

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2023, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., PCI Medical Pavilion 1

Present: Gordon Epping, Eric Griggs, Pauline Herb, Michelle Jensen, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Michelle Niermann, Okpara Rice, Michelle Stramel, Nathan Van Genderen

Absent: Eric Dalton, Russ Nieland, Julie Sterling

Guests: Jennifer Pratt, City of Cedar Rapids

Staff: Peggy Degnan, Jesse Thoeming, Phil Wasta, Nikki Willcox, Caleb Woods

Welcome, Introductions & Call to Order

Rice called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Congratulations was given to Niermann on being one of Becker's 107 Community Hospital CEO's to Know for 2023.

Consent Agenda

Wasta noted all investments are within guidelines. Epping moved to approve the consent agenda with Van Genderen seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Net Assets Related to Addition of Bigbelly Units

Epping remarked how the Bigbellies are leased and will review the structure of the lease with Wasta regarding GAAP. Epping explained the monthly entry for depreciation. Wasta explained that the MedQ's Bigbellies are an add-on to Downtown SSMID's contract through the EA and that MedQ is paying their portion to EA. MedQ has six and Downtown SSMID has 40 Bigbellies. Wasta reiterated the cost savings of being part of a larger group rather than in a stand-alone lease contract.

Nomination for Re-Appointments

Eric Griggs, Michelle Jensen, and Suzy McGrane-Hop were nominated for re-appointment to the Medical SSMID Commission for additional 3-year terms (7/1/23 – 6/30/26). Motion to approve by Niermann with Van Genderen seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Nomination and Election of Michelle Niermann as Vice Chair of Medical SSMID Commission

Preparation is needed for the July meeting where Rice will roll off as Chair and McGrane-Hop will become Chair. Niermann will come on as Vice Chair from July 2023–June 2025 and Chair from July 2025–June 2027. Van Genderen moved to approve and McGrane-Hop seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Proposal from Lakota Group for Addendum to Master Development Plan to Include New 5-Year Action Plan

In October of 2022, one of the action strategies for 2023 was to consider updating the master development plan with a new 5-year action plan. Wasta referenced that Scott Freres with Lakota Group visited with the commission at the March meeting and noted that ten years have passed, the commission has many new members, and that we are in a different world than when the original plan was approved in 2014. After the last meeting, Freres provided an outline of a proposal that Wasta presented to the chairs for review. The master plan was determined to still be valid, so the desire is to add an addendum to it with a new five-year action plan.

Epping said the plan is well done and feels the cost of \$64,950 is reasonable. Rice agreed saying the proposal is solid and he sees the fee as reasonable as it related to the work proposed. He likes that it builds onto the existing plan instead of starting from scratch.

Wasta asked the commission if the proposal addresses their needs, and if they are comfortable with the expenditure? Epping feels it is. Epping stated that the funds are available. McGrane-Hop asked about the timeframe with Wasta responding 4-6 months. Wasta suggested that if the proposal is accepted, that the process could kick-off at the July meeting with acceptance of the plan in January 2024, but that they would need to stay on track throughout the process to meet that timeline.

Herb questioned the wording that included refreshing the brand. Wasta said it will be more of a tagline and clarified MedQ is not rebranding.

Wasta explained that if the preference by the commission is to use Lakota Group and not go out for competitive bid that MedQ, Inc. funds should be used. Niermann said she supports using MedQ, Inc. funds for this purpose as it would be an appropriate use of funds. Rice moved that the SSMID approve requesting MedQ, Inc. fund the expenditure to engage Lakota Group as proposed. Epping motioned to approve and Niermann seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

2023 Executive Director Goals for Year-End Review

Wasta said the Director Goals are derived from the 2023 Action Strategies. Each line will need to be weighted by the Chairs. The six chairs get together and handle the personnel side of his review at the end of the year. Wasta shared he received two comments regarding the goals: 1.) Concern on pursuit of the child care facility. Wasta stressed a decision needs to be made as to whether this initiative is viable or dead. 2.) Concern on what our “event” would be. Wasta feels a first step could be to build around an event that raises the profile of the businesses in the MedQ and not try to conduct a health care event. Van Genderen motioned to approve the goals as provided and McGrane-Hop seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

District Marketing Initiative Updates

Woods reported on the 2023 MedQ Perks+ Summer Bash Pass saying it is more of a seasonal pass this year. Currently, there are 16 participating businesses and 181 pass sign-ups. More of a push was made this year with a change to weekly messaging by text and email. Woods is gathering data in order to increase engagement. Woods recommended giving out more gift cards in the future. Stramel asked if awards were being given. Woods stated no one qualified last month so they’re considering decreasing the points required to qualify. Stramel recommended listing the winners would help with promotion. Woods said he knows the businesses are in support of it because some proactively included discounts.

Rice asked if table tents with QR codes were distributed with Woods and Wasta confirming they just distributed them to the largest employers. Discounts within the MedQ were a big draw last year since people knew they could get discounts in addition to points. Woods asked for help in determining how much time people have to collect points, so other ways may be needed to engage people on more of a personal level.

With regard to a MedQ event, Wasta and Woods shared that the MedQ will be a Corporate Partner at the July 15th Downtown Farmer’s Market. The entry point at 3rd Avenue and 5th Street will have an alcove that will say “Gateway to MedQuarter.” The booth location will also be indicated on the Farmer’s Market venue maps. Wasta plans to do drawings for “Choose Kindness” t-shirts and stickers and MedQ Perks+ points will be awarded for checking-in at our booth. Volunteers are needed to man the booth from 7:30am–12:00pm. By being in close proximity to the day sponsor, Alliant Energy, our booth will be situated in a high foot traffic area. It was noted this is not a health care event, but an opportunity to gain awareness for the MedQuarter and garner support for businesses in the district. The Corporate Partner rate is \$1,000.

Jensen thinks this is a great solution for exposure without being very expensive. Our exact location is diagonal from Greene Square. Stramel feels staggering restaurant sample times and limiting it to an hour is a good idea.

Substack is being used for the MedQ News: Stakeholder Updates that come out on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Woods said Substack has 137 subscribers with a 46% open rate compared to an industry average of 21.5%.

Committee Updates

No discussion. All updates were included in the agenda packet.

Executive Director's Updates

Wasta placed "Choose Kindness" stickers and this month's Mental Health Summit brochure at each person's seat at today's meeting. Wasta shared that Kirkwood has met the criteria so that Contact Hours, CMEs, CEUs, and CEHs are being offered. As of now, there are 140 registrants and hoping for 200-250 therefore, more registrants are needed.

The planter placement plan for 2023 increases the number of planters along 1st Avenue from 6th Street to 12th Street with planters at every corner at major intersections. They will be positioned on either side as you drive down 1st Avenue. Additional planters will be placed on 10th Street as well to have a similar effect where possible. There are 44 planters total compared to 32 last year. The planters will start to be placed/planted on May 15th.

United Way's Day of Caring is May 11th. Phil will be hosting 16 volunteers from Transamerica to help refresh the district.

As part of the 8th Avenue / 10th Street / Mt. Vernon Road SE roundabout project, the MedQuarter needs to take care of the signage on the retaining wall as well as the programmable LED lighting. Wasta is working with contractors to gather cost estimates so that the Standards Committee can review them.

Other Business

Thoeming shared that the consultants working on the downtown vision plan are returning next week and thanked those Medical SSMID Commission members that will be participating in the roundtable on 5/19. Thoeming also promoted Blues Night in Greene Square on May 19th as the first of four new events this year.

Epping commented that UFG has a new tenant moving into the Security Building with the possibility of 200 employees. The tenant name has not yet been released.

Pratt shared the City has hired a national non-profit to help address the homelessness problem in downtown Cedar Rapids. She said this is to happen in June and recommendations are expected by the end of the summer.

Adjourn

Epping moved to adjourn with McGrane-Hop seconding. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.