

Cook County Board of Commissioners Meeting October 2, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 10:20am by President Stroger.

Comm Peraica requested that the rules be suspended to allow item #4 from the Consent Calendar be considered. The Consent Calendar was being passed out as he made this request. The request was approved and the individual cited was honored.

Comm. Butler then made a motion that the rules again be suspended and item #1 from the New Items agenda be considered. This too was approved and this called for a closed session to consider a hospital personnel issue. When Comm. Quigley and Suffredin suggested that the closed session be delayed until the end of the meeting President Stroger stated that this had been well thought out and the plan was to have the session at the beginning of the meeting. At 10:30am the room was cleared and the board went into executive session. At 11:30am the public was allowed back and the meeting resumed. Comm. Butler made a motion for removal of the hospital department chair that had been discussed during the closed session and the motion was approved.

The Finance Committee meeting was called to order at 11:33am by Comm. Daley. Court Orders were approved with only a few questions from Comm. Peraica. Bills and Claims were approved without comment.

Bills and Claims –

- Health Facilities - all approved with discussion on the following items.
 - Item #289554 - refers to a partial payment to Great Lakes Medicaid, Inc. Comm. Suffredin asked Tom Glaser, COO of Bureau of Health Services, for an update on medicaid billing at Stroger Hospital. Mr. Glaser stated that the 4 vendors that are under contract to the county for establishing billing eligibility are now working in accordance with their contract guidelines. Comm. Suffredin wanted to know if they were satisfied with the work Great Lakes is doing and Mr. Glaser stated that it would be beneficial to wait until the end of the year before an evaluation can be done. Since the vendors are all paid a percentage of what they collect, they submit an invoice that is compared to their collections and then they are paid accordingly. Comm. Collins asked if the vendors had given an estimate of expected collections so that anticipated revenues from the vendors could be used for budgeting purposes. She stated that all the vendors needed to have a performance analysis. Comm. Peraica reminded the board that on July 26, 2007, a report on the vendors had been given to the board indicating that \$128m was collected from July of 2006 to June of 2007.
 - Item #289497 – refers to payment to Siemens Medical Solutions, Inc. for billing software and hardware. Comm. Peraica asked Mr. Glaser about the status of the computerized billing system. Mr. Glaser stated that they are trying to get cash into the system. Money had to be pulled from the super-bill process to pursue other projects and the projection that the super-bill would be deployed by Sept. 2007 has been altered.

- Comm. Peraica expressed his concern about this since the board had been assured that computerized billing would help collections and again the process has been stalled. He wanted to know if this would create a larger revenue shortfall than previously predicted. Mr. Glaser again stated that the revenue shortfall would be \$43m.
- Comm. Moldonado wanted to know if the contractors had been reaching out to establish eligibility for the 47% of the patients reported as self-pay. Mr. Glaser stated that since July 1 they have been working on billing eligibility.
- Comm. Goslin clarified that self-pay is an industry term that actually refers to the patient population that has no significant resources for payment for health care costs.
- Comm. Daley stated that Mr. Cookingham, CFO for Bureau of Health Services, has stated that the self-pay percentage (those for whom there will be no reimbursement) could possibly be reduced to 42% but probably not much lower than that.
- Comm. Goslin emphasized that that means that 42% have no ability to pay and the county will have to pay the bill for those persons.

The remaining agenda items were acted on without discussion except for the following two.

Item #288456 was the reconsideration of a previously approved contract amendment for eligibility determination services provided by Chamberlin Edmonds and Associates, Inc. at Stroger Hospital. The \$4m contract amendment was approved at the July 10th board meeting and brought back for reconsideration at the July 31st meeting where it was referred to the Finance Committee. At this meeting the item was first presented for approval but then Comm. Moreno made a motion to defer consideration at the recommendation of the President which appeared to be to the surprise of Comm. Daley. This resulted in another lengthy discussion of the 4 vendors doing eligibility services within the Bureau of Health Services.

- Comm. Moreno said there is a disparity in the amounts being paid to vendors so it is best to defer the contract approval.
- President Stroger wanted an up or down vote (to approve or not approve) and then determine if an RFP needs to be done.
- Comm. Peraica agreed that action should be taken at this meeting. He stated that Great Lakes (one of the 4 vendors) gets a disproportionate amount of the revenue and Chamberlin Edmonds got their contract in a non-RFP process.

President Stroger asked Mr. Glaser if the process was fair for awarding the vendor contracts and Mr. Glaser said yes. Comm. Claypool stated that the process was messed up from the beginning and once again that is what is coming back to haunt them. The motion to defer action on this contract was voted down – 13 No, and 4 Yes. (No – Beavers, Butler, Collins, Gorman, Goslin, Murphy, Peraica, Quigley, Schneider, Silvestri, Steele, Suffredin, Daley; Yes – Claypool, Moldonado, Moreno, Sims)

A motion was then made for approval. More discussion ensued concerning the fairness of the process for awarding the contracts and the fairness of the way the contracts are now operating.

Dr. Simon explained that he wanted to continue the process as it is operating now until the end of the year, with the expectation that the vendors will probably bring in an additional \$40m, and then assess the process and possibly do an RFP and end up with just 2 vendors instead of 4. The motion was finally approved – 12 Yes, and 5 No. (Yes – Beavers, Butler, Collins, Gorman, Goslin, Murphy, Quigley, Schneider, Silvestri, Steele, Suffredin, Daley; No- Claypool, Moldonado, Moreno, Peraica, Sims)

Item #288470 was a request for authorization to enter into a contract with Vantage Solutions to do a Job Classification Study. After questioning Mr. Gilmore from the Bureau of Human Resources it was determined that his department had already done part of what the contract was supposed to cover and he was not sure that the vendor would be able to do the management evaluation portion, so it was decided to Receive and File this request until his department had a better idea of how they wanted to implement such a study. The Finance Committee was finally adjourned at 1:17pm.

The Zoning and Building Committee and Roads and Bridges Committee approved their entire agendas as presented and both were completed by 1:20pm.

The Board meeting was reconvened at 1:21pm.

Item #2 on the Board agenda was a motion to Rescind a Previously Approved Resolution. The previously approved resolution was the suspension of payments as of July 10, 2007 to the Special State's Attorneys Egan and Boyle in the Jon Burge case.

- Comm. Daley stated that he had been urged by the State's Attorney to rescind the resolution that had been passed at the July 10th board meeting.
- Comm. Collins stated that she did not think they should rescind the resolution even if there was a hearing on the issue scheduled for the next day and they could be held in contempt of court if they stopped payments.
- Mr. Driscoll, the State's Attorney, stated that in July Judge Biebel had entered an order for payment and the courts had ordered payments. The duration of the investigation is not within the control of the board and they are required to continue payments although it would be legitimate to ask the judge at the scheduled hearing how long the investigation will last. Mr. Driscoll stated that new charges continue to be filed so the investigation keeps going on.
- Commissioners expressed concerns with how the legal system failed in this case and how the issue has now become 'pay these guys or the board will be punished' since no one else in the case has been punished.
- Comm. Peraica said that the reasonable time for investigation of this case has been exceeded and payment needs to cease.
- Comm. Collins stated that the report has been issued and therefore the job is done and payment should stop.

The motion to rescind was not approved – 9 No, 6 Yes, 1 Present, and 1 Absent. (No – Butler, Claypool, Collins, Moldonado, Moreno, Peraica, Quigley, Steele, Suffredin; Yes – Beavers, Daley, Gorman, Murphy, Schneider, Silvestri; Present – Sims, Absent – Goslin)

At 2:10pm the observer left the meeting. The Board was just moving on to item #3 of 69 agenda items.

Reported by
Cynthia Schilsky
LWVCC Observer