

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2020, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., Zoom Meeting

The Medical SSMID Commission met virtually in regular session. Those present are listed below. The meeting was held as an electronic regular Commission meeting because a meeting in person was impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Commissioners, staff and the public presented by COVID-19.

Present: John Albert, Tim Charles, Gordon Epping, Michelle Jensen, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Michelle Niermann, Okpara Rice, Karen Smith, Julie Sterling, Mike Sundall, Sarah Wickenkamp

Absent: Mary Meisterling

Guests: Sandi Fowler – City of Cedar Rapids

Staff: Jessica Komisar, Doug Neumann, Phil Wasta

Welcome & Call to Order

Smith welcomed everybody and called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Okpara moved approval of the March minutes, March and April financials and January-March 2020 investment reports with Albert seconding. The minutes, financials and reports were unanimously approved.

COVID-19 Impacts on Stakeholders

Wasta contacted 20 MedQuarter business owners recently and asked how things were going, if they applied for financial assistance and how might the MedQuarter be able to help moving forward? Wasta said the vast majority had applied and received PPP and other grants and loans. Wasta said Gary Ficken with Bimm Ridder Sportswear is one business that has been impacted the most. Bimm Ridder manufacturers sports apparel and has lost 90+% of volume. Wasta said they received PPP and have been trying to alter their manufacturing to produce other items. Wasta said most business owners he spoke with voiced appreciation for updates that have been sent out about webinars, funding opportunities and other resources. When asked how the MedQuarter can be of assistance moving forward, there were 3 common responses: 1) continue to be the clearing house for information about businesses within the district to encourage shopping local 2) become the clearing house for information as it pertains to medical clinics such as hours and dates of operation in addition to restaurants and retailers and 3) collective district wide marketing effort as businesses re-open not only on social media but perhaps print ads to reach a broader demographic.

Wasta asked Commissioners to share how their business is doing. Albert said Citywide Cleaners received some financial assistance and the updates they've been receiving have been beneficial. McGrane-Hop said Gilded Pear received some financial assistance, open by appointment only for the time being and figuring out the re-opening plan. Information that has been sent out has been the most helpful. Sundall said PCI opened full-time on Monday after a furlough of 50% in mid-March and are practicing social distancing in lobbies, waiting rooms, etc. and staying very busy. Sundall said about 85% of patients who had previous elective surgeries have rescheduled. PCI, St. Luke's and Mercy have been meeting regularly about the right way to go about processes and coordinating care for the community. Charles added the former competitive interest has been put aside as these three organizations are collaborating. Sundall said the MedQuarter may see a shift in the number of rural patients that may not want their procedures done in their smaller communities and may feel safer coming here. Charles said the early conversations with rural facilities were confident but as time went on, they have had extra pressures and stress and that there is a level of sophistication and needs to safely care for patients that the MedQuarter can provide. Sundall suggested this could be a marketing opportunity for the MedQuarter.

District Initiatives and Potential Adjustments

Neumann said there have been continued collaborative efforts between the three districts and an increase in cross district communication. Neumann said due to the across the board salary cuts at the Economic Alliance, the MedQ charges have been adjusted and reduced by \$1,779/year. Because the Czech Village NewBo SSMID has very limited financial resources compared to the other districts and do not have a dedicated Executive Director, Neumann asked for Commissioner feedback on shifting 4 hours per week of Wasta's time to CVNB SSMID priorities and bring his salary in from other sources (\$12,540/year in salary from non-MedQ source). Neumann said this could easily be a trial period for cross-district leadership that could potentially lead to additional SSMID

staff restructuring down the road. Neumann said a 30-day exit clause could be included in the contract if at any point either party wants to reverse course. Wasta said he looked at the executive director goals for 2020 and if COVID disruptions continue, there will be some goals that that may not be priorities anymore and said if he can't be completely committed to those goals, this would be a good way to utilize his skills.

Niermann moved approval for a trial program to shift 4 hrs/week of Wasta's time to the CVNB SSMID with a 30-day out caveat. Albert seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Smith said we will get a formal contract created.

Wasta shared the YTD budget to show line items that may not happen or be used to their budgeted amount and where there might be some potential in the budget to support a district marketing plan and business support program. Wasta said the Downtown district allocated \$100k of reserves to develop a phone app where consumers would get \$50 in credit for a Downtown retailer or restaurant when they spend \$100 with Downtown businesses. Wasta said there will be over \$82k in SSMID dollars that will not be spent including \$60k in gateways, \$20k in façade improvement and a handful of other line items. Wasta said once businesses open up, things will move quickly and asked for a motion to utilize budget excess for a small business support program and district marketing initiative with the guidance from the Chairs. Sundall suggested a June meeting to discuss this effort and offered a large conference room at PCI so we can discuss in-person. Rice moved approval to have the June 10th meeting with Albert seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

MPIP for 2020 – 1st Ave Project

Wasta said at the last City Council meeting, Pirc Tobin was awarded the 2020 1st Ave project from 6th Street to 10th Street. Wasta said he plans on conducting a MedQuarter "townhall" via Zoom inviting MedQuarter stakeholders to review the plans. The stakeholders along 1st Ave are aware of what will be taking place in front of their businesses. Unfortunately, due to the material and equipment for this project, there will be only 1 lane of traffic East bound during the first phase and 1 lane of traffic West bound during the second phase. The project is scheduled to start by the end of the month.

Wasta received the final bill for the 2019 10th Street project. The original approved budget for this project was up to \$778k with a \$41,500 contingency. Wasta was pleased to announce the project total came in at \$709k which is \$40k under budget and \$69k under exposure (what we could have spent if the contingency was used).

Digital Marketing Campaign

Jensen shared results from the "People of the MedQ" campaign and said she and Amperage felt that it did well based on our goals. Wasta thanked the organizations that provided testimonials for the campaign. Wasta added there was a good cross section of the major institutions, smaller private practices and small businesses and was received well on social media.

Jensen said the next campaign will be "Places of the MedQ" for small businesses. The original goal was to start that campaign right away but with COVID impacts, the branding and marketing committee is unsure when it will begin. Wasta said we have a good social media following now and will continue to work with Amperage on how to leverage that and move forward with the next campaign to hammer home the value of the MedQuarter.

Wickenkamp suggested making red MedQ branded masks to hand out to our businesses. Wasta said a similar initiative is happening in Iowa City for restaurants and can look into the details.

Core District Loop Update

Wasta met with city traffic engineering, MPO, Downtown and Czech Village NewBo district directors to discuss the proposed core district bike/pedestrian loop. City engineering embraced this concept very well and made some modifications to the loop map of which streets and avenues would be included. There was immediate buy-in and currently working on pricing and what implementation would look like. Wasta and Jesse Thoeming with the Downtown district walked the loop to look for signage and broken connectivity opportunities. Wasta said the proposal for what it would cost the districts should be ready by the end of the month. There is no current target date but everybody in the meeting felt that it could be implemented this summer.

Executive Director's Update

Wasta has been thinking if there would be energy behind a group buying effort in the MedQuarter for PPE – gowns, masks, sanitizers, shields, etc. Rice said it would give us more buying power by collaborating as a district and would be a good idea. Smith agreed that it would be worth looking into. Wasta will work on more research.

Adjourn

Rice moved to adjourn the meeting with McGrane-Hop seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 a.m.