

Village Board to finalize remaining pieces for purchase of nursing home

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

The puzzle looks nearly complete for the purchase of Heritage of Wauneta from Vetter Health Services (VHS). The Village Board anticipated reviewing and approving the final three pieces of the puzzle at their meeting Tuesday night, which fell after the deadline for this week's paper.

The agenda included a management agreement with Rural Health Development (RHD), formal agreement with VHS for the purchase of the nursing home and an ordinance to authorize the revenue bonds.

With the approval of these final three items, along with the recent approval of the option to purchase bed licenses and the successful fundraising campaign, the planning and preparation process to purchase the nursing home will be complete. Nursing home organizers now plan to move forward with implementation of the plans set forth.

Approvals needed

The first puzzle piece will finalize the management of the nursing home with RHD. The company will manage the day-to-day operations of the nursing home while the Village Board will maintain fiscal control and oversee RHD's operation of the nursing home. Nursing home employees, with exception of the administrator, will be employees of RHD.

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The second puzzle piece concerns the formal agreement with VHS detailing the stipulations of the nursing home purchase. VHS announced last summer that they would cease operation of Heritage of Wauneta on June 30. The successful completion of these three items will assure that the nursing home will continue to operate under Village ownership July 1.

Thirdly, board members will need to pass an ordinance to authorize the revenue bonds. Last Friday, Village Board members Page Johnston and Lloyd Sinner held a conference call with bond issuers and bond council to discuss the revenue bonds needed to purchase the nursing home.

The revenue bonds will come from four lenders, each bond for \$125,000. According to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board, a revenue bond is in essence a loan to municipalities that will be paid back from specific sources which do not include taxation. Upon approval of the bond terms Village Board members will pass an ordinance to approve the debt.

Donations still coming in

The Village continues to receive private donations to help with the purchase and operation of the nursing home after July 1. As of Tuesday morning, \$238,125 in donations has been received from individuals, businesses and organizations in support of the cause.

Nursing home organizers tagged \$225,000 as the amount of private donations needed towards the \$800,000 necessary to purchase the nursing home facility from VHS and cover initial operating costs including bed licenses and mandated updates to the facility.

Private funds raised in excess of the \$225,000 goal will be used to cover unexpected expenses, to decrease the amount of debt incurred for the purchase and for future operations of the facility.

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Further details of Tuesday's meeting will be included in next week's edition of the Breeze.