



705-382-2900
www.almaguin-health.org

Minutes: May 7, 2024, 10:00 am via Zoom and at the Township of Perry Municipal Office

Present: Rod Ward (Chair), Delynne Patterson, Margaret Ann MacPhail, Chris Hope, Fraser Williamson (Vice Chair), Vicky Roeder-Martin, Bill Black (for Tom Bryson, Joly), Jim Ronholm, Norm Hofstetter, Brad Kneller, Camille Barr (Secretary)

Regrets: Tom Bryson, Cheryl Phillip

Guest: Isabel Pereira, Sandy Zurbrigg, Rebecca Paul

Called to order at 10:00 am by Chair R. Ward

1. 2024-14 Moved by B. Kneller - Seconded by D. Patterson
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Almaguin Highlands Health Council adopt the minutes from the regular meeting of April 4, 2024, as circulated. Carried.

2. **DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY OF INTEREST:** None

3. **DELEGATIONS:** None

4. **RESOLUTIONS PASSED:** None

5. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

a) **Almaguin healthcare updates and updates from the BFFHT**

As previously discussed, there is a need to explore healthcare requirements for all of Almaguin as we plan for the future. A needs assessment would be valuable with the goal of creating a strategic plan for the area. The last time this occurred was approx. 12 years ago when the hospital in Burk's Falls closed. R. Ward discussed with C. Harrison who shared some consultant information (S. Van den Heuvel and M. Barnes). The project would be tendered. An assessment is said to cost approx. \$10-15,000.00. Consideration could be given to the 10 municipalities using \$1000.00 each from their Almaguin local share hold back. R. Ward will continue to move the project forward and draft a statement of work for all to review. The aim would be to have a draft completed for September/October.

MAHC hospital foundation will begin their fundraising efforts for Almaguin. The x-ray replacement is still top priority for them. They are setting a high target with the initiative running approx. 2-3 years.

R. Ward enquired with the foundation if the xray fundraising includes the renovation costs. They expressed a discomfort in fundraising for a renovation in a building they do not own. They are comfortable fundraising the equipment. C. Hope is looking into the renovation aspect. The xray equipment can be installed in the existing building in Burk's Falls and moved in the future should that make sense. Cost would be approx. \$20,000.00.

The foundation feels there are resources and donors in Almaguin that would be very supportive. A corporation has approached the Village of Burk's Falls about a donation as well the Three-Mile Lake Association is interested in hosting a gala.

Brief dialogue occurred regarding creating links between the two FHTs for cost sharing on projects (Sundridge and Burk's Falls) which already is occurring with the latest funding announcements.

R. Paul shared that the BFFHT has been very busy. She explained some of the challenges they face as well as opportunities. HHR continues to be a challenge. The FHT has not had an increase to their funding packages since 2018 which means no increases. For human resources they are competing for sector staff with organizations or practices funded at higher rates. Across Ontario there are stories of staff leaving FHTs as they just cannot afford to stay with the increasing costs of living. There are many benefits to being part of a health team, a couple being hours of work and partnerships. Recruitment however is going well. The team has hired one NP who will start in August and are in negotiations with another thanks to Recruiter support. They are exploring a third that will be based out of Sundridge and working in collaboration with that FHT. NP's will roster patients. A Registered Dietitian has been hired. The role is new and will be a great referral source to physicians. They start in May. Other positions are in progress.

The rebranding project will be launched mid May. The Almaguin region will be highlighted as well as the health council. R. Paul offered to provide a demo when available. This project includes a new logo, name, and signage. It is exciting for the team and will assist with recruitment efforts.

The BFFHT has a good partnership established with the Sundridge team. The proposals were done in collaboration and now working together on legal on agreements etc. They will work on creating programing for the communities served by those two centres.

R. Paul shared that the Burk's Falls Family Health Team will be renamed the Almaguin Highlands Family Health Team.

R. Paul updated that the physician group is working to have Kearney and McMurrich Monteith in the catchment. Graydon Smith is aware of the issue.

Dr. Baechler is retiring June 4 from the Sundrige and District Medical Centre. A replacement has been hired and will start in September. In the interim locums will provide patient coverage.

b) MAHC builds and local share updates

MAHC continues to provide weekly updates. Members are encouraged to subscribe to the updates on their website. There continues to be challenges, however those are being worked through. Some significant changes have been made to the Bracebridge site plans.

Council is encouraged to share the positives about the initiative. To sign up for the updates visit their website and click “stay connected”.

c) **Follow up regarding recruitment of doctors and possible impact**

Chair followed up regarding the large incentive offered by Huntsville for primary care recruitment. Huntsville shared at the last HHR meeting, they will not recruit from our area.

Progress report: Will be prepared and sent out with minutes.

d) **Other business**

Sandy Zurbrigg was introduced to the group. Sandy is the new to the MAOHT Patient and Family Advisory Committee and interested to hear what is happening in Almaguin Highlands. Welcome Sandy.

F. Williamson tabled the idea of working together between facilities. He shared that the way the Sundridge and District Medical Centre is set up is that when work needs to be done, municipal staff are pulled to assist, setting aside regular duties. This was similar in Burk’s Falls until a maintenance person was hired who works out of the building. C. Hope said that centralized/ shared administration is needed, and it is at Graydon Smith’s level.

S. Keast provided HHR updates. She worked with Sundridge on Dr. Recruitment. She shared how important word of mouth has been in her role from finding housing to making recruitment connections. Sisan provided council with an update report in which she reviewed. In addition, she shared that on the CBC show “White Coat, Black Art” there was an episode where a recruiter was interviewed and shared some interesting concepts for recruitment she will duplicate.

C. Barr and C. Hope mentioned community concern for recent and ongoing lab closures. C. Barr to connect with MAHC regarding the notification process for a closure and how it might be further communicated to Almaguin municipalities.

2024-15 Moved by F. Williamson - Seconded by C. Hope

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Almaguin Highlands Health Council adjourn at 11:15 am to meet again on June 6, at 10:00 am at location TBD. Carried.