

Hospital loses money, but optimistic

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The Quincy Valley Medical Center reported a financial loss for May at the Grant County Hospital District No. 2 board of commissioners meeting Tuesday, June 22, but also reported reasons for optimism for a turnaround in subsequent months.

The medical center's budget report showed a net operating revenue figure of \$961,880 for May and a total oper-

ating expense number of \$978, 434, meaning the center lost \$16,554. Its projected budget showed a profit of \$15,300 for May.

Through May, the medical center reported a net loss of \$58,148.

"I'm anxious to see what happens in June because I know we did still have significant numbers of temp agency help on staff," said financial officer Ken Kiehn. "Hopefully it will be a positive number. I don't know yet, but in July, when the positions get filled,

that's going to be the key to tell us where we're going."

However, Kiehn pointed out two critical numbers in the budget — \$101,361 for professional fees (\$61,941 budgeted) and \$164,495 for purchased services (\$123,940).

"Professional fees was significantly over the budgeted amount. However, that does include the \$28,000 paid out to the contract of (incoming emergency room doctor Eric Harrington)," Kiehn said. "So not that far off from budget,

but it's something we're keeping our eye on. We do have of course some extra personnel, so those flow into that number.

"As far as I'm concerned, we cannot keep this trend," he said. "The other services, obviously there is a need for it, but we need to somehow justify the cost with somewhat of an increase of revenue. I know we've had interviews for positions that are filled by agencies in both the clinic and surgery."

In other board business:

• The board approved Merred's appointment of a new director of nursing services. Sarina Fahrner will take over for interim director Christy Jackson, who has been in that position for the past two months, in July.

The medical center found Fahrner through a recruiting agency. She currently resides in Spokane.

"She presented pretty much all the attributes and the skills we were looking for in a director of nursing," Merred said.