News. Fox 13 news also wanted to do a story about Charlie the therapy kangaroo, so they came back a few days later and did a story highlighting several of our residents and cute little Charlie. Todd will send links to both stories to all board members. Both stories were very nice and add to the reputation of this facility.

We had a great Veterans Day celebration on the 11th. Congressional hopeful Doug Owens was our keynote speaker, along with Gary Harter, the East High Madrigal Choir and an honor guard. The room was full and we received lots of comments of appreciation.

We continue to have issues with the billing process for the VA per diem. We are in a pilot project with VA VISN19, and that means we get hit with the arrows first. Our latest is another attempt to get the State Officers to have PIV access so that we can communicate more easily with Denver, Reno and Florida in the billing process. Loren Miller offered to help in the process.

3. Avalon Report was given by Noralyn. She first introduced Jason Halley, our brand new Director of Nursing.

Customer Service: She reported that we are still a 5-star facility with the highest scores of all the State Veterans Homes. We have had another complaint survey. The complaint was dismissed with no substantiation.

The Pinnacle report was distributed and discussed. In this last report, we were the top scored Veterans Home in Avalon's system. We continue to strive to provide excellent care in every area.

We are still struggling to find CNAs. Our salary range for CNAs is \$10.40 to \$16.60, but there are so many jobs available throughout the city.

Financially, the facility continues to operate on the plus side, but the margins are not as great as they have been in the more recent past.

Next Meeting – February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Chairman

6. Executive Committee Meeting

a. Approval of Minutes

Chairman

c. Restricted Fund Review

State Officer

Current total in our Donation account is \$29,254.09. We have had expenditures for new patio furniture in the MCU, tickets to two SL Bees baseball games, the horseback riding at Camp K and the Earthwings aviary show.

d. Contract negotiations with Avalon

Dennis/Todd

We have had continued contract negotiations with Avalon since they won the bid to manage operations for the next five years. We have changed the date of the expiring contract to Sept 30, 2015 to coincide with the Federal FY, and changed the management fee for all contracts from 5% to 6% of revenues. With this change, Avalon will also absorb the expenses associated with their Regional VA manager (Kelly Snowball). We are also finalizing language that allows Avalon to keep 35 days worth of current cash needs at all times, with a reconciliation of amounts beyond that to be made twice per year. These contract changes (excluding the date adjustment) will also apply to the Payson and Ivins facilities.

We also discussed efforts to have Avalon make management performance bonuses based more on quality factors and not on bottom line financial performance.

We also discussed getting an independent wireless internet provider and not keeping our current system that is tied in to the VAMC and has significant limitations that annoy residents, family members and other visitors. Todd will start looking into that.

7. Adjournment was at 3:55 p.m.

Chairman