

COUNTY POLICY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 21, 1999, 11:00 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Ed Melvin
Commissioner Talmage Baggett
Commissioner Breeden Blackwell

OTHERS: Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
James Martin, Deputy County Manager
Grainger Barrett, Senior Staff Attorney
Andrea Wright, Mid Carolina Council of Governments
Dr. Michael Bryant, President, Sandhills Physicians, Inc.
Dr. Zane Walsh, President, Medical Society
Dr. Myron Strickland, Chief of Staff, Cape Fear Valley Hospital
Dr. Sherry Jordan
Dr. Rakesh Gupta
Rita Graves (Sandhills Physicians)
Marsha Fogle, Clerk
Press
Torrey Johnson, Senior Associate Administrator-Finance-CFO
Cape Fear Valley Health System

1. Election of Chairman

The Committee elected Ed Melvin, Chairman, by acclamation.

2. Election of Vice Chairman

The Committee elected Tal Baggett, Vice Chairman, by acclamation.

3. Designation of regular meeting date

The Committee unanimously voted to meet on the third Thursday of each month at 11:00 AM in Room 564, Cumberland County Courthouse.

4. Discussion/consideration of Rule 30 (f) in the County's Rules of Procedures (If a person is appointed to fill someone's unexpired term and serves less than ½ of that term, he/she is eligible to serve two full terms) (This item was referred to the Committee by the Board of Commissioners)

MOTION: Commissioner Blackwell moved to leave the Policy as it is.

SECOND: Commissioner Baggett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

It was noted that if there is some special circumstance regarding a board member's tenure, the Board of Commissioners may by majority vote make an exception to the policy.

5. Discussion/consideration of mileage for members of the Nursing Home Committee and the Adult Care Home Committee

Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager, noted that he had received a request from Mid Carolina Council of Governments to consider their request for mileage reimbursement. He noted that the only County Boards currently being reimbursed are those the General Statutes requires. The following County Boards receive mileage and/or reimbursement of some amount: Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, ABC Board, and the Jury Commission.

Ms. Andrea Wright, Mid Carolina Council of Governments, asked the Committee to consider establishing mileage reimbursement for the members of the Nursing Home Committee and the Adult Care Home Committee. She stated that Sampson County reimburses their members out of their travel line item. She said she hoped that reimbursement of mileage would give the members some incentive to fulfill their obligations. She said she was having a retention problem. Ms. Wright indicated she was also going to ask Harnett County to provide mileage reimbursement.

Commissioner Baggett asked if approval of this request by the Committee would open up the door for other boards/committees to request reimbursement. County Manager Cliff Strassenburg stated it would.

Commissioner Blackwell said he did not think any of the Boards should be paid and that if we do in fact approve this request, it would be difficult to say no to others. He suggested this Committee take no action until Harnett County has deliberated the issue. Mr. Blackwell said the Commissioners would welcome some recommendations from Mid Carolina concerning qualified and willing applicants to serve on these two committees.

MOTION: Commissioner Baggett moved to table this matter until Harnett County responds to this request.

SECOND: Commissioner Blackwell

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

6. Discussion/consideration of the composition of the Cape Fear Valley Health System, Inc. Board of Trustees (referred to the Committee by the Board of Commissioners)

A request has been received from Sandhills Physicians, Inc. asking the Board of Commissioners to change the composition of the Hospital Board of Trustees.

Grainger Barrett, Senior Staff Attorney, reviewed the by-laws pertaining to the composition of the Hospital Board of Trustees. Currently the Board consists of 15 members: 3 doctors, 7 commissioners, 1 registered nurse, 4 at-large members, ex-officio non voting member: County Manager.

The Board of Commissioners may change the number of commissioners on the Hospital Board by a vote of the Body. The Board of Commissioners can reduce the size of the Board of Trustees and change the proportionate make-up through changing the By-Laws. Other physicians could be added to the Board by the defacto method of appointing a physician to the at-large positions. If

the Board of Commissioners chooses to change the make-up of the hospital board, i.e, specifically designating more than three physicians or increase the number of trustees, they would need to approve an amendment to the Charter which would be sent to the Secretary of State.

Dr. Strickland noted some ambiguity in the bylaws relating to terms. He noted the Board of Commissioners may serve indefinitely as long as they are on the Board of Commissioners while the other members have definite terms. He also said he was aware that Tenent has been meeting with commissioners and doctors individually relative to lease of Cape Fear Hospital. He noted that hospitals owned/leased by Tenent do not have commissioners on their Boards of Trustees. He also noted that Mr. John Carlisle is planning to retire in the next year. He expressed concern that commissioners may reverse decisions made by the Hospital Board of Trustees of which they are members, when the item gets to them for consideration as Commissioners of Cumberland County. He also expressed concern that there may be too much of a political atmosphere on the Hospital Board of Trustees.

Dr. Michael Bryant noted that there has been a change in the number of commissioners serving on the Hospital Board of Trustees. Torrey Johnson, stated that prior to 1982 only one commissioner served on the Hospital Board of Trustees, a decision made by the Board of Commissioners. However, following some problems, the Commissioners decided that all of them would serve as trustees on the Hospital Board. Dr. Bryant is requesting that the Commissioners consider the following petition from the Sandhills Physicians, Inc.:

- Depoliticize the Board of Trustees. (Of the 26 North Carolina county hospitals surveyed, Cape Fear Valley Health System is the only one that has all commissioners on the Board rather than a combination of commissioners, physicians, community business leaders and other citizens);
- Decrease the number of county commissioners on the Board of Trustees to no more than three;
- Reconfigure the at-large appointments to ensure large and mid-size business/employers join with small employers and community leaders to more closely reflect the interest and concerns of Cumberland County residents. The Board of Trustees should select the at-large members, subject to approval of the commissioners;
- Increase the number of physicians on the Board to six;
- Ensure that health care professionals and physicians with broad-based medical knowledge have a strong voice in naming the successor to the CEO position when John Carlisle retires;
- Assure the public that the hospital will not be sold or leased to a third party for-profit corporation.

Dr. Rakesh Gupta, who served on the Board of Trustees for three years, said because of the minority representation by doctors on the Board, issues important to physicians are outvoted. He said it is important to recognize the importance of concerns of patients and ancillary staff. These concerns are not always addressed by the Hospital Board of Trustees. He stressed there should be a balanced view on the Board. He said the reduction of the number of commissioners on the Board will not cause the commissioners to have less control because they ultimately will make decisions concerning the hospital as county commissioners.

Commissioner Ed Melvin said he was supportive of increasing the number of physicians on the Hospital Board of Trustees. In addition, he said he wanted to make it clear one more time that he would never lease or sell the hospital to anyone as long as it is profitable.

Dr. Jordan expressed concern that there are no checks and balances on the Board and patient advocates are lacking on the Board. She said she has ideas she could share that would help make the hospital more successful and that would bring more money to the bottom line.

Commissioner Breeden Blackwell said he had met with Tenent three times and they had never used the word "lease" to him. He said he is new and is trying to learn more; however, his feeling is there is a lack of trust between the physicians and hospital administration. He said he is concerned about that and when he has a better feel and understanding about the issue he will discuss it at the Board meeting. He said he agreed that the physicians have to be involved in the replacement of the administrator; however John Carlisle has not said when he is planning to retire. He said he hoped physicians would be part of the team making the selection of a new CEO for the hospital at the appropriate time. In addition, he noted that just because other county's don't have commissioners serving on their boards, does not mean it is not a good idea. He said in fact this Board of Commissioners does provide the "check and balance" for physicians, administration and the citizens of the County. Commissioner Blackwell asked what organization represents the majority of physicians in the community. It was noted that the Medical Society and Sandhills Physicians, Inc. both fit into that category. There are a total of 225 members in the Medical Society and 175 in the Sandhills Physicians, Inc. Dr. Zane Walsh noted there are 395 licensed physicians in Cumberland County. There is dual membership in these organizations. Commissioner Blackwell also stated that physician's opinions and suggestions about how to utilize Highsmith Rainey Hospital will be important. Commissioner Blackwell noted that when the citizens of the community have concerns about the hospital it is the commissioners they voice their concerns to. Mr. Blackwell said at this point in time he is willing to give one more seat on the Hospital Board of Trustees to the physicians. (He noted that could happen when one of the at-large position's term expires this year). He also said at this point he is not willing to remove anyone from the Board to make room for a physician.

Dr. Gupta noted that in his three year tenure on the Board of Trustees commissioners did not take an active role, read minutes or attend meetings regularly. He said he hoped that would change. He again urged the Commissioners to consider a balanced board that would allow for the physicians' voice on issues. He said as it is currently structured, the physician's view is not represented adequately.

Commissioner Tal Baggett said he had not met with Tenent and thought a meeting would be a waste of everybody's time. He said he is supportive of more physician representation on the Hospital Board. He said perhaps a 5-5-5 make-up of the hospital board is a starting point for consideration.

Dr. Strickland said it is hard for him to trust the other members of the Hospital Board (at-large members) because they are appointed by the Commissioners and some have indicated to him it would take a strong opinion not to vote along commissioner lines. He expressed strong concern

that equipment is being purchased at the hospital the physicians do not feel is needed. In addition he noted that it costs more to go to Cape Fear Valley Hospital than Duke or Chapel Hill.

Commissioner Ed Melvin said that perhaps the 5-5-5 ratio on the Hospital Board is a good starting point.

Commissioner Blackwell noted that is incumbent upon the commissioners to read materials and come prepared to the Hospital board meetings. He said he for one is open to the doctors' opinions relative to hospital purchases. He also said he believed the other commissioners should hear the physician's concerns and that they should be given time on an agenda, either at the commissioners' meeting or perhaps more appropriately at the Board of Trustees meeting. Perhaps a special meeting could be called for this matter. Torrey Johnson, Cape Fear Valley Health Systems, Inc., noted this issue could be discussed as part of the Chief of Staff report to the Hospital Trustees at their meeting next week.

MOTION: Commissioner Blackwell moved that the Policy Committee recommend that a special meeting of the Cape Fear Valley Hospital Board of Trustees be held to receive physician comment and input on the composition of the Hospital Board of Trustees.

SECOND: Commissioner Baggett

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Commissioner Blackwell said he would address this at the Hospital meeting next week.

Torrey Johnson, Cape Fear Valley Health Systems, Inc., noted that the structure of Boards of Trustees are different in different counties. He said, speaking for himself, that the single more critical time of growth and maturity of the hospital system was when the entire Board of Commissioners became trustees of the hospital board. Their presence at the hospital board meetings gave them insight into the operation and continues to keep them in the loop of what is happening in that facility.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 12:30 PM