

**MINUTES OF APRIL 21, 2025
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
ANN KLEIN FORENSIC CENTER**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Ann Klein Forensic Center was held on Monday, April 21, 2025; pursuant to notice duly given. Notice of the Board Meeting and minutes are sent to the Department of Health's Division of Behavioral Health Services Commissioner's office. The following members were present:

Present:

Richard Higgins	Chairperson
Linda Elias	Board Member
Steve Vardakis	Board Member
Kenneth Bacorn	Board Member
Sajitha Sutton	AKFC CEO
Kesha Parkes-Williams	Deputy CEO, Clinical
Eileen Lonergan	Business Manager
Cheryl Thompson	Secretarial Assistant 3

Guest: None

Absent: Rafael Aviles Board Member

Mr. Higgins called the Board meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. The Board Meeting was held at the Ann Klein Forensic Center. Minutes were presented from the March 17th, 2024, meeting and approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Rehabilitation Department continues to run full rehabilitation programs in the morning, afternoons and evenings. During the month of March, we held 993 groups during our 9:00 am-3:30 pm Monday-Friday programming and 24 groups during our Monday- Friday 6:00-8:00 pm programming.

The rehabilitation department celebrated Ash Wednesday on March 5th. It's a holiday in the Christian church that marks the beginning of Lent. Patients received ashes if they wished at the 7:00 pm service ran by our Catholic priest to observe the holiday. Ashes were also administered to all staff that wanted to receive them the following day.

On March 18th there were no afternoon groups in rehab to allow for the assigned 38 patients to attend the Dr. Pat Deegan webinar. Dr. Deegan is a thought leader and disruptive innovator in the field of behavioral health recovery. She speaks around the world carrying a message of hope and recovery. The takeaways from the webinar with the patients included the following: 1. Don't believe the prognosis of doom. 2. Having a mental health challenge is not a death sentence. 3. We can live our lives and not our diagnosis. 4. There is hope.

In addition, preparations began for Eid feast, our upcoming Easter Service, and our Sobriety event all of which will be happening in the next few weeks. Art Therapy patients have been submitting design ideas to paint on the front of the stage in the gym.

During the month of March, AKFC had no patient diagnosed with COVID-19.

Ann Klein Forensic Center has begun the final training for NJ Step on March 4th. The training will be completed April 15th for all supervisors in all disciplines. There has been excellent participation thus far.

The Patient Advocacy division held its second Patient Council meeting on February 12, 2025. Each unit selects a patient representative to represent the interests of the unit at the Patient Council. In attendance were 7 patient representatives, 8 hospital supervisors from varying departments, and 2 patient advocates. Unit 2, the admission unit, did not send a representative. Common themes across all units were TV, cleanliness of the units, unit temperature, shower temperature, use of the store, portion size and availability of snacks. The various department supervisors provided feedback around the food, the store, the SSPRC and CARP process, and issues related to maintenance were referred to the department.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Eileen Lonergan, Business Manager presented the Welfare and Our Store reports for the month of January as follows:

February

Welfare

Beginning balance as of February 1, 2025, for the Welfare Fund = **\$80,067.18.**

Additions to the fund totaled **\$206.80;**

less expenses and adjustments of **\$2,542.70 leaving** a net decrease to the fund of **\$2,335.90.**

Ending Welfare balance as of February 28, 2025, totaled **\$78,507.05.**

Our Store

Beginning balance as of February 28, 2025, for the "**Our Store**" fund = **\$64,156.88.**

Additions to the fund totaled **\$8,638.06;**

with less expenses and adjustments of **\$11,257.98,** leaving a net decrease to the fund of **\$2,619.92.**

Ending balance as February 28, 2025, totaled **\$61,536.96.**

OLD BUSINESS

-Richard Higgins discussed the division's plans to centralize the Board of Trustees Bylaws in an effort for all state psychiatric hospitals to have the same bylaws. The Board discussed again in person to further discuss in more detail.

- Ann Klein continues to work diligently to ensure patients are offered the opportunity for the influenza vaccination.

NEW BUSINESS

-Dr Sutton informed everyone, the Ethics Department for the State of New Jersey's Data Privacy and Research Integrity staff would be attending the next Teams meeting on May 19th to present a few items pertaining to ethics. The presentation should last about 10 minutes.

- The board suggested exploring ways to use the accumulating funds to support patient programming. Dr. Sutton shared that the Director of Rehabilitation Services has been developing ideas by attending an occupational therapy conference, which focused on educational and therapeutic programs for patients—including activities such as cooking, music, and other life skills.
- The board officially welcomed its newest member, Kenneth Bacorn, who gave an impressive introduction of himself, followed by a roundtable of introductions from all members.
- Everyone except the members were excused to finalize the Bylaws in question.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

Attest: On file

Mr. Richard Higgins, Chairperson
Ann Klein Forensic Center
Board of Trustees

The next board meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2025