

Rinehart Clinic Building Background

Part Two of the Nehalem Bay Health District's Facilities Assessment

As part of its ongoing strategic planning process, the Nehalem Bay Health District held an information gathering meeting on June 26, 2018 to consider issues related to the district owned building occupied by the Rinehart Clinic in Wheeler, Oregon.

Background:

The Rinehart Clinic and Pharmacy is a non-profit family health center that provides healthcare to everyone who comes through its doors regardless of their health conditions or financial circumstances. The Clinic is a Federally Qualified Health Center and depends on a mixture of federal and other grants, Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance payments.

The Clinic serves a critical role in the community, including providing essential health care to minority and underserved populations. Additionally, the clinic and the district have had a long-term relationship and, in many ways, a shared mission. A volunteer community board governs the Clinic's operations.

The district owns the Clinic building and maintains the basic infrastructure – HVAC, electric, exterior finishes, etc. of the clinic building – and the Clinic pays the district monthly rent.

General discussion:

Numerous members of the public and several members of the Rinehart Clinic board attended and participated in the informational session.

The Clinic's leadership has indicated that it has pressing needs for additional space to accommodate existing and anticipated needs. A naturopath and a family nurse practitioner will soon be joining the Clinic staff, the Clinic is offering a variety of new educational classes on subjects such as healthy eating, weight loss and diabetes risk reduction. Currently many classes must be held off-site due to limited space at the Clinic.

The Clinic was also recently informed that it may be eligible for a grant administered through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) designed to address the nationwide opioid crisis. The grant would facilitate physical improvements to the Clinic building, as well as provide financial resources to enhance staffing. (*Oregon Health Authority* data indicates that Tillamook County in the years 2011-2015 experienced the highest increase in opioid-related deaths on a per capita basis in Oregon.)

Clinic leadership indicated that the grant application has a very quick turnaround time with a six to nine month approval process for renovation plans. The Clinic will require the cooperation and agreement of the district as its landlord to proceed with the application.

The board of the health district will discuss these issues at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 3, 2018.

Additional topics considered and discussed during the informational session include:

- The potential for further collaboration between the Clinic and the Nehalem Valley Care Center, a skilled nursing facility owned by the district and adjacent to the Clinic, was discussed at some length. Additional collaboration possibilities including shared usage of physical therapy resources, pharmacy and medical staff. These are potentially issues that can be addressed as the district prepares a long-range strategic plan.
- Development of a community garden on ground adjacent to the Care Center.
- How a new clinic building might be financed and constructed and the time horizon to develop such an effort.
- The best form of district-clinic relationship/partnership in the future, including whether the landlord-tenant relationship continues to be in the public interest. What should a district/clinic partnership look like? What are the advantages to the community of a partnership? What are the potential tradeoffs? No decisions were made and again these issues can be addressed in the district's long-term strategy.

The district will hold a third informational session on July 11, 2018 to consider issues related to the Care Center building. That session will begin at 7:00 pm in the district's conference room at 278 Rowe Street in Wheeler. Members of the public and anyone interested in the future of the Care Center are encouraged to attend.
