

**FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC WORKSHOP
COURTHOUSE ANNEX – COMMISSION MEETING ROOM
OCTOBER 29, 2019
9:00 AM
AGENDA**

Commissioners Present: Noah Lockley – Chairman, William Massey-Vice-Chairman, Joseph Parrish, Ricky Jones, Bert B. Boldt, II

Others Present: Erin Griffith-Assistant Finance Director, Michael Moron-County Coordinator, Michael Shuler – County Attorney, Lori P. Hines-Deputy Clerk to the Board.

Call to Order

Chairman Lockley called the meeting to Order.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Jones said a prayer that was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Moron thanked everyone for being here and discussed the format of the meeting.

Public Comments

Ms. Barbara McInturff, a resident of Apalachicola, asked when the Board does questions. Chairman Lockley answered now. Ms. McInturff said she assumes the Board is never going to answer questions in any of these hearings. Ms. McInturff stated she asked last time and is asking again if an impact study is going to be done about the hospital. She explained the cost for the first year of managing and oversight is over \$337,000 and it does not include the salaries of the other employees and additional items she listed. She questioned where the new staff will live. Chairman Lockley reported what they are going through now is the procedure to see whether they are going to build a hospital or an emergency room. He stated they have not reached the point for some of the questions. Ms. McInturff asked if the impact study would determine whether or not they can do this. She explained she is not saying they cannot build but she is just asking as an impact study was done a while ago but she has been receiving the newspaper for 11 years and there has always been an issue with Weems Memorial Hospital. She stated this needs to be resolved and she is glad it is being addressed but she knows most people are on a budget. Ms. McInturff said she thinks an impact study would help answer some of these questions. Chairman Lockley stated all of this will be worked out once they make

a decision on what they are going to do. Ms. McInturff thanked Chairman Lockley for addressing her questions.

Mr. Alan Feifer, Concerned Citizens of Franklin County, questioned what the process will be and if there is a defined time to make a decision. Mr. Moron said he will be recommending at the end of the meeting that the Weems Memorial Hospital Board of Directors call a special meeting and then make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. He stated this Board will then discuss the recommendation and make a decision. Mr. Feifer inquired if there will be any chance for a public dialogue because they have not heard the presentation and cannot have any questions yet. Mr. Moron suggested once they hear the presentation and it is on the Agenda then they would address their comments or questions during public comment at that meeting.

Mr. Roger Hall – President Sacred Heart Hospital (Emerald Coast) – Presentation

Mr. Hall thanked the Board for allowing Ascension/Sacred Heart to provide this presentation. He introduced Dr. Rachel Bixler, Family Practice Physician in Gulf County, Dr. Ryan Pharr, Family Practice Physician in Apalachicola, Ms. Robin Goodwin, Vice President of Nursing at their facility in Port St. Joe, and Ms. Patty Greenberg, a consultant with National Health Care Associates. Mr. Hall stated Sacred Heart/Ascension is the largest not for profit health care system in the United States. He said Ascension Florida is the second largest health provider from Jacksonville to Pensacola. Mr. Hall reported Ascension is the largest faith based hospital system in the United States but they like to think of it more like a ministry than a hospital or health care system. He read their mission statement. Mr. Hall provided a history of Ascension Florida. Mr. Hall said they were invited to build a hospital in Destin and it costs \$48 million and \$20 million was raised from the community. He explained the hospital started with 148 employees and now has over 800 employees. He reported the hospital was 48 beds and now has 82 beds. He reported the day they opened the hospital the real estate values in the area increased by 20%. Mr. Hall stated they then asked to come to Gulf County to build a hospital and that hospital costs \$32 million and the community raised \$10 million for the hospital. Mr. Hall said the Port St. Joe hospital is 1 of 5 hospitals that have a 5 star rating. He stated their Emerald Coast Hospital also has this rating. He explained this is a rating Medicare looks at for quality and patient satisfaction. Mr. Hall said they have made a difference in the community from a patient satisfaction and a quality standpoint. He reported their Port St. Joe facility just received recognition from the Florida Hospital Association for approaching zero percent for the infection rate. He said they have done a tremendous job on changing health care and finding new ways of delivering health care in their community. Mr. Hall stated Weems Memorial Hospital is a 25 bed hospital and has an average day consensus of 1 and 9% market share which means 91% of the patients that could be admitted are leaving the county. He reported uncompensated care based on the last cost report was \$683,000. He said Weems West is open 5 days a week and staffed with a nurse practitioner and Weems East is open 5 ½ days a week with a nurse practitioner. He explained quality care is measured by access. Mr. Hall showed what Sacred Heart does today in Franklin County with Dr. Pharr's practice, rehabilitation services and on the

percentage of market share. He said the market share shows Ascension Bay has 40% of the market from Apalachicola, 30% of the market from Eastpoint and 8% of the market from Carrabelle. He reported their medical group provides \$1.3 million worth of uncompensated medical care for Franklin County and their hospital provides \$2.4 in uncompensated care for Franklin County. He discussed My Gulf Care and said they had a million dollar grant to bring primary care to Gulf County. Mr. Hall said they used the grant to recruit some physicians and mid-level providers and over 2 years they added 7 providers. He explained they also added a service called My Gulf Care which is individual nurses that go to patients' homes to help educate them on medication, diet, and exercise to help change their health status. Mr. Hall stated they identified them through the emergency department because they came in on a consistent basis and were non-compliant with medical orders. He said they serve 200 patients in Gulf County and Franklin County. He said these 200 patients they take care of has decreased the admissions by 150% based on the expected admissions back to the hospital. Mr. Hall stated 40 patients in Franklin County are served by this program. He explained they are proud of this because it is a new way of looking at health care and they are changing health care by educating their patients. He stated health care is not delivered in a hospital because hospital care today is for episodic medicine. He explained if they want to change the mortality statistics for Franklin County they must take care of the poor and vulnerable. Ms. Greenberg discussed the hallmarks of rural healthcare and said with the changes in Medicare 55% of hospitals are in danger of closing. She reported Medicare reimbursement rates are going down and inpatient hospitalization is going down throughout the country and those things have implications on the future of any hospital but rural hospitals are in a worse position. She explained in rural areas the labor skill to adopt new technology or the capital investment is not available to have the latest equipment so people leave the area for care. Ms. Greenberg said recruiting and maintaining skilled personnel in a rural area is challenging. She explained Mr. Hall was successful in recruiting Dr. Pharr and his patient panel after 4-5 years is 5,600 patients. Ms. Greenberg said his office is a resource Ascension put here because they identified a need. She reported they need to focus on what quality services they can have and what makes sense for the community. She explained in relation to hospital trends they are continuing to transition from inpatient to outpatient. Ms. Greenberg stated in rural markets many times there are not the volumes. She reported the usefulness of a 24/7 facility with hospital beds is declining. She highlighted the number of rural hospital closures. She addressed community trends that also apply to this area. Ms. Greenberg stated Mr. Hall mentioned it but 91% of people that receive medical services and surgery in a hospital are receiving it outside of the county. She explained they have all the information on what services these individuals received, what doctor they went to and what zip code they live in. She said they are going to larger facilities that have specialists available or a retail clinic to get different diagnostic and tests. She commented telemedicine is also filling in. Ms. Greenberg stated in relation to health care delivery solutions a stand-alone hospital going forward will have difficulty standing alone and surviving. She explained a solution is to identify a regional healthcare partner with a deep bench. She said they must identify the key services they want to implement locally. Ms. Greenberg reported no rotating specialists come to the community and they need a partner who can bring that expertise so their community has access to the specialists. She explained they also must discuss

how they address emergency situations. Ms. Greenberg stated these are health care solutions they believe make sense for Franklin County. She reported this is not the first county Ascension has attempted to partner with and Ascension's ideal model in addressing outlying rural markets is to create an ambulatory platform that includes a free standing emergency room and a line with the full service hospital that has comprehensive services. She explained the first facility was at Panama City Beach and was available when Hurricane Michael decimated Bay Medical Center. She reported Ascension Florida has 6 other free standing emergency departments in various stages of implementation across the panhandle. Ms. Greenberg said when the Legislature agreed free standing emergency rooms would be allowed in the state they restricted it so it must be a department of a hospital so only a hospital can open an emergency room. She explained the free standing emergency room is required to provide all the same services as the host hospital provides. She reported under Medicare rules the department of the hospital must be within 35 miles of the host hospital so they can be transported quickly if they need to go to the hospital for an inpatient bed. She stated patients are admitted directly to the host hospital at the emergency room. Ms. Greenberg said the Ascension time line to build a free-standing emergency room once the design documents and land is identified are 10-11 months to get that facility licensed. She reported Ascension hired her firm to study this market and identify the needs. She discussed the study performed by her firm. Ms. Greenberg stated what they are proposing is a reconfiguration of the health care system. She explained they want to establish new state of the art access points which would improve access locally, improve health care services locally and provide a range of health care services locally incorporating telemedicine and aligning with the main tertiary provider. She said Ascension Bay is a trauma hospital and they have a high quality cardiology program. She stated they want to implement a health care system that is economically sustainable and not on the backs of the taxpayers. Ms. Greenberg reported they also want to expand the Ascension/Sacred Heart ministry in Franklin County and align Franklin County and Ascension/Sacred Heart to a partnership where they have a mutual goal going forward. Mr. Hall said the services they bring is they have a children's hospital in Pensacola, navigate for cancer patients and are an affiliate for MD Anderson in Pensacola. He stated they have MD Anderson physicians in Destin. He explained when they started Emerald Coast and the Gulf Hospital they wanted to be the gateway to world class care. He said they link their hospitals through CEO's and regional quality ventures. Ms. Greenberg reported they are proposing an ambulatory health care pavilion and the first piece is to develop, license and operate a free standing emergency department. She stated it would be a new facility licensed under the Ascension Gulf Hospital. She explained Ascension Gulf Hospital is the only one that can partner for this item because the department of the hospital must be within 35 miles. Mr. Creamer asked why Weems would need Sacred Heart to do this if Weems could do it. Ms. Greenberg reported because of everything else Sacred Heart brings like physicians, specialists, qualified staff, capital and the expertise and access to the whole system. She stated they are also bringing the ministry. She said Weems Memorial could do it but she references the risks involved. She pointed out Ascension is not coming in asking to be paid a management fee. Ms. Greenberg reported the new free standing emergency room would replace the Weems Memorial Hospital emergency room. She said the new facility would include 6 new emergency/procedure rooms and 2 holding rooms for

overnight stays. She estimated it would be 11,400 square feet and would include a new cat scan, x-ray, ultrasound and a lab. Ms. Greenberg stated it would be available 24/7 and staffed by their emergency room physicians. She stated the staffing would also include 2 nurses round the clock as well as a CT/ultrasound tech around the clock and other support employees. She explained the second part of the scope would be to establish a second primary care practice contiguous to the free-standing emergency room. Ms. Greenberg reported Dr. Pharr will stay where he is. She said the second primary care doctor and two nurse practitioners will be in private office space adjacent to the emergency room and they would share the diagnostic and lab services with the emergency room. She reported this second primary care doctor will replace the Weems Medical Practice building they currently have. Ms. Greenberg said the third item is they would staff the Weems Medical Center office 5 1/2 days a week with two nurse practitioners. She explained this would bring a new physician, 2 nurse practitioners and 9 support staff in addition to Dr. Pharr's office. She reported they will also establish a specialty care primary practice and bring cardiology in 1 day a week, orthopedics 1 day a week, general surgery 1 day a week and they would all share the same office. She said there are also other specialty services to be determined. Ms. Greenberg stated they will also relocate their rehabilitative services and staff on Market Street to the new building which would be contiguous to the emergency room. She said they would need 43 full time equivalent positions so it would have a significant effect on employment. Ms. Anderson pointed out Weems Memorial Hospital employs approximately 100 people so that would be a net loss of employees. Mr. Hall agreed it could be a decrease of some employees. He said they also have Dr. Pharr's staff, and 20 physicians at Port St. Joe. He reported there will be a decrease in employees but what they will create is a model that can grow and be a financially sustainable healthcare market. He stated they will be responsible for recruiting and will have consistent service so the county will not have the issue of a physician being out. Mr. Hall said there will be fewer jobs. Ms. Anderson asked if they will be looking at the present employees for employment. Mr. Hall answered yes, because health care employees are valuable and they would be looking at every one to employ. He explained they do not want anyone not to have a job and they have other hospitals in other locations where they may be employed and they would be given a preference. Ms. Greenberg presented a conceptual rendering of a free standing emergency room they have under construction. She explained it is a one story building that would have the emergency room and contiguous to it would be the primary care, specialty care, and rehabilitative practices. She reported the building is approximately 20,000 square feet of new construction and the hard construction costs for the project is \$7.6 million without land. She said they do not know the site or the site work costs at this time. She stated the equipment is another \$2.7 million. Mr. Hall explained their proposal is for the county to build the facility from the 1 cent sales tax and it would be the county's facility. He stated they would bring in all the furniture, fixtures and equipment so they would be responsible for the \$2.7 million on the capital side. Ms. Greenberg presented the budgets for the operational side based on anticipated volumes. She said they expect the loss the first year to be \$1.3 million and the loss the second year to be \$1 million. Ms. Anderson asked about the Apalachicola Clinic. Mr. Hall explained that is being replaced by the new physician and 2 nurse practitioners. Mr. Creamer said they will not have a doctor in Carrabelle. Mr. Hall stated no they will have

mid-level. Mr. Creamer said that is nurse practitioners or physician assistants. Mr. Hall agreed and said that could change when demand requires it. Mr. Creamer explained for the first 2 years they are not showing a doctor in Carrabelle. Mr. Hall said that is correct they will have a mid-level employee and are still losing about \$102,000. Ms. Greenberg explained they are asking the county to provide the capital for the construction out of the 1 cent sales tax and that is the \$7.6 million plus the land. She said they would enter into a long term lease for the building and they would provide the \$2.7 million in capital for the state of the art equipment including telemedicine. She stated they would develop, license and operate the newly constructed facility which is the emergency room, primary care, specialty care and rehabilitative services and they would discontinue the services at Weems upon the licensure of the free-standing emergency room. She reported Ascension will operate and staff the Carrabelle Clinic and if it loses money they will pay for it. She stated Ascension will be financially responsible for the operation. Ms. Greenberg explained their proposal is the county continues to collect the 1 cent sales tax which generates approximately \$2 million per year. She said Ascension will also maintain the buildings on an on-going basis and all they ask for is that the county contribute \$500,000 a year for charity care. She reported Ascension would be at risk for the operations, at risk for the loss on an on-going basis, at risk for cash flow and all operating expenses going forward and the county would not be at risk. She said all they are asking for is the \$500,000 to subsidize charity care. Ms. Greenberg explained they recommend establishing a Health Care Council to oversee how the other \$1.5 million of sales tax funds would be spent because Ascension would not be seeking those funds. She reported the downside risk and liability of the operation would shift to Ascension Florida. Ms. Greenberg pointed out the remainder of the health care sales tax would remain with the county to spend on health related projects. She said Ascension will offer to help staff the Health Care Council. Mr. Hall clarified their proposal is for the county to build the free-standing emergency department and the clinic for \$7.2 million and they will provide all the furniture, fixtures and diagnostic equipment. He stated they will make that investment of \$2.2 million and take the risk of the operations. He reported if they take the \$4 million they have now from the 1 cent sales tax and put it on the facility for 3 years and pay off the facility and during the first 3 years they still free up \$500,000 of the funds for the county to do what they need to do for health care. Mr. Hall said after 3 years they then have \$1.5 million left for the county with no risk and increased access and an improved facility. He stated it is a great proposal for their thought and consideration. He said if they solve their health care issues and it is not on the back of the taxpayers and they had \$1.5 million that would give them an economic incentive to bring in people and grow Franklin County.

Weems Board of Directors – Questions & Comments

Ms. Anderson said the list of equipment did not include mammogram and people have to go out of the county for a mammogram. Mr. Hall agreed it is not in the proposal but they will consider it. Mr. Creamer said when he started this proposal he indicated when they went into Destin and built the hospital property values went up 20%. Mr. Hall agreed that is what the real estate people told him. Mr. Creamer stated if they close the hospital here then they could

expect the real estate values to go down 20%. Mr. Hall answered no because the services would be enhanced and they would have better health care, more access, more doctors and more services. He stated it wasn't the hospital that increased the values but that Sacred Heart brought in the services to the community to make the difference. Mr. Hall explained they will bring in services that the community will embrace and after 3 years 90% of people will not be leaving the county for health care. Mr. Walker clarified no property taxes go to the hospital so it is not on the backs of the taxpayer, it is a retail tax. He said one of their Hospital Board members is not here today and he wanted him to reiterate that part. Mr. Walker stated it is a sales tax but ad valorem tax goes to EMS. Mr. Walker reported there is a study in California about the closing of hospitals and in those communities the mortality rates go up. Mr. Hall agreed he has seen the study. Mr. Walker brought into discussion the critical access designation and said if the hospital closes then Sacred Heart could apply for it in Port St. Joe. Mr. Hall said absolutely. Mr. Walker asked how much they are losing a year at Sacred Heart Hospital in Port St. Joe. Mr. Hall stated they are breaking even now. Mr. Walker reported before it was losing money. Mr. Hall agreed and said they stayed for 8 years. He stated in 2008 they started construction and the economic bomb hit and they did not discontinue because they had a commitment to Port St. Joe and they operated a number of years taking losses. He reported today it is breaking even and is a blessing to the community so they stand behind what they say they will do. Mr. Walker said he is not sure if they are familiar with the interlocal agreements with the City of Carrabelle and the City of Apalachicola. He read the ballot language and said he is a citizen who voted for the surtax in 2007 and was promised these things would be done. Mr. Walker quoted from the interlocal agreements and questioned if this model they presented would fit the interlocal agreements. Mr. Hall reported it does from a standpoint as it is a stand-alone emergency department but it is a department of a hospital. Mr. Walker said technically \$5 million would be turned over to a Health Care Council and they would have control and not the County Commission. He stated the Health Care Council must be replacing the Hospital Board and they would have control over the money. Mr. Hall reported that is what they are recommending. Mr. Walker explained he wanted that clarified because they need to make sure they are clear. Mr. Hall agreed Franklin County needs to look at this because health care has to change because it is unaffordable today. He explained the reason it is more critical in local hospitals is because the model was built on inpatient census and that is evaporating. Mr. Hall reported no hospital makes money on the inpatient census but on the outpatient services. He said changing the quality of health care gets back to access. Ms. Anderson stated he said they are a faith based ministry and a mission and how much influence if any do the positions of the Roman Catholic Church have on the availability of comprehensive health care for women. Mr. Hall responded they operate under religious ethical directives on how they take care of patients and follow these directives. Ms. Anderson asked if a woman wants a prescription for contraceptive would Sacred Heart provide it. Dr. Pharr replied he prescribes birth control pills. Ms. Anderson asked if the woman is single. Dr. Pharr said that would not have any effect on it. Ms. Anderson inquired if a woman wants to terminate a pregnancy can it be done at Sacred Heart. Mr. Hall answered no. Ms. Anderson stated that is inadequate. She reported many residents also bike or walk to the hospital and they cannot drive to another town to visit their relatives. Mr. Hall agreed but said they would

have holding beds. Ms. Anderson reported the population that needs health care services in the community is not just 10,000-12,000 residents but also the thousands of visitors and said that must be taken into account because the better the facility is the better they can serve everyone. Ms. Anderson said if they build the new hospital then they will be able to do all of the things they want to do. Ms. Greenberg explained they did look at the population dynamics and 15-20% of hospital admissions are tourists. She stated they believe the proposed facility would be favorable to the tourists due to the services they provide. Mr. Walker asked if they can build a 10 bed facility and have wrap around services and use the critical access designation since the county is paying for the facility. Mr. Hall stated it is just economics and the critical access designation is not enough to make up for it. He reported the construction costs, staffing costs and support is higher and drives up the cost. He explained even though they are paying for the facility the 1 cent sales tax will not build and operate a 10 bed hospital. Mr. Creamer stated they are willing to build the emergency room and bear the financial burden with a \$500,000 contribution from the sales tax trust fund but they are not willing to build a 10 bed hospital and incur the financial responsibility with the \$2 million generated from the sales tax trust fund. Mr. Hall said that is correct. Mr. Creamer clarified what the county gets from Sacred Heart is an emergency room with physicians and specialists for \$500,000 and another \$1.5 million would go to the Health Care Council. Mr. Hall stated that is their recommendation. Mr. Creamer questioned who picks the Health Care Council. Mr. Hall responded it will be up to the County Commission. Mr. Hall stated the county is building the emergency room but what Sacred Heart is bringing is a total health care system. Mr. Creamer questioned if they bought a 10 bed hospital Sacred Heart would not operate it because it is a hospital. Mr. Hall answered yes and because it is not economically sustainable. He explained they want to have something that is economically sustainable because they can build on that. He said they want to work with Franklin County to improve health care but they want to do what they can do to live up to their mission and be economically sustainable. Mr. Creamer clarified their proposal is to close Weems, build an emergency room, bring in specialists and employ 43 people. Mr. Hall stated plus Dr. Pharr's office and additional people. Mr. Creamer pointed out the people at Dr. Pharr's office are already employed. Mr. Creamer said that will leave 60 people unemployed and possibly a 20% decrease in property values. Mr. Hall stated they will not have the 20% decrease because of the improved services and access. Ms. Greenberg reported they have studied other markets and historically when you have an organization like Ascension Sacred Heart that is known for quality and some of the best hospitals in the state coming into the market the property values go up. Mr. Creamer explained he is concerned if they enter into an agreement with just an emergency room the cities will decide to leave the interlocal agreements and then the funding source falls apart and then the \$500,000 being required will fall on the backs of the property taxpayers. He went on to say the sales tax trust fund is based on the vote of the people to build a hospital and the interlocal agreements that the 2 cities entered into with the county support that. He stated he has heard they might want to build an emergency room closer to the center of the county and then the City of Apalachicola is not going to want to be involved. Mr. Hall said it is the county's decision where to build the facility but they will operate it. Mr. Creamer reported they will take the critical access to Port St. Joe. Mr. Hall stated they will apply when the beds are de-certified. Mr. Creamer reported he likes

Sacred Heart but he does not like the proposal because the people in Franklin County should not be deprived of a hospital. He stated some people disagree but they disagreed when they voted to build a hospital and they have not changed their position. Mr. Hall agreed they both care about health care.

The meeting recessed at 10:24 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:36 a.m.

Mr. Moron asked if there are any more questions from the Weems Board of Directors. There were no more questions.

County Commissioners – Questions & Comments

Chairman Lockley said they are in a situation where they have got to build something and come to a final agreement with the Hospital Board after they will come back with a recommendation. He reported he disagrees with hiring 43 or 60 people. Mr. Hall agreed to start off with and explained that is what they are committed to because they are going in at risk. He reported in every service they have offered they have to get the services down to where they are economically sustainable. Mr. Hall promised they would do everything to give opportunities to people that are displaced. He said they have other facilities and Bay Medical has 150 open positions today. He reported when they hire these people they will put them in a training program so where their job possibilities are greater they can have career enhancement and promotion. He stated they pay for their education and put them in an environment where they are with a large system and have upper mobility. Chairman Lockley asked if most of the 60 jobs will be low paying. Mr. Hall replied just the opposite because the average salary of the jobs is much higher. Mr. Hall stated they will hire everyone Weems has but they have to fit the job description and have the skill mix. He explained they want to find a position for all the people at the hospital. Chairman Lockley said most of their hospitals are in the same county but Franklin County citizens will be going to the hospital in Gulf County and asked if they will be the first to cross county. Ms. Greenberg listed the areas where the hospital and free standing emergency rooms are in separate counties. She reminded the Board the free standing emergency room is the front door of the hospital and they can be admitted right at that facility. Ms. Greenberg reported 85% of the emergency room visits are fixed and sent home and not admitted. She stated at Weems they have 5,000 emergency room visits and only 130 admissions. Chairman Lockley explained Franklin County is a wide county to cross and for the people on the eastern end of the county it is a long way to the emergency room here and then additional miles to the hospital. Mr. Hall stated they will look at all the social issues when they take care of patients. He explained in relation to the Carrabelle people they have every intention of working with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (TMH) on how to take care of them better. He stated those are developmental opportunities beyond their initial proposal. Chairman Lockley said he does not understand why they cannot have a hospital. Mr. Hall reported they have experience and have consulted experts and they can build but they need to

look at the economics of it. He suggested the county get an outside expert to do a proforma on what a 10 bed hospital will look like in Franklin County. He said they have already done that and it would take a considerable amount of funds to be able to operate. Mr. Hall stated they are giving a proposal for what they can do that is economically viable on what the availability of funds are. Chairman Lockley reported it is economic for them and a disaster for the county. Mr. Hall said if they are not able to provide high quality compassionate care and grow those practices it is not a great economic boom for them. He stated they think they can do this and have a positive impact. Mr. Hall questioned who has come before the Board and put money in Franklin County and willing to go at risk to help solve a problem that is statewide. Chairman Lockley said no one. He stated he appreciates what they have done and Sacred Heart is a good system but they are still coming in as an emergency room. Mr. Hall reported they bring in a health care system and a reconfiguration of health care. Mr. Creamer stated they have not mentioned EMS and asked if Sacred Heart will be assuming the EMS. Mr. Hall replied no, they will work with the county but have not studied the EMS. Mr. Creamer reported the EMS would have to be run by the county. Mr. Hall said it is now. Mr. Creamer responded no, it is run by Weems. Mr. Hall reported they will have to evaluate it but it is not part of their proposal. Chairman Lockley stated they have not used ad valorem taxes since they got the sales tax for Weems but they promised the people and he was on the Board when they went out for the sales tax. He said they are under commitment to do what they said they will do and he does not know if they can legally do what is in their proposal. Chairman Lockley stated they may have to go back to the people and see if they can do that. Mr. Hall reported that might be a good suggestion. He said health care has changed and when they look at a county it is supported by education, county infrastructure and health care. He said they are here to provide their expertise on what they can do and they stand behind what they can do. Commissioner Parrish reported in the proposal they are talking about a lease but how long is their commitment. Mr. Hall said they will sign a lease on the time the county is comfortable with. Commissioner Parrish asked what kind of lease they are looking for. Mr. Hall replied 20 years. Commissioner Parrish stated he had another question but they already answered it about the EMS and the county would have to establish something for EMS. Commissioner Parrish reported his remarks are conflicting about the Health Care Council taking over the Health Care Trust Fund because that is not possible since the County Commission will always be in charge of the fund and what those funds are spent for. He stated having the Health Care Council make recommendations would be appropriate but they will never be entitled to take that money to spend like they want without coming to the County Commission. He explained the County Commission answers to the people about the tax. Commissioner Parrish said the Health Care Council would have to have the blessing of the County Commission and asked if this is how Mr. Hall sees this working. Mr. Hall said it is how the Board sees it working but their recommendation was on how they have seen it work successfully in other communities. He agreed the Board has control over the sales tax. Commissioner Parrish reported no one on the Board has health care experience but they are charged with providing good health care and they will need some help if they are going to take the next step of being part of a network of some kind. Commissioner Boldt stated he does have health care experience in the paramedical field in physical therapy. He referenced a drawing he made and said his position is health care

in Franklin County should be comprehensive in every area. He reported the county is large and the district he represents is a desert of medicine. Commissioner Boldt said he sees a partnership as being non-polarized geographically and from a medical standpoint. He explained the drawing shows a stable facility, bilateral feed from the ambulance, outpatient and medical professional standpoint. Commissioner Boldt asked how they see addressing comprehensively the need geographically. Mr. Hall responded you have to have continued growth of primary care and access. He reported if they move the county ahead in health care they have to start looking at a wellness program instead of just a sick care program and how they incorporate telemedicine. Mr. Hall stated they have not talked about it but the number one health issue in Franklin County is behavior health. He said when they start to address behavior health then the access points and telemedicine become very critical. Mr. Hall reported the expansion of My Gulf Care is critical because it puts nurses in the home and provides good education on medicine, exercise and therapy. He explained this is a minimum baseline of health care but they have a tremendous task ahead of trying to develop a new model that is responsive to the county. Commissioner Boldt stated he wants to see more medical people stationed in the eastern side of the county and questioned how that will look. He asked Mr. Hall to make a commitment in building their facility as an outreach as well and make a commitment on the east end of the county. Mr. Hall stated they make a commitment to continue to address the needs and the commitment to the east part of the county and what that looks like and additional dollars he can't commit to. Mr. Hall reported they will commit to work to bring that because they have done that in all their marketplaces. Commissioner Boldt stated they continue to talk about building the hospital in Apalachicola but the demographics are moving more east and seems to be more concentrated at the intersection of Eastpoint and Island Drive. He stated respecting all the interlocal agreements and legal issues he is interested in seeing a facility moving further east. Commissioner Boldt asked if they will build the facility anywhere they say. Mr. Hall answered yes. Commissioner Boldt said after the patients go to big trauma centers then they need to go back to a facility in their hometown and asked about a micro hospital instead of an emergency department. Mr. Hall reported what they are seeing is rehabilitative facilities and the legislation is changing the feasibility. Mr. Creamer asked if he was talking about swing beds. Mr. Hall answered rehabilitative is in swing beds. Commissioner Boldt agreed they want to get residents back here so families do not have to travel. Mr. Hall said they recognize transportation is a big issue. Commissioner Boldt stated the hospital has a huge accounts payable and he asked if they are proposing they give them the accounts receivable and accounts payable when they begin to operate. Mr. Hall stated they are not committing to that but they will provide some expert support. Commissioner Boldt asked if the Health Care Board is an exchange for their Board of Directions. Mr. Hall said they made this recommendation because it works in other communities. He reported in all their facilities they have an advisory council and it is a group of citizens that they work with in those counties. He explained they develop advisory councils for the systems they have to look at their accountability back to the community. He went on to say that is part of the organizational structure they bring to any facility they manage. Commissioner Jones thanked Mr. Hall and his team for their presentation. He said what they are seeing today is the people on the advisory board and the Commission want good solid answers and make sure they are making good solid

decisions. Commissioner Jones said the biggest insurance provider in the county is Capital Health Plan (CHP) and asked if that is incongruent with what Ascension Sacred Heart does or does the county need to address it if they go forward with this proposal. Mr. Hall replied all their practices in Franklin County have Capital Health Plan but it is an issue when they take people to Port St. Joe. He said the CHP issue is not a resolved issue. He reported Ascension Sacred Heart is one of the top 2 providers from Jacksonville to Pensacola so they have considerable influence on insurance companies and feel they could make a workable agreement with CHP but there are also other insurance companies. He said they will not diminish the access to good high quality insurance to the residents of Franklin County. Commissioner Jones asked if this is a geographical issue. Mr. Hall explained CHP is a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) and the license for the HMO includes Franklin County. Mr. Hall reported they have extended it because they are the insurance company in the prison system in Gulf County. Commissioner Jones stated there is coverage for CHP in Gulf County just not for Franklin County. Mr. Hall said the people of Franklin County will be covered but they may not be covered to go to the hospital in Port St. Joe but they are covered in Tallahassee and would be honored wherever the insurance company is for the patients. He explained they will not put them in a financial disadvantage because they redirected them. Commissioner Jones said unless the county wants to go with another insurance provider for their employees they will not be a satellite of Sacred Heart in Port St. Joe because they cannot take people there. Mr. Hall stated that is correct. Commissioner Jones brought into discussion the critical access designation and said some residents do not know what it looks like without that designation and it is not just the designation and the dollars it provides but the other part of the system with the FLEX program and other items. Mr. Hall reported critical access is not an economic salvation for all rural hospitals and a number of hospitals that are closing are critical access hospitals. Mr. Hall reported they bring in something that is economically sustainable because with the critical access Weems is not economically sustainable. He explained without it they have a health care system that is economically sustainable. He stated they need to address what they are trying to accomplish because their objective is to improve the quality of life and health care. Commissioner Jones said the interlocal agreements were mentioned and they were made 12 years ago. He reported the reason they are having this workshop is in the spirit of the agreements and he hope everyone understands that. Commissioner Jones reported he has heard them mention the east end services and they need to consider that but this is a proposal to start a difference in health care in the county. Commissioner Jones stated he heard a phrase today he has not heard at any other point and that is someone else talking about being at risk and not the county being at risk. He explained that is not an end all but that is something this Commission needs to do. Commissioner Jones reported they do not need to be at risk for the hospital and not that they do not care for their citizens but it is not the best way for it to be. Mr. Hall agreed. Commissioner Massey stated he heard the proposal and does not have any questions. Mr. Creamer asked if they will be able to get the Franklin County facility CHP approved. He reported the county employees and state employees are CHP and when the county took that action is saved the taxpayers over \$300,000. Mrs. Griffith said it saved \$380,000. Mr. Creamer questioned if Sacred Heart will be able to accommodate CHP in Apalachicola. Mr. Hall answered yes they are not going to interrupt care over insurance. Mr.

Creamer inquired if that meant even if those individuals would be transported to Tallahassee rather than Bay County. Mr. Hall stated they handle different insurance where they are. Mr. Creamer asked if it would affect employees' coverage or require them to change insurance carriers. Mr. Hall responded no, they will work with the insurance carriers. Chairman Lockley clarified everyone with CHP from the emergency room will be transported to Tallahassee. Mr. Hall answered yes. Commissioner Boldt said this is critical and CHP is a defining insurance company in this county. He stated they need to be sure CHP is on board with what is happening here. Commissioner Boldt asked if they would consider a compromise for a micro-hospital. Mr. Hall explained they have looked at it and when they did the analysis it is just marginally different in what it would look like. He reported the cost does not change the dynamics. Commissioner Boldt questioned if a micro-hospital is the same cost as an emergency department. Mr. Hall answered yes for this size facility. Commissioner Boldt stated he would like to hear the micro hospital concept from them. Chairman Lockley reported the school system is also covered by CHP. Mr. Hall agreed all the county people are covered under CHP. He stated they would be accepting them and do not re-direct people and have to send them where the insurance coverage is. Chairman Lockley asked if that would be a big loss to them. Mr. Hall said they would not go into it with the intention of keeping it that way for 5 years. Chairman Lockley inquired if they would stay if they could not get that straight. Mr. Hall answered yes. Chairman Lockley thanked them for being here today. Mr. Moron stated they have heard from the two health care systems that are interested in partnering with the county and now at the next Weems Board of Directors public meeting they will discuss this matter because they need to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. He explained as soon as the CEO indicates they have discussed this at an open public meeting and are ready to make a recommendation then he will inform the Board and place the Hospital Board Chairman and Hospital CEO on the Agenda. Mr. Moron said at that point they will come to the meeting and discuss it with the Board and the Board can make a decision at that meeting or at the following meeting if they need more information. Mr. Moron clarified public workshops are not designed for the public to comment. He explained that is a meeting for Boards to receive information on whatever matter is before them. He stated public hearings and/or public comment at subsequent meetings is when the public gets a chance to voice their opinion. He said when Weems places this item on their Agenda people need to go to the meeting, comment there and listen to what they are saying and then when it is on the County Commission's Agenda they can go to that meeting and at the beginning of the meeting state their comments. Mr. Moron reported it is up to this Board to direct the Weems Board of Directors in a different direction if they would like to. Mr. Moron thanked Mr. Hall and all his team for their presentation. Ms. Greenberg stated they have copies of their presentations available. Mr. Moron commented he will place both presentations on the county's website. Commissioner Massey asked Mr. Walker to explain this information to the Hospital Board members that were not present today. Mr. Walker agreed he will. He said this was an informative meeting and they want to make the best decision for the citizens of Franklin County. Mr. Moron said the decision before the Board is where do they want to take health care in Franklin County and they need to look less at the organizations and more at the options being offered. Mr. Creamer thanked Mr. Hall and his group for the presentation. Chairman

Lockley said both groups will be contacted when a decision is made. Mr. Moron stated he will email if there are additional questions.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Noah Lockley - Chairman

Attest:

Marcia M. Johnson - Clerk of Courts