

**City of Melfort  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
October 7, 2004**

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004, in the Council Chambers, Melfort, Saskatchewan, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**    **COUNCIL:**    Mayor Collins and Aldermen Abbott, Degelman, Lang, MacNaughton, Terry and White.

**VISITORS:**    Chairman Carol Heibert, Vice-Chair Dale Link, Member Marion Heavin and CEO Gordon Denton, Kelsey Trail Health Region.

**STAFF:**         J. Wade, City Manager.

**KELSEY TRAIL HEALTH REGION**

Chairman Carol Heibert advised that the board consists of 12 appointed members. At present there are two vacancies on the board. She then turned things over to CEO Gordon Denton. The CEO discussed various successes and challenges of the board:

Challenges . finances are always a challenge and they are working at this. They are anticipating a deficit at year end.

Some successes . redeployment of staff in certain areas has helped and they are making progress with this.

Services provided . Melfort, Nipawin and Tisdale are all provided with service with surgery performed only in Melfort and Nipawin.

Status of first floor . a study has been done with regards to having a medical clinic there. This probably won't work. The community services could possibly be located there. The investment on this would provide a good return in the long run.

Ultrasound . Henrietta Roy is going to go on her own and be located in the Mall. This is fully supported by the Health District. It will not change the level of service and there would be no cost difference.

Primary Care . This is part of the Federal and Provincial Governments' Action Plan on health care, which deals with lighter health problems. It will provide teaching, prevention and early intervention. Hudson Bay and Carrot River are already on this. It is also part of the federal mandate.

Redeployment of staff . this has consolidated payroll and accounting to the central office.

Management levels . there has been a 4 . 5% reduction in this since amalgamation.

Parkland update . 1 or 2 outstanding issues on the new building. There was a small surplus originally. Former facility belongs to SPMC . health officials don't know what is going on with it.

Assisted living . Rate increases were necessary as it was being subsidized by the Health District. This is not an assured service. With the increases, they hope to get to a break even point.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

D. Terry . With the number of doctors currently in Melfort, do we have enough?

CEO . There should be 10 and we haven't been there for some time; however, presently there are 11.

D. Link . The original plan was for 9 ½ to 10.

CEO . 1 will be leaving.

Mayor . Is there a full compliment across the Region?

CEO . Pretty well, Nipawin would like an increase.

R. Lang . What is the criterion?

CEO . Presently most doctors are on a fee for service basis. Hudson Bay is on an alternate payment plan. This is not a salary type of arrangement. The alternate payment plan is based on an average over a period of time. It is a predetermined amount. The doctor still does shadow billing. On a fee for service, the doctor is paid directly from the government. On the alternate payment plan, the government sends money to the Health District, who in turn pays the doctors.

R. Lang . There is no primary health care in Melfort at this time?

CEO . Correct.

R. Lang . Will Melfort fall under primary health care?

CEO . Yes, Melfort is presently all fee for service. 21% of the Health Districts are under primary care at this time.

Mayor . Who decides on alternate payment plan?

CEO . The provincial government and health district, and the health district then discusses with the doctors

R. Lang . If the doctors are on a predetermined fee, what is the incentive to see more patients?

CEO . That shouldn't be a problem. Fee for service doctors are not taking on new patients at this time. Some doctors are fearful, while others think it is great.

D. Link . This is a team approach that will take time for everyone to come on side. This is a national plan and not the province or health district.

Mayor . Do federal/provincial agreements affect funding?

CEO . No.

J. White . Is the alternate plan a 3 year average of the individual doctor or group of doctors depending on the situation.

CEO . Yes.

R. Lang . Was the assisted living rate increase because the health district was subsidizing and they hope to get to a break even point?

CEO . Yes.

D. Degelman . With respect to doctor retention, there are rumours that some doctors are not happy here and some are moving.

CEO . Two new doctors are not happy due to an apparent misunderstanding. The doctors thought their primary duty was to be an anesthesiologist. The health district wanted this, as well as being a GP. There are no surgeons here at present, but one is coming in November. Doctors are never doing anesthetics full time.

D. Degelman - If we increased surgeries would that help? Could we bring in an orthopedic surgeon?

CEO . There is some going on now, but nothing major.

M. Heavin . Doctor groups do not like single practitioners.

R. Lang . Can the misunderstanding with the two new doctors close the gap? There was a job description misunderstanding.

CEO . Yes.

R. Lang . People are leaving Melfort because the service is not here and they have to travel to Saskatoon, for instance, so they move there instead of traveling.

D. Link . The health district is not the employer of doctors. The health district cannot dictate to the doctors. There are no other communities that can come close to Melfort and the service provided here.

CEO . The north east region is well ahead of other parts of the province.

M. Heavin . 15 . 17 specialists are coming to Melfort at the present time.

D. Link . We have a resident radiologist. Other health districts only see one once a week.

S. MacNaughton . Are there areas that Melfort could be stronger in?

CEO . I think there is a good compliment here now.

S. MacNaughton . In the future, are there areas of expansion?

CEO . Primary care.

S. MacNaughton . Concerning waiting lists, have portable MRIs, for instance, been looked at?

CEO . The province is looking at this, but I don't know where it is at this time. If it was available it might help to attract more radiologists,

Mayor . Ultrasound . will this be open privately?

CEO . Yes.

Mayor . Is there a cost for patients in the hospital to travel to the service from the hospital?

CEO . No, in-patients will still be looked at in the hospital.

R. Lang . Ultrasound . if this was not going private, would the health district look at it?

CEO . Yes. This is a business opportunity for a private individual.

Rick . Is the local linking to Saskatoon?

CEO . Yes.

Rick . Will this cause problems for radiologists?

CEO . No.

Rick . Will this affect future hiring of radiologists?

CEO . Possibly.

Mayor . What is the state of the capital reserves?

CEO . Almost depleted, we need funding from Sask Health and fund raising. This will be a significant challenge for all in the future.

D. Degelman . Do you see any changes in primary health services?

CEO . Some possibilities.

Mayor Collins extended his thanks to the representatives from the health district, who left the meeting at 8.05 pm.

**MELFORT TIGER LILY SCHOOL DIVISION**

Council discussed the latest motion received from the Melfort Tiger Lily School Division. Mayor Collins explained that we did prepare a letter of support previously, which was very much appreciated. Today we received a further press release dated October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004, and the motion that was passed as a result of the public meeting held on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

The question is . do we want to send another letter of support for the new motion? A question was asked as to how the school division arrived at what they are proposing in this motion? Alderman Abbott advised that the Melfort Tiger Lily School Division had held meetings with the other school divisions and as a result came up with this proposal. There could be up to 13,500 students in this proposed division if accepted. It is felt that this is better then what the government is proposing.

The consensus of the entire council was that we would support this new resolution.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Clerk