



ADVERTISEMENT

## Hospital board discusses letters

### Board talks to its accusers during meeting

Chuck Allen/editor@qvpr.com  
Oct. 28, 2010

The Quincy Valley Medical Center board members and administrator discussed letters of complaint they have received from several local residents.

"I don't know where to begin with these letters," said board chairman Anthony Gonzalez, during the board's monthly meeting on Monday, Oct. 25. "I'm surprised by the letters. They carry really strong negative statements to each of us board members and the staff."

Gonzalez summarized the letters stating that they are critical of the board because it has not ordered a psychological evaluation of administrator Mehdi Merred based on an analysis of his handwriting.

ADVERTISEMENT

The letters, which were also sent in a packet to the Grant County Board of Commissioners, also contain very personal information about Merred's family that could be libelous, Gonzalez said.

Another letter is critical of how the hospital staff receives correspondence, stating that a staff member should date and sign each page of correspondence when it is received. The letters also asked the members of the board to step down and let someone else run the hospital.

"We're voted to this position," Gonzalez said. "We represent 16,000 taxpayers. If we're doing such a bad job, then why haven't we been contacted by them? We haven't even been contacted personally by the people who signed these letters. I find that sad."

Some of those who signed the letters were in attendance during the meeting, including Leslie Tobin, Audrey Benz, and Misty Gottschalk.

Gonzalez asked Tobin why she signed her name to the complaints.

Tobin said she had no comment.

"How is it that you want me to help you out. I'm here to answer your questions and you have no comment?" Gonzalez asked.

He asked the letter signers if they really thought the board members should step down.

"The reason for this is not that we want to replace you," Gottschalk said. "We also have an opinion that things are not supposed to be done the way they are being done. If concerns are brought before you, then you should address those concerns. We shouldn't be mocked or belittled for it."

Gonzalez asked Gottschalk to give him a specific concern about how the hospital is being run.

"People feel it is a hostile work environment," Gottschalk said.

When asked for specific examples, Gottschalk said she would give the board examples in a different setting.

Emergency room nurse Rebecca Warner, who spoke critically about the board and administration exploring a private ambulance service during last month's meeting, said she disagreed with Gottschalk's assessment.

"Mehdi's always been respectful. He has an open-door policy," Warner said. "This doesn't just look bad on the people sitting here in this meeting. This looks bad on all of us."

Benz said she had concerns about converting the ambulance service to a private company and also about care she received at the hospital, but she said she did not endorse personal attacks on Merred's family or on the board members.

Merred said he and the board are exploring their options about what to do regarding the personal, malicious and false attacks in the letters.

Gonzalez said anyone who wishes to contact the board should do so by e-mail to qvmcboard@inhs.org.

"We welcome constructive criticism from you and anyone else in the community," he said.

He said the hospital staff will not sign correspondence because there is no law that makes that requirement. He added that the board will not order a psychological evaluation of Merred or staff members as demanded by the complaints and the board will not step down.

Board member Bob Poindexter said that those who think they can do a better job can do something about it.

"You can always come and take my job," Poindexter said. "If you want that \$100 a month, you can file for office and get elected."

Fellow board member Don Condit said he supports Merred and appreciates the effort he has made to improve the hospital.

He said Merred has helped turn the hospital from a financial disaster to an entity that may very likely show a profit for three straight years.

Board member Darrell Van Dyke concurred, "I personally believe in Mehdi and what he's trying to do."

Through September, the hospital has shown a net income of \$233,676 for 2010, according to a financial report made later in the meeting.

Editor's note — The last name of the one of the participants in the meeting was incorrect in the original story. The name has since been corrected.

0 Comments

Post a comment

Your name:

SEARCH

ADVERTISEMENT

**QUINCY VALLEY SCHOOL IS MOVING!**

**SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADE MAY BECOME AVAILABLE!**

**LEARN MORE!**

[www.quincyvalleyschool.org](http://www.quincyvalleyschool.org)  
509-797-5301