

SPECIAL SESSION
April 21, 2003

The Board of Supervisors of Maricopa County, Arizona convened at 12:00 p.m. April 21, 2003, in the Tom Sullivan Conference room, 301 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona, with the following members present: Fulton Brock, Chairman; Andy Kunasek, Vice Chairman; Don Stapley, Max W. Wilson, and Mary Rose Wilcox. Also present: Norma Risch, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Shirley Million, Administrative Coordinator; David Smith, County Administrative Officer; and Paul Golab, Deputy County Attorney.

DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CITIZEN'S TASK FORCE ON COUNTY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND GENERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.

Sandi Wilson, Deputy County Administrator
Mark Hillard, Maricopa Integrated Health Systems
Chris Keller, Chief Counsel, Division of County Counsel
Diane Sikokis, Director, Government Relations
Bill Sims, Outside Counsel
Rory Hays, Lobbyist
Doug Cole, Lobbyist
Lou Gorman, County Counsel
Shawn Nau, Director, Health Care Mandates

Supervisor Stapley said that he had attended a healthcare luncheon/information meeting at which Peter Fine, Banner Health, was also present last Thursday. He indicated that Mr. Fine was still troubled with the content of the Mission Statement as recommended by the Task Force and which the County wants to maintain. He discussed the substitute wording endorsed by Mr. Fine and the hospitals. He said that the other "sticking point" discussed with Mr. Fine and the hospitals had to do with ambulatory specialty hospitals which the private hospital's representatives seem to believe the County is planning to build or establish on/off the existing campus. It was agreed that the County is not in the specialty hospital business and has no intentions of going in that direction in the foreseeable future.

One compromise the County has made is agreeing to limit any healthcare expansion to two additional off-campus sites in the next ten years. After the ten-year period that restriction is removed and anything can be done. Supervisor Stapley said, "Why would we want to build one (a hospital or surgi-center) when we're struggling with what we have?"

Discussion ensued on why any compromise was necessary on legislation the County is introducing that is designed to benefit not only the private hospitals but all residents of the County. Supervisor Stapley and the lobbyists agreed that it is essential for the Hospital Association to endorse this legislation if it is to be approved in both houses. If the hospitals and AHCCCS fight it there is a definite danger that the legislation could be defeated. Supervisor Wilcox expressed her concern at the change of attitude displayed by members of the Hospital Association during current negotiations and also at the demands for changes in the proposed legislation that are being made by that Association. She also voiced surprise at the different things the hospitals and AHCCCS have done to stall the County's bill, especially since particular care had been taken to include those representatives as members of the Task Force that studied the issue and made the recommendations the County is now acting on in this legislation.

The discussion then turned to the Dispro Fund concerns. Diane Sikokis advised the Board that it is important to understand how disturbed the State is over the possibility of losing these funds. She added, "It wouldn't be a good time for any big changes in the distribution of the State's Dispro monies." The allotment methods used in dispensing the Disproportionate Share funds (Dispro or Dsh funds) was discussed further, and Chris Keller said he had been in contact with a Washington D.C. expert on Dispro Funds who indicated that "D.C. talk is that changes will be forthcoming on these funds before long."

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The conclusion drawn was that without a Hospital District the County would have no alternative left but to close the hospital and all its healthcare facilities or face possible bankruptcy conditions in the future. Supervisor Stapley said, "Without a district we don't have many good options left." Doug Cole called this "mutually assured destruction" and said the best leverage the County had left might be to go to the Governor and legislative leadership with that thought "because there aren't many other avenues to go down."

The importance of letting the public know how serious the situation has become and the roadblocks that are being thrown at the County, in their endeavor to get this legislation on the ballot so registered voters can make this important decision, was also discussed. Sending a letter to John Rivers, Hospital Association, to further explain the situation and ask for the Hospital Associations' cooperation and support was endorsed.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Fulton Brock, Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:

Norma Risch, Deputy Clerk of the Board