5:00 Call to Order – *Renee Overath, Co-Chair*

Attendance - *Monica Downen, Jim Aho, Amy Lawrence, Pete Wimmer, Renee Overath, Nadine Dockendorf, Brandon Myers, Angela Sells, David Emmons, Commissioner Ed Wolfe*

Approximately 230 members of the public attended the meeting.

5:03 Announcements & Comments

 A. Council Announcements – No announcements
 B. Commissioner's Comments – *Commissioner Ed Wolfe*
 Commissioner asked Council members to introduce themselves.

5:15 CK Fire and Rescue Emergency Medical Services Update
 Chief Jason "Jay" Christian

5:30 St. Michael Medical Center Update
 Chad Melton, President
 Dr. David Weiss, Associate Chief Medical Officer
 Jim Terwilliger, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health Chief Operating Officer

5:45 Questions from Council members

6:00 Public Questions and Comments
 See attached Kitsap Sun article for more information on comments.

6:30 Adjourn

Upcoming CKCC Meetings
• Jan 4, 2023 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm, CK Schools Silverdale Center/Silverdale Library Rainier Room
• Feb 1, 2023 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm, CK Schools Silverdale Center/Silverdale Library Rainier Room
• Mar 1, 2023 from 5:00 to 6:30 pm, CK Schools Silverdale Center/Silverdale Library Rainier Room

The Central Kitsap Community Council is an advisory group created by the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners. The mission of the Council is to promote a sense of community by identifying and conveying community concerns and issues to the Board of County Commissioners, and advise the citizens of the County s plans, policies, and actions. The purpose of the Council is to provide enhanced citizen-to-County and County-to-citizen communication within the Central Kitsap area by providing a formally defined representative body with which the citizens can discuss items of mutual concern and explore mutually agreeable solutions. Meetings may be recorded to assist in the creation of monthly minutes.

'Zero candidates interviewing:' No quick solutions offered in St. Michael staffing crisis

Nathan Pilling
Kitsap Sun

In a pair of public appearances this week, representatives for St. Michael Medical Center acknowledged lingering problems at the hospital, including the chronic short-staffing issues that have plagued the facility's emergency department, but offered up little in the way of short-term solutions.

Hospital president Chad Melton spoke on Tuesday to Kitsap Public Health District board members alongside fire chiefs from throughout the county, who have repeatedly expressed frustration over delays in transferring patients to the facility. Then on Wednesday evening, he appeared before the Central Kitsap Community Council, which moved its November meeting to Ridgetop Middle School to accommodate a large crowd. Hospital staff and community members who piled into the school's cafeteria were not shy about voicing concerns and complaints to three hospital administrators who fielded questions.

Last week, UFCW 3000, which represents about 1,500 employees at the hospital, began circulating a "no confidence" petition that calls for the resignation of leadership at the facility, including Melton specifically. At the session on Wednesday night, the union circulated informational cards about the petition and collected signatures.

Melton said the hospital currently employs about 180 contract staff members and has more than 300 total positions open for hire. Fully staffed, the hospital would employ roughly 1,900 people, he estimated. He also noted that the facility recently bumped pay rates to try to recruit traveling nurses to work in the emergency department and in other areas.

"...We are short-staffed on various nights," he said. "No one is debating that. That's what we're working towards, to try to fill those gaps. The emergency department specifically, zero candidates interviewing. Zero."

Melton has repeatedly noted that 90% of the hospital's employees live on the Kitsap Peninsula and has pointed to the importance of developing staff through local programs: "We have to grow our own here locally," he said.

Dr. David Weiss, associate chief medical officer for St. Michael Medical Center and St. Anthony Hospital in Gig Harbor, made the case that high acuity patients — those who need care urgently — are being attended to in the emergency department quickly. "Emergent" patients delivered by ambulances

generally wait an average of six minutes to be seen, he said, adding that about 72% of patients who present to the emergency room on their own are placed in a treatment room within 27 minutes.

A spokeswoman for Virginia Mason Franciscan Health told the Kitsap Sun on Thursday that the data presented had been pulled from patient records over a one-year period that ended Aug. 31, 2022.

"Sometimes if your seriousness of your condition, your acuity, is lower, you may wait longer, because other people with higher acuity illnesses go through faster," Weiss said.

Kelsay Irby, an emergency room nurse whose call to Kitsap 911 on a night last month brought in a pair of Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue firefighters to help support the department, addressed Melton, Weiss and Jim Terwilliger, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health's chief operating officer.

"Just saying it's a problem everywhere, I think that that's a cop-out," she said. "…I do think that we have to get creative. Yes, we do make good money, I will make more money this year than I've ever made in my life. I know that I speak for myself and several coworkers that when we leave at the end of the day going, I honestly don't even know if it's worth it. It's not just about the money. It is about going into health care to be able to take care of you guys (the public). When we can't do that, when we go home at the end of our shift and feel like we failed you because we are not heard by our management, there's no words."

Recently, Irby said, her daughter had been sick enough to need hospital care, and the girl's father had called to ask if he should take her to St. Anthony Hospital.

"I wanted her to go to my people, I wanted her to go to my ER, the people that I know," Irby said. "But I told him to take her someplace else. For me, that's absolutely heartbreaking."

Asked about the hospital's use of taxpayer resources on the night firefighters helped to stabilize the emergency department, Terwilliger said he wasn't sure how to respond.

"Boy oh boy, we are trying to hire people — I don't want to use the word desperately — but we are so eager to bring people into the environment," he said.

Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue Chief Jay Christian said he felt it was appropriate to respond that night and said he would send firefighters again if requested: "It was 100% appropriate for us to respond to our trusted partners who were in crisis that night, to help stabilize the ER. The ER collapsing would have helped no one. If I had the ability to send firefighters, just like any other

call, any other response that we go on, it just happened to be in the ER that night.”

Speaking with the Kitsap Sun following the session on Wednesday, Kim Von Ruden, an emergency room technician, questioned the hospital's statistics and lamented the lack of resources, saying that the facility wasn't prepared for a catastrophic incident.

“We aren't even prepared on most nights for more than one very critical patient,” she said.

She added: “I will never take my kids to that emergency department, and that pains me to say. Never.”

Speaking to the health board on Tuesday, Melton acknowledged the issues that have at times strained the hospital's emergency department, noting that the department ranks within the top seven in the state for visits.

“Can't stand up here and say in front of you with honesty to say that we don't have issues on some days,” he told health board members. “We do have significant delays in EMS arrivals, we've had days where we had significant staffing challenges. I have to admit that those are issues and concerns.”