

Fundraising for nursing home nears \$200,000

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Friday, 24 February 2012 18:51 - Last Updated Friday, 24 February 2012 18:52

By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

The generosity of Waunetans and expatriates has been the key in the successful campaign to raise funds to save Wauneta's nursing home.

Donations totaling \$14,513 have been received in the past week. As of Tuesday morning, \$192,574 has been donated by individuals, businesses, organizations and foundations.

Additional funds are anticipated from the Wauneta Community Foundation Fund, whose board recently voted to grant \$10,000 to the project from its general fund. The Frenchman Valley Development Corporation board has also voted to allocate \$10,000 once the nursing home property has been acquired.

Nursing home organizers are working to raise \$225,000 in private donations to help cover a portion of the projected \$800,000 needed to purchase the facility and cover initial operating costs including bed licenses and mandated updates to the facility.

The nursing home effort was a key topic of discussion at last Tuesday's Village board meeting. Board member Page Johnston reported that the purchase contract with Vetter Health Services (VHS) has gone through a couple drafts but that a final contract is not yet ready for presentation to the Village board.

It was noted that VHS has been very helpful and generous during the contract negotiations.

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The exact items included in the sale have not been determined but VHS has given the Village board assurance that they will maintain reasonable supplies for daily operation which will then transfer to Village ownership after the sale. VHS computers and vehicles will not be included in the sale.

Nursing home inspections continue and to date have not shown anything of significant concern.

The Village board is also working to finalize a contract with Rural Health Development (RHD) for the management of the facility once it's purchased by the Village. It was noted that RHD has a lot of experience in the field and in our area. RHD currently manages health care facilities in Nebraska, Wyoming and Iowa.

Although changes are anticipated after RDH takes over management of the nursing home, they are not expected to be major.

It was reported that RHD's president, Ron Ross, has said their approach is that they are consultants. They will suggest changes to the Village board rather than make the changes themselves. The larger management decisions will be addressed by the Village board, the board will make the final decisions.

When questioned about staffing the home Page Johnston said, "the thing that makes it work is the people on the ground everyday." At this point, changes in staff are not anticipated.

The board moved into executive session to discuss the purchase of the nursing home real estate. It is anticipated that the board will have a special public meeting later this month to discuss the nursing home efforts.

If you would like to contribute to the nursing home effort you can send your contribution to The Wauneta Village Office, P.O. Box 95 Wauneta, NE 69045, with Nursing Home noted on the memo line, or you can make a contribution via credit card by going to

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www.savewaunetanursinghome.com.