

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2025**

Recording of this meeting can be found linked [here](#). These meeting minutes show the time of specific agenda items. Fast forward the recording to the item of interest to hear detailed discussion.

The Board of Directors of Grossmont Healthcare District held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., via teleconference and in person. Members of the public were able to participate by telephone, Zoom, or in-person at the Grossmont Healthcare District Conference Center, located at 9001 Wakarusa Street, La Mesa, California 91942. For the purpose of these minutes, the listed items are reflected in the order set forth on the posted Agenda. In some cases, discussion of items may have taken place out of sequence during the meeting. Any mis-labeled items on the agenda have been corrected in these minutes.

Directors Present: Robert “Bob” Ayres, Board President
 Randy Lenac, Board Vice President
 Virginia Hall, RN, Board Secretary
 Nadia Farjood, Board Treasurer
 Maggie Watkins, Board Member

Staff Present: Aaron Byzak, Interim Chief Executive Officer
 Tom Scaglione, Chief Administrative Officer
 Amy Abrams, Chief Community Health Officer
 Aleks R. Giragosian, Esq., Interim Legal Counsel

Guests Present: Alana Forbes - Public Comment
 Eileen Conway – Public Comment

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by President Ayres.

B. Pledge of Allegiance **(00:00:32)**

Director Maggie Watkins led the pledge of allegiance.

C. Approval of Agenda **(00:01:02)**

Motion was made by Director Hall, seconded by Director Watkins, and unanimously carried (5-0), to approve the agenda.

D. Public Comment **(00:01:52)**

Alana Forbes spoke about the need for the expansion of the Crafternoon Mondays held monthly in the library to reach more people.

Eileen Conway spoke about the need for funding a larger Crafternoon program or creating more sessions since the program is at capacity.

E. Consent Action Items **(00:05:52)**

1. Policies & Procedures Committee Meeting Minutes – September 10, 2025
(Director Ayres)

Director Farjood raised questions about the meeting minutes, which included the recommendation for a 3.5% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) cap without a rollover provision. She is advocating for a 5% increase due to current inflation rates. She asked about the reporting process for Board discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and received an explanation that Board members would report such incidents directly to the General Counsel. Additionally, the Committee's recommendation to remove Juneteenth from the list of District-observed holidays was clarified, as it is now a state-recognized holiday. Director Farjood also received comments from Aleks R. Giragosian, Esq., Interim Legal Counsel, regarding governed internal procedures for motions, related to Board meeting times and the potential pilot program.

Motion was made by Director Ayres, seconded by Director Watkins, and unanimously carried (5-0), to adopt the September 10, 2025, Policies & Procedures Committee meeting minutes.

Director Lenac inquired as to why committee meeting minutes are now being placed under "consent action items." Interim Counsel Giragosian explained the Brown Act requires an agenda item with a short description in order to be discussed during the Board meeting. He will further review this issue with Director Ayres.

F. Reports/Presentations/Discussion/Possible Action Items **(00:24:38)**

1. Presentations

a) Presentation/Interactive Educational Session: Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC (Aleks Giragosian, Esq., Senior Counsel, District Interim General Counsel) *(20 minutes with 10 minutes Q&A)* **(00:24:38)**

- i. Rosenberg's Rules of Order
- ii. Public Comment (Government Code section 54954.2, subdivision (a)(3))
- iii. Public Meeting Virtual Attendance

Due to recent parliamentary procedural questions from the Board, Interim Counsel Giragosian gave a presentation on Rosenberg's Rules of Order, as well as public comment, and public meeting virtual attendance. Counsel Giragosian answered all questions the Board had. The Board thanked Counsel for his helpful and detailed presentation. The presentation included the below:

- The role of the Chair
- Format of an agenda item
- Types of motions with hypothetical questions
 - o Motions requiring super majority votes
 - o Motion to reconsider v. Motion to appeal with hypothetical questions
- Public comment and teleconferencing
 - o Items not on the agenda
 - o Four types of teleconference meetings
 - o State of emergency teleconferencing
 - o Just cause vs. emergency circumstances
 - o Teleconferencing method comparisons
 - o Annual limits on teleconferencing

2. Policies & Procedures Committee – Director Ayres **(01:24:35)**

- a) Employee Handbook (EMP-02) (For Information Only)
- b) Attendance at Meetings (BOD-03) to Include Legal Opinion regarding Remote Teleconferencing (For Information Only)
- c) Guidelines for Individuals with Service Animals (New Policy) (ADMIN-07) (For Information Only)

- d) General Driving Policy (New Policy) (ADMIN-08) (For Information Only)
- e) District Visitor Behavior Policy (New Policy) (ADMIN-09) (For Information Only)
- f) Public Policy Priorities Guidelines (New Policy) (CH-08) (For Information Only)
- g) Grant and Program Support Letter Policy (New Policy) (CH-09) (For Information Only)

Director Ayres asked Board members to review the above-mentioned policies and procedures changes and return their comments to the Interim CEO within two weeks. An updated General Driving Policy with comments from Interim Counsel Giragosian was passed out to the Board by Interim CEO Byzak. These policies will be placed on the October 16, 2025, agenda for recommendation and comment. Director Ayres thanked CAO Scaglione and his staff for all his work on the policies.

- h) Consideration of Board Meeting Time Change Pilot Program to One Morning Board Meeting and One Evening Board Meeting

Interim CEO Aaron Byzak read the names of 18 written public comments that were received, summarizing their support of the pilot program to hold at least one Board meeting in the evening each month. The public comments were received from Laura Fink, K. Michael Peddecord, Briana Costan, Cindi Fuller, Patricia Dillard, Ron Ennis, Alysson Snow, Kelsey Wadman, Genevieve Suzuki, Fatima Ghoulam, Rochelle Hershfield, Jay Steiger, Ian Devita, Melinda Vasquez, Hon. Lauren Cazares, Julie Roland, Mohammed Rahimi, and Jonilyn Vargas.

Due to all public comments not being read aloud, Director Farjood requested that each public comment be written in these minutes for documentation. She did read one public comment from Kelsey Wadman:

- Kelsey Wadman, a longtime East County resident living in La Mesa. My family and I receive care through Sharp Grossmont, and we've had the same pediatrician for our sons for nine years. I also work in the nonprofit sector and have previously received grants from GHD, giving me insight into and appreciation for your work. As a working parent, I'm unable to attend daytime board meetings, which limits my ability to stay informed and engaged. I strongly support piloting one evening board meeting per month to give working families like mine a chance to participate in GHD governance. Thank you for considering this inclusive step.

- Laura Fink, Patient at Sharp Healthcare Grossmont - As a patient, I strongly support the pilot program to hold at least one board meeting in the evening each month. Many community members work during the day and can't attend morning meetings. Evening meetings allow more people, especially working families, to participate and be heard. This small change can have a big impact on making healthcare decisions more inclusive. Thank you for your consideration.
- K. Michael Peddecord, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, San Diego State University - I support the idea of holding at least one evening board meeting per month. Prior to my retirement I was not able to attend meetings due to my work. Since I retired, I have been able to periodically attend meetings and participate as a volunteer in several GHD endeavors. I suspect many other interested East County residents may be in this situation. Regularly scheduled evening meetings will remove a barrier for those who work during the day. As the District increases its investments in community health improvement grants, enhanced community input will ensure that the District's decisions are informed by a wider range of knowledgeable voices. Greater participation also enhances the community's understanding of meaning work of the District and how their tax dollars are spent.
- Brianna Coston, Trustee, La Mesa-Spring Valley Board of Education, Resident, Grossmont Healthcare District - As a local school board member, I strongly support the proposed pilot to hold at least one Grossmont Healthcare District board meeting in the evening each month. Our board meets at 6:00 p.m. to ensure working families, educators, and community members can participate in important discussions. Like many of us, your constituents have work and family obligations that make attending 9 a.m. meetings difficult. Evening meetings would increase access, transparency, and public input—especially from those most impacted by the District's services. This small change can have a meaningful impact on community engagement and accountability. I respectfully urge you to move forward with the pilot and evaluate its effectiveness.
- Cyndi Fuller - I support the pilot program to add a monthly evening board meeting. It's a commonsense step that improves transparency and accountability by giving more community members, especially those who work during the day, a chance to participate and be heard.

- Patricia N. Dillard, Councilwoman, La Mesa City Council – I strongly support the pilot program to hold at least one board meeting in the evening each month. Most community members work during the day and can't attend morning meetings, yet their input is essential to addressing healthcare issues. Evening meetings would allow more working individuals and families to participate, be heard, and contribute to decisions that affect their health and well-being. This small change could greatly improve inclusion and ensure the board's work reflects the needs of the whole community. Thank you for your commitment to accessibility and inclusion in healthcare decision-making.
- Ron Ennis, OTR/L, NBCOT, CBOT – I support a pilot program to move one of the Grossmont Healthcare District's monthly board meetings to the evening. Many community members, especially working families, cannot attend 9 a.m. meetings due to work and caregiving obligations. An evening option would allow more voices to participate in important District decisions, including how taxpayer dollars are spent. Holding at least one evening meeting per month is an important step toward greater public access and participation. Thank you for considering this pilot program.
- Alysson Snow – I am writing I'm support of the pilot program to have the District meetings in the evenings when people can attend. Work schedules make it difficult to participate, unless after-work options for meetings are available.
- Genevieve Suzuki, La Mesa City Councilmember – I strongly support the pilot program to hold at least one board meeting each month in the evening. Most community members you serve work during the day and cannot attend morning meetings, yet they have valuable perspectives on healthcare issues that deserve to be heard. Evening meetings would allow working families to participate and ensure district decisions reflect the needs of all residents. As a family law attorney, I see how the district's policies affect families, especially working parents, balancing jobs, childcare, and health concerns. Their lived experiences offer essential insight into how policies function in daily life. As a working mother of two, I also understand the challenge of staying civically engaged while supporting my children's education and activities. Our La Mesa City Council meetings at 6:00 p.m. make participation possible after work, and I urge the district to provide similar accessibility. Thank you for your commitment to transparency, accessibility, and community engagement.

- Fatima Ghoulam - Thank you for considering a pilot program with one evening board meeting each month. This approach expands access to Board participation, allows the District to gather data and adjust as needed, and demonstrates responsive, thoughtful leadership. Please implement this program to enhance governance and community engagement.
- Rochelle Hershfield – Thank you for considering a pilot program with one evening board meeting each month. This approach expands access to the Board’s important work, allows the District to gather participation data, and demonstrates thoughtful, flexible leadership. Please implement this program to strengthen governance and community engagement. My family and friends in the District would greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend an evening meeting each month.
- Jay Steiger, Spring Valley – I strongly support the pilot program to hold at least one board meeting in the evening each month. Most people you serve work during the day and can’t attend morning meetings, yet their perspectives are vital to community healthcare. As vice chair of the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group, I’ve seen how evening meetings let families participate—residents have shared important issues like school access and road safety only because they could attend after work. This small change makes a big difference in ensuring community health decisions reflect everyone’s needs. Thank you for prioritizing inclusion and considering this program.
- Ian Devita - As a Santee resident and working father, I strongly support holding one board meeting each month in the evening. Many working families can’t attend daytime meetings, yet their voices are vital to decisions affecting our healthcare services. This pilot program is a small but important step toward better community representation. I urge you to move forward and make evening meetings a regular option to improve public engagement.
- Melinda Vasquez – I support the proposal to add an evening board meeting each month through a pilot program. Transparency and accountability are strongest when the public can attend and participate. Evening meetings remove barriers for those who work during the day, like me — I work at the East County Courthouse from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This program will allow more community members to engage and help ensure the District’s decisions reflect a broader range of voices. It’s a commonsense step toward better governance, and I applaud the board for pursuing it.

- Hon. Lauren Cazares, Vice Mayor, City of La Mesa – As a Grossmont Healthcare District resident and Sharp Grossmont patient, I strongly support adopting at least one evening board meeting per month. Accessible meeting times are essential for public accountability and equity. Many working residents, caregivers, and patients cannot attend daytime meetings, limiting community participation. Evening meetings would show a true commitment to transparency and partnership. As Vice Mayor of La Mesa, I’ve seen firsthand how accessible meetings increase public engagement and trust. The District can do the same, ensuring those most affected by its decisions can observe and contribute. I urge the Board to make this permanent commitment to open, accountable governance.
- Julie Roland – I’m a veteran who has lived here since being stationed as a Naval Officer in 2017, and I support the proposal for a monthly evening board meeting pilot. Transparency and accountability are strong when the public can truly participate. Many residents, including myself, know how hard it is to attend morning meetings while balancing work and community commitments. Evening meetings remove that barrier and ensure District decisions reflect a wider range of voices—a commonsense step toward better governance.
- Mohammad Rahimi – I support a pilot program to hold one of the Grossmont Healthcare District’s monthly board meetings in the evening. Many residents, especially working families, can’t attend 9 a.m. meetings due to work and caregiving responsibilities. An evening option would give more people a voice in District decisions and spending. Accessibility is key to good governance—please move forward with this pilot to expand community participation.
- Jonilyn Vargas – As a Grossmont Healthcare District resident, I support the pilot program for one evening board meeting each month. Many working families can’t attend 9 a.m. meetings, and an evening option makes participation more accessible. This simple change will help ensure more community voices are heard and strengthen public trust through genuine civic engagement.

Director Farjood expressed her ongoing concern regarding shifting at least one Board meeting to an evening time in order to better accommodate public attendance, as requested by local constituents since January 2025. She is in support of conducting a pilot program. Director Hall shared previous public comments directed at Director Farjood and her inability to attend daytime meetings due to her job. Director Farjood stated that she has not missed a

single meeting this year despite having a full-time job. She emphasized that her support for one evening Board meeting a month is not about her schedule but instead is about the community and public access. Director Farjood asked the Board to consider this proposal.

A motion was made by Director Farjood, seconded by Director Watkins, to initiate a six-month pilot program beginning with the first Tuesday Board meeting in November 2025 at 5:00 p.m., while retaining the third Thursday Board meetings at 9:00 a.m. The motion did not pass, failing to secure a majority (2–3). (Directors Hall, Lenac, and Watkins were the nay votes.)

G. Convene to Closed Session **(01:44:32)**

1. Public Employee Appointment (Gov. Code 54957) Title: General Counsel

H. Report After Closed Session **(02:04:05)**

Motion was made by Director Ayres, seconded by Director Farjood, and unanimously carried (5-0), to approve the August 29, 2025, proposal of Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC to become permanent legal counsel to the District with primary General Counsel representative being Aleks Giragosian, Esq., Senior Counsel.

I. Reports/Presentations/Discussion/Possible Action Items (Continued)

1. Leadership & Evaluation Committee – Director Ayres **(02:07:36)**

- a) Recommendation: Consideration of Adoption of Resolution No. 10-25 Approving an Amendment to the Grossmont Hospital Corporation Bylaws Regarding the Method of Electing Board Members

General Counsel Giragosian discussed the amendment to the Grossmont Corporation Bylaws regarding the method of electing board members, following concerns raised about potential Brown Act violations.

Motion was made by President Ayres, seconded by Director Hall, and carried (4-1), to approve the Adoption of Resolution No. 10-25 to approve an amendment of the Grossmont Hospital Corporation Bylaws regarding the method of electing Board Members. (Director Farjood was the nay vote.)

- b) Recommendation: Consideration to Approve Slate of Recommended Representatives for Grossmont Hospital Corporation Board (Subject to the Appointment of Grossmont Hospital Corporation (GHC))

Director Farjood raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest, suggesting that elected District Directors should not serve on the Grossmont Hospital Board while being fiduciaries of public funds. **Motion was made by Director Farjood to prohibit elected Directors from serving on the Grossmont Hospital Board, but allow all Directors to appoint designees instead. With the absence of a second, this motion failed.**

Director Lenac discussed amending the bylaws to allow the Board President to appoint Directors to the Grossmont Hospital Corporation. General Counsel Giragosian asked for a brief recess so he could review the bylaws.

(The meeting took a 5-minute recess.)

After reviewing the bylaws, General Counsel Giragosian clarified that Article 8 already provides the President with the authority to make appointments when more than two District Board members are interested in serving.

Motion was made by President Ayres, seconded by Director Watkins, and carried (4-1) to consider approval of slate of recommended representatives, Director Hall and Director Lenac, for the Grossmont Hospital Corporation Board (subject to the appointment by Grossmont Hospital Corporation). (Director Farjood was the nay vote.)

General Counsel Giragosian stated that usually on agendas, there's an item listed where individual board members can propose an item be placed on a future agenda, so long as there is a majority vote.

2. Board and CEO Comments

There were no Board and CEO comments.

J. Next Regularly Scheduled Meetings

1. Thursday, October 16, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
2. Tuesday, November 4, 2025, 9:00 a.m.

K. Adjournment

There being no further business on **motion duly made, seconded, and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned at 12:02 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Robert "Bob" Ayres, President, Board of Directors

ATTEST:

Virginia Hall, RN, Secretary, Board of Directors