

**MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MEETING OF FEBRUARY 9, 2006
HELD IN THE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Medical Care Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., in the Emergency Operations Center by Chairman Michael Dennis. All members of the Commission were present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

In the absence of a flag, Chair Dennis asked everyone who held the country near and dear to their hearts to raise their right hands.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda approved as printed.

IV. REVIEW OF THREE APPLICATIONS FOR SURVEY CONSULTANT

Chair Dennis opened up discussion for the group.

Commission Member Traverse noted that there was an abundance of data available from various studies that would help with the survey questions. He noted that the survey questions proposed had only eight spaces to fill in with other than yes or no answers. He suggested that volunteers be asked to stuff the envelopes and help with the survey, in the interest of cost savings.

Chair Dennis commented that a choice of who would perform the mechanical production of the survey was necessary, as well as a professional to assess the data. He agreed that cost was a very important aspect.

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Commission Member Friedman commented that the Police Department had recently sent out a survey in which they had utilized volunteers to stuff the envelopes. He questioned the exact purpose of the Medical Care Commission survey.

Commission Member Stein responded that the survey would tell the Commission what they already knew, however, the main purpose of the survey was to give the work of the Commission some added validity and credibility in the community. He stated that he, personally, did not like the yes/no questions without explanation. He noted that the issues had been pretty much narrowed down: the intention of Tenet must be determined; the improvement of Good Samaritan must be determined; the issue of doctors coming into the community. He noted that he considered the Sunshine law an impediment, and noted that the Palm Beach Civic Association had commissioned a committee to look into different areas of Town governance and how committees and commissions worked. One of the issues in their report had to do with the Sunshine Law. He also noted that a clear mission statement must be set down for the Medical Care Commission, to narrow the focus to better care for the Town of Palm Beach; if in that process there was better care for the surrounding area that would be fine too.

Chair Dennis commented that he felt very strongly that the Medical Care Commission was created to represent the citizens of Palm Beach, the health care consumers of Palm Beach. The Commission was not representing hospitals, physicians, or other service providers. In order to develop a strong advocacy role for the people, a rapport must be established through the survey, which would give every citizen the opportunity to respond. He explained that he believed information would be gathered which only the citizens could provide.

Commission Member Traverse commented that the survey would give people the opportunity to participate, and would indicate what the residents wanted in order to give the Commission a mandate.

Commission Member Stein noted that all of the survey questions were already available, and now must be put in usable form.

Administrative Assistant Sara Blake commented that a survey would not do anyone any good unless it was used. Once the survey had been initiated and the tabulations were done, an assessment must be made of the survey responses itself. That assessment must be considered in order to make recommendations; the survey would then become the instrument by which the recommendations were made. She agreed that the survey did need to go the media, and to the legislature. She stated that she found the cost factor prohibitive in the three applications for survey consultants. She noted that she had done a needs assessment in two particular areas of Palm Beach County less than one

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year ago; the survey itself had been an eleven page instrument, and had only two topics: crime and prevention.

Ms. Blake reiterated that she found the cost factors on all three applications entirely out of line. The Commission determined to refer to the survey applicants by "A," "B," and "C."

Ms. Blake referred to "A" noting that the time line was sufficient, as was the simplicity of the sample questions. She noted that a lot of verbiage would result in massive duplication of answers, and "A" gave the best reference as to how the questions should be presented.

Ms. Blake referred to "B" and "C," noting that she was not sure that focus groups or public forums were needed, and proposal "B" went more in depth than what the Commission was looking for. She stated that both "A" and "C" had good follow-up, which she believed was necessary.

Chair Dennis noted that the Commission could scale up or down with any consultant, and suggested that the focus should be on whether the Commission would hire a consultant and how it would interact with the consultant.

Commission Member Traverse stressed the importance of a fast track for the survey, before people left for the season, and that volunteers from the community could be recruited to help stuff envelopes.

Commission Member Friedman referred to "Affordable Printing," who printed, collated, and distributed for a reasonable fee.

Commission Member Stein commented that he favored "A" because of its simplicity and brevity, although he considered that it may be a little too brief, and many questions needed some explanation, rather than just a yes or no. He suggested synthesizing Dr. Traverse's questions and the two samples from "A" and "B." He suggested sitting down with "A" to see what could be learned from them, and what could be negotiated with them, and if a satisfactory answer could be found, then it may be better to go with "A." He noted that "A" talked about a physician survey too.

Administrative Assistant Sara Blake commented that she would be able to contribute to the survey, however, she was not capable of doing the survey from start to finish by herself.

Commission Member Furlaud suggested that someone like "A" could be hired to work under the direction of Ms. Blake.

Commission Member Stein suggested that it may be valuable to speak with "B" and "C"

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before speaking with "A," in order to improve the Commission's ability to evaluate.

Ms. Blake replied that she believed the Commission would get the same thing that they currently had in writing. She suggested that the Commission may be able to schedule a meeting with the principals from "A" and approach them with what the Commission wished to garner from them, and then determine where they could from there; not disallowing "B" and "C" totally.

Commission Member Stein suggested that there were useful questions in both Dr. Traverse's set of questions and those submitted by "A" and that they could be synthesized; also he suggested that perhaps the survey could include a question asking the participant if he/she would be willing to be interviewed by one of the staff. He discouraged the use of focus groups, because, in his experience the dominant personality of the group usually took over.

Chair Dennis commented that one thing he liked about "A" was that they were going to look at all of the returns, and some of the other responses had indicated that they would do a selective/random process. He stated that he did not believe it would be fair to ask the residents of Palm Beach to provide a response, and then only have a one in seven chance of actually being quantified. He suggested that the Commission may wish to authorize him to contact "A" and "C" and they could attend the next Medical Care Commission meeting.

Commission Member Stein suggested that a fixed time be set for the length of each meeting.

Commission Member Furlaud moved approval of authorizing Chair Dennis to meet with the three survey applicants to obtain further information in order for discussion to take place at the next Medical Care Commission Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Stein. On call of the Chair, the motion carried unanimously.

Commission Member Traverse noted that he had spoken with the Town Manager regarding business cards for the members of the Commission, and that the proofs should be read before the cards are printed.

Commission Member Friedman noted that the scheduled Medical Care Commission Meetings to be held on the second Tuesday of each month conflicted with the regular Town Council meetings, and there were many people who wanted to attend both.

Chair Dennis commented that he would much rather schedule meetings on the basis of looking ahead a month or six weeks, and choose the days that were best for everyone.

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V. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were none.

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Medical Care Commission meeting of February 14, 2006, was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Michael Dennis, M. D.
Chairman

Prepared by:
Susan A. Eichhorn
Town Clerk