

**HOSPITAL**

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members and employees to thank for that \$11 million.” Congrave said the board has no current plan or project in mind on which to spend the money. And she said the hospital must have a certain amount of operating costs set aside.

“It’s a security blanket, certainly, but it’s to be used for what needs to be done,” she said. “We prefer not to use any of it because it would be a nice attractive thing for leverage, a potential for a new hospital in the future.”

Congrave said the board will consider all options, but said no serious discussions have been held about establishing relationships with other health care providers, such as Sanford Health, based in North and South Dakota, and Fairview Health Services.

“We need to keep all our resources, and have relationships with everyone if they have something to offer us,” she said, but stressed that no talks have been opened with those two providers.

In 2009, Essentia Health and Falls Memorial Hospital entered into three agreements: an affiliation agreement and management services and professional services agreements. As part of the new relationship, Falls Memorial Hospital and Essential Health-International Falls Clinic became known as Rainy Lake Medical Center, with hospital and clinic campuses. Half of the RLMC Board are appointed by Essentia, a majority of whom live in the Falls area. The other half are appointed by the prior Falls Memorial Board, which is self-perpetuating, meaning board members may continue to appoint themselves for subsequent terms or can name their replacements. These members refer to themselves as Falls Memorial trustees.

**COLLABORATION**

Meanwhile, Congrave said she envisions even more collaboration between the Essentia-managed RLMC clinic moving forward and said she believes members of the community, clinic and hospital wanted the decision about whether to integrate to be resolved.

“There were pros and cons for each, and I heard that in the community,” she said. “But what I perceive and want to assure is that we continue the services we have. Maintenance of services is critical in my mind and to build on some specialty services that Essentia has brought in.”

But Congrave said Essentia’s ability to bring visiting specialists to International Falls was limited because it had lost specialists from its Duluth clinic.

Congrave said primary care physicians are also needed. While nurse practitioners and physicians assistants — mid-level staff that Congrave said are very good, but need oversight by doctors — have been providing more care at the clinic.

“We absolutely need doctors and primary care physicians and we will move forward trying to recruit them. We haven’t been very

successful in the past couple years,” she said.

But she said the decision to end integration talks may make that easier for the hospital, which would likely enlist the assistance of a recruitment agency. And she said she’s sure Essentia will continue its recruitment efforts for the clinic.

Congrave acknowledged that the hospital and clinic may compete for clients should the clinic choose to expand its services, but she said she hopes that the two facilities do not duplicate services.

“I hope there is enough services we don’t have here that we don’t need to duplicate,” she said. “It is possible for them to do it and it would affect the hospital’s revenue. People still have a choice and I am a proponent of choice. If we have two MRIs, where would they get it? I hope people are respectful of each other and choose which one they want.”

Congrave said FMH board members were concerned about outsourcing of positions under integration. Now, she said, it won’t be known how that would have played out.

And Congrave said that integration with Essentia brought the assumption that the hospital would generate more revenue. That was not the case, she said. And instead, there have been losses.

At issue with integration, she said, is that Essentia had a different vision of health care delivery than the FMH-appointed board members. She said FMH Board members believed there should be more specialists and surgery locally, which would not only stem the loss of revenue by the clinic, but turn that around to generate revenue.

Congrave said she wants the unwinding to be completed sooner than later. It must be completed by June, she said.

Among the first things the hospital must do is secure obstetrics and newborn care, which she said must continue to be offered locally.

And that again comes back to recruitment, including the need for a surgeon who can perform Cesarean sections if needed. She said traveling to Bemidji or Virginia to give birth, or for other services by an aging area population, is not an option.

When asked about how the board would address the needs of an aging hospital building, Congrave said aging is relative. She pointed to St. Mary’s in Duluth, and other hospitals in the state that are much older than the Falls hospital.

“The hospital is in extremely good condition,” she said, adding that a joint review assessment conducted a couple years ago resulted in positive comments that the hospital is in very good shape.

“Is it as efficient as it could be? No. If you built a new hospital you would build it differently because times have changed,” she said. “But can it serve our needs? Yes, very much so. It’s in good shape. It’s been maintained well.”

“Do I want a new hospital? You bet. Do I want it connected to the clinic and nursing home? You bet. But

what I want is not a need.”

Prior to integration with Essentia, the hospital board was positioned to build a new hospital and had selected a general contractor, she said. “And then the two parties started talking about integrating and getting married and that delayed the whole thing. Integration didn’t work quite as well as we anticipated, as far as revenue goes,” she said.

She said having a new hospital is always “on our plate. We have to reposition ourselves to move forward. I think it will be on the back burner for a few years, but it will be on our minds.”

Meanwhile, the end to integration will bring other decisions, she said.

Whether the hospital, now known as Rainy Lake Medical Center hospital campus, will be renamed is not yet known and will likely be a part of the unwind, she said. “To be continued,” she said.

Following the unwinding, Congrave said a permanent CEO must be hired who can lend their vision, provide stability and be a part of the community.

The services of interim CEO Bob Haley have been provided under a contract with Quorum Health, which also provides other services including consultants, continuing education, and discounts on purchased supplies.

Congrave said billing from the hospital and clinic will be separate once the unwinding is complete and she said hospital employees will have a transition.

**HELLELOID**

Meanwhile, at the start of the interview, Helleloid explained that board members appointed by Essentia would not be involved during an “unwinding” process that ends integration negotiations. The board members are bound by a confidentiality agreement.

“There is a group of us who will not have involvement, so basically it makes sense that these questions are directed to Sue. Because indeed, how things are handled in the future — the Essentia members of the board will not have anything to say about that. There has been concern by the board about communication and communication that shouldn’t be happening. First (RLMC Interim CEO) Bob Haley would be spokesperson and then he and I would be spokesperson, and (Journal staff) quite appropriately asked to speak to Susan, and that was brought up at the board and nobody objected, so I think we’re in the clear, but they wanted me to be there, but only because that was a decision made previously.”

“I agree that the responses you have had are appropriate and consistent to the thinking in voting against the offer,” he said. “A number of us on the board felt the offer was worth perusing, but that’s not what this issue is. It’s done with. Now, we’re trying to present an article to the public, which is important going forward. I was asked to be a part of this so I am. And this puts (Journal staff) in a difficult spot. (Congrave has) accurately portrayed where we are at. I can’t say this is the vision the Essentia board members had hoped for.”

**SECURITY**

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or escort them to where they need to go depending on who they want to see.”

At Falls Elementary School, the vestibule will be controlled with a security camera and doorbell.

Insulated safety glass has been installed at the south entrance of West End Elementary. The north entrance, Nelson said, will be locked. Each school will also have panic devices in place.

Lori Jorgenson, administrative assistant at Falls High School, said she anticipates it will take time for everyone to adjust to the new security updates, but noted that office staff will be as helpful as they can be during the transition.

“It is all about the safety of the students,” she said.

**ADJUSTING TO THE TIMES**

Last December’s mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, at Newtown, Conn., where 26 students and staff members were killed prompted security reviews and upgrades at schools across the nation. Budget limits posed some obstacles, but the Falls School Board bumped safety above budgets.

“I have a real concern that we’re going to start the school year the same way it ended,” Falls School Board member Gordy Dault said during a June board meeting. “And that is unrestricted access to Falls High School and Falls Elementary. I think something needs to be done.”

During the same meeting, the board gave its approval of upping the security of the entrance areas at all three schools to better ensure the safety of students, staff, administration and members

**RRCC**

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students,” she said. “We get students of all kinds of skill level, so I think the report did a good job of showing the work we do at two-year colleges.”

Having a close-knit community is critical toward fostering student development, Collins said.

“Rainy River has a history and tradition of taking students in and bringing them where they want to go,” she said. “The faculty know every student by their first name, and their doors are always open.”

With so much riding on graduation results and evaluations, having another way of judging the success of institutions of higher



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

**Signs have been placed at all three of the Falls’ district schools to remind members of the community to check in with office staff before entering the buildings.**

of the public.

The board in a statement released this month, said it has taken on the responsibility to adjust the entrances to school buildings as a first step in creating a safe school setting for students, staff and district users.

Nelson said is not aware of any concerning incidents at any of the district’s schools, however, the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary spurred concerns from the community.

“We’ve had parents tell us that they just walked in (to the school) and nobody stopped them,” he said. “It is easy to see how people could.”

The superintendent added he has stood in the hall and watched members of the public freely enter the school buildings without being seen by office staff.

“I’ve seen people walk in with instrument cases for their children,” he said. “I take for granted I know what’s really in (the cases).”

Nelson said he still has concerns for the entrance near the Community Edu-

cation offices at Falls High School.

“It’s an easy access,” he said. “It is locked and people have to push a buzzer, but once they’re in, they’re in.”

Nelson said he is hopeful that the Community Education office and staff be moved closer to the district offices near the front entrance of FHS.

“There is no sense spending money to install similar security measures back there,” Nelson said of Community Education offices. “That would be a whole other cost I don’t think we need to deal with.”

He added that the intent behind the new security systems is “not to turn the school buildings into fortresses.”

“We want a welcoming arrangement, and I know the district residents will be more than accepting of what we had to do because of our society today,” he concluded. “I (hope) that the public will understand and work with the personnel at the school to make it a workable arrangement.”

education can only help, Favela said.

“Data drives a lot of processes at higher education, so having another set only helps,” she said. “The two measures the report uses are both really good and positive.”

Collins stressed the difference between public and private colleges, and that evaluating schools using a broader scope of data is important.

“We need to judge effectiveness on a variety of measures,” she said. “So a broader set of metrics is important.”

In the end, Collins said the recognition RRCC received is a direct result of the hard work the staff do every day.

“Rainy River’s attention to student needs and the way they listen, as well the collective heart and soul of the faculty, that’s what produces recognition,” she said.

**AGENDA**

**City Council  
Tuesday, September 3, 2013 • 4:30 P.M.  
Council Chamber**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**ROLL CALL**

**MINUTES**

- Approve minutes of the August 19, 2013 special City Council meeting

**SPECIAL ACTION CLAIMS**

**TRANSFERS**

<b>To:</b> City of Intl Falls - Fund #101	<b>From:</b> City of Intl Falls - Fund #812    \$236.77 Lodging tax
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**REGULAR CLAIMS**

- Regular Claims

**AUDIENCE**

**BIDS AND/OR QUOTES**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Request for waiver of due on sale clause and subordination of SCDP Commercial Rehabilitation Program for James A Cowgill and Sharon Cowgill - Kimberly Literovich, Shermoen & Jaksa Law Office
2. City of International Falls and the School Board of Independent School District #361 – Joint Powers Agreement Establishing a Joint Recreation Commission renewal- July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014
3. Report of Budget & Finance Committee- recommendation to approve the assumption of the commercial loan of Greentech Manufacturing, Inc.
4. Report of Human Resources committee- update firefighter engineer and volunteer firefighter list's
5. Resolution # \_13 supporting the Minnesota Power Great Northern Transmission Line
6. Resolution # \_13 airport grant
7. Resolution # \_13 approving application for exempt permit – Friends of the Falls Fire Department
8. 2013 Taxi License - Flame Van Service, LLC
9. Approve travel for attendance at League of Minnesota Cities 2013 Regional meetings
10. Approve Master Service Agreement and rates for ARRO of The North, LLC – three year agreement
11. Any other business

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATOR, ATTORNEY, AND DEPARTMENT HEADS**

**REPORTS OF MAYOR, COUNCIL COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

**AUDIENCE – 2<sup>nd</sup> CALL**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- July 10, 2013 International Falls Public Library Board meeting minutes

**REMINDERS**

- Next regular Council meeting is Monday, September 16, 2013 at 4:30 PM

The City of International Falls complies with the ADA. Individuals with disabilities requiring special aids should contact the City Administrator, 600 Fourth Street, International Falls, MN, 56649, 218-283-9484, 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL**

**Wellness Demonstration**

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**Where:** Falls Public Library Basement Mtg. Room  
**Who:** Rainy Lake Waves Massage, Jeanne Corrin

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