

**MINUTES  
LOWER FLORIDA KEYS HOSPITAL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
NOVEMBER 4, 2024**

**PRESENT:** Mrs. Ovide, Dr. Thompson, Mrs. Sterling, Mr. Muir, Mr. Toppino, Mrs. Spottswood, Mr. Halpern, Dr. Chambers, Mr. Hammond

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Perla, Mr. Fishman, and residents from the community (sign-in sheet attached to official minutes).

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Dr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Dr. Thompson led the attendees to the pledge of allegiance.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the Board of Commissioners meeting held on August 19, 2024, were reviewed as presented:

**Mr. Ovide motioned to approve the minutes to be accepted as presented, Mrs. Spottswood seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: DR. THOMPSON**

Dr. Thompson spoke about the community committee being formed and stated it was a fact-finding committee to gather data and that they have no decision-making authority. Dr. Thompson also stated that Mr. Fishman would address some of the questions that came to the board in his attorney report.

**CITIZEN INPUT:**

Dr. Thompson went over the citizen input guidelines as stated below:

Presentations to the Board are limited to three (3) minutes for each individual speaker and five (5) minutes for the representative of a designated group. Transfer of time between individuals and/or groups is not permitted. Letters submitted to each Board Member and/or the district Administrator prior to a Board Meeting will not additionally be read into the record at the meeting. All statements must be directed towards the Board; no person may address or question Board Members individually, and Board Members will not engage in a dialogue with people

making public comment. Furthermore, all speakers agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Citizen Input and will begin their presentation by stating the full name and their city or town of residence for the record.

Mr. Kaufman spoke on behalf of the task force and stated he recognized how complex the process is and wants to know who will be determining the process that will occur for the hospital operator's selection. Mr. Kaufman inquired about who will conduct and manage the process, will staff or a consultant be hired to assist with the process, what is the status of the advisory committee being formed and what is the status of the cancer services.

Several members of the community spoke and addressed their concerns in regard to the care and level of services they want and expect from the next hospital operator. The sign-in sheet of speakers is attached to the official minutes.

#### **HOSPITAL CEO REPORT: MR. PERLA**

Mr. Perla over the highlights and acknowledgements of the hospital for the last quarter. The hospital is still ranked as a 4-star hospital and continues to recruit physicians needed within the community. Employee recognition continues to be a very important acknowledgement by management to staff.

The Emergency department continues to see about 70 patients a day and staff are continuing to reach out with those patients after being discharged for successful follow-up on their post release instructions.

Physician recruitment for an ENT, Nurse Practitioner, Pulmonologist, Orthopedic Surgeon and Family Practice physician have been contracted and those physicians will be joining the physician community soon.

Mr. Halpern stated it has been 14 months since the residents of the community has had access to cancer treatment care. Mr. Halpern has stated that the community has failed and is very disappointed that chemotherapy services have not been provided to the community.

Mr. Perla's report is attached to the official minutes.

#### **NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: MR. KEIGHLEY**

Mr. Keighley was in attendance and spoke regarding the status of the nursing home. They have hired a new Director of Nursing and is working with the hospital to try and make sure that residents that leave come back and are able to get the care they deserve while being surrounded by loved ones. Mr. Muir is the nursing home rep on the board and state he visited the nursing home recently and noticed a major change in the morale of the facility.

**ATTORNEY REPORT: MR. FISHMAN**

**Nursing Home**

Mr. Fishman relayed the good news that under a bankruptcy filing he submitted a claim in the bankruptcy proceeding for the interest accrued on the 2.98-million-dollar loan and the district received \$ 360,150.00, which was the full amount of accrued interest.

**Consent to Assignment & Sublease**

Mr. Fishman presented the revisions of the consent to the assignment and sublease.

**Mrs. Sterling motioned to approve the lease assignment as presented, Mr. Muir seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Fishman gave a summary of the ground lease, parties involved and the history for the community members to get a better understanding of the transactions that occurred with the leases with the hospital. In 1967 the district was formed, and the hospital was operated as Florida Keys Memorial Hospital and simultaneously a group of doctors purchased, built and ran the hospital and is still currently owned by Kennedy Drive Investors. Depoo hospital was a private for-profit hospital, and the hospital was a public entity. For years the hospitals competed with the same medical staff on both facilities and in 1989 Kennedy Drive and the District came together and formed a non-profit entity called Lower Florida Keys Health Systems. The two hospitals leased their respective facilities to the Lower Florida Keys Health Systems which obtained a license to operate the hospitals. Medicare rules state that as a rural hospital you can get a higher reimbursement if you are designated as a sole community hospital and Lower Keys Health Systems applied for that status and were granted. Health systems operated the two hospitals as 1 hospital for 10 years even though there are two separate locations.

In 1999 the parties involved agreed to issue an RFP for a hospital operator and selected HMA. Kennedy Drive negotiated with HMA, and the district negotiated with HMA on separate leases. Lower Keys Health Systems is a legal entity that is inoperative but at the end of the 30-year lease, if the District and Kennedy Drive don't agree with an operator, LFKHS would come back into existence to operate the hospital and the district would have several decisions to make i.e., milage levy, management etc. LFKHS is comprised of 4 district board members, 2 Kennedy drive appointees and the Chief of Staff of the hospital which doesn't currently exist.

A copy of Mr. Fishman's Report and Memo are attached to the official minutes.

**APPROVAL OF FINANCE COMMITTEE QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

**Mrs. Ovide motioned to approve the financial report from PFM and the quarterly financial report for the quarter ended September 30, 2024, Mrs. Spottswood seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Mrs. Sterling motioned to accept the auditing firm proposal from Marcum for a (3) year engagement, Mrs. Ovide seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

A copy of the quarterly financial reports and auditor proposals are attached to the official minutes.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

There was a motion on the floor for the following officers:

Chairman-Kathy Ovide

**Dr. Chambers nominated Mrs. Ovide for the Chair position, Dr. Chambers seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

Vice Chair-James Muir

**Mr. Muir was unanimously approved to retain in the Vice-Chair position.**

Secretary-Mary Spottswood

**Mrs. Ovide nominated Mrs. Spottswood for the secretary position, Mr. Muir seconded, and the move carried unanimously.**

Treasurer- Mary Chambers

**Dr. Chambers was unanimously approved to for the treasurer position.**

The roll was called, and vote was as follows:

Thompson-yes  
Muir-yes  
Ovide-yes  
Chambers-yes  
Hammond-yes  
Sterling-yes  
Halpern-yes  
Toppino-yes

**Finance Committee:**

Dr. Chambers, Dr. Thompson & Mr. Halpern were unanimously approved to be the members of the finance committee.

**Nursing Home Community Rep-**

Mrs. Ovide requested the appointment of Paulina Smith as the community rep for the nursing home.

**Nursing Home Board Rep-**

Mr. Muir agreed to stay in the board rep position for the nursing home

**CHS Board Rep-**

Mrs. Harrison wasn't in attendance but agreed to stay in the position of the Community rep for the CHS board.

**CHS Board Rep-**

Mrs. Ovide nominated Mr. Hammond for the CHS board rep position.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business to come before the District Board, the meeting was adjourned by Dr. Thompson at 4:36 pm.**

  
Approved, Secretary

2/4/2025  
Date