Library president asks for referendum

Predicts return to municipal library

By Randy Hanson
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The president of the Hudson Area Joint Library Board on Monday night asked the City Council to consider holding a referendum on increasing tax support for the library.

Barbara Peterson laid out a scenario in which the joint library would revert to a municipal library at the start of 2014.

She said that allowing the library to be funded to the level of the county library levy would free residents from the current situation of being taxed doubly for library service, but having only half of the money come to the Hudson library.

This year, $289,968 in city taxes will be appropriaated to the library, while city residents will pay a county library levy of $277,173.

The $277,173 won’t increase funding for any library in the county, Pe-

HOSPITAL OBSERVES 60 YEARS

The Hudson Hospital observes 60 years this month and four pages in this week’s Star Observer are devoted to the milestone (Pages 5, 6, 7 and 8A). Another expansion to the new campus, 405 Stage Line Road, is currently underway. A new $10 million structure will house many of the campus’ specialty physicians. The new 40,000-square-foot medical office building is scheduled to be completed in November of this year. The new campus is 10 years old this year.

Hot Air Affair is this weekend

The Hudson Hot Air Affair will take to the sky this weekend for the 24th annual hot air balloon rally and winter festival, Feb. 1-3. The event is presented by Westown Credit Union—Hudson and features commercial, regular and special-shaped hot air balloons coming to town for the
HOSPITAL CELEBRATES 60 YEARS

Hospitals in Hudson built by citizens committed to community

Two capital campaigns — one for the 1953 hospital and one for the 2003 hospital — found local citizens raising the money

By Doug Stohlberg
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The Hudson Hospital celebrates 60 years in the community this January. Interestingly, 2013 also marks the 10th anniversary of the new Hudson Hospital and Clinic, 405 Stageline Road. The hospital opened its doors on Jan. 18, 1953, at 400 Wisconsin Street, at a cost of $464,000. It was built because the community decided it was needed. An early history of the hospital credits philanthropist Stephen C. Phelps with starting the effort. Phelps was the son of a wealthy railroad official and started the Phelps Foundation in 1946. He announced that he would contribute $70,000 toward a hospital building fund. His goal was to perpetuate the memory of his mother, Frances, with a lifesaving memorial.

The community hadn’t had a hospital since the old Hudson Sanatorium (overlooking Lake Malbaise) was destroyed by fire in 1934. The ward structure was constructed in 1887 and operated as a general hospital for several decades. In the latter part of its life, however, it was primarily used as a mental health facility. In 1942 the residents of Hudson passed a referendum calling for the construction of a new hospital, but the project stalled.

After Phelps made his offer, a group of civic-minded citizens formed the Hudson Hospital Association in 1950 to begin the effort to build a new hospital. The board of directors included Yvette Ward, Edna Bees, Raymond Casanova, Harry Blackman, Hugh Owin, John Bauerneinf, Edwin Mayer, Mrs. Walter Bees, Raymond Casanova and John M. Hughes (honorary member).

The 1953 hospital underwent several expansions over the years, including the addition of a nursing home. At one point, the facility had a capacity of 125 beds. The facility underwent another major change when Hudson Physicians Clinic moved from downtown (220 Locust St.) into a new wing at the hospital in 1987. Since the opening, the 1953 hospital served its community well. For five decades, it was the place where many medical miracles happened. However, the facility once described as “the latest work in hospital design” was built when inpatient stays were lengthy, and the need for technology space — like meet technology — was still many years away.

It became apparent in the late 1990s that the Hudson Hospital needed a new location. With the rapidly changing landscape of health care, the local hospital affiliated with HealthPartners in 1997. In 1998 the Hudson Hospital purchased 17.5 acres of land from George Isok near 1-94 for a future health campus.

In 2009 the hospital board voted to proceed with the plans for a new campus. Another capital campaign was organized. Called “Building Healthier Hudson,” the organization led by banker Ken Hauser, that the task of raising $13.5 million toward the construction of the $85 million facility.

The effort received a big up-front boost. Phelps Foundation, the same organization started by Stephen Phelps in 1946 — contributed $5 million to the cause. In the end, there was $103 million in funds raised, and the hospital opened in November 2003, the doors opened in late June of 2003.

Another expansion to the new campus is currently underway, with new $20 million parking structure was built on the current campus, and the construction of the new hospital building is scheduled to be completed in November 2016.

Hospitals in Hudson built by citizens committed to community

The people of this community should have the best possible hospital care at the lowest possible cost.

Charlie Ward, President of Brown & Bigelow

The community had the foresight to see that Hudson needed a hospital in the early 1950s, said Furlong, president & CEO, Hudson Hospital and Clinics since 1999. "Leaders again stepped forward when it was time to build our new campus which is now 15 years old. Even before that, they recognized that our hospital could not stand alone and the need to build a new hospital, the project stalled.

A public meeting was held in November 1950, at which final plans for the construction of the hospital were formulated. Oscar Nelson was named general chair of the campaign; and a number of fundraising teams worked under his direction.

They said community leaders demonstrated thoughtfulness, foresight and leadership throughout the 60 year history of the Hudson Hospital.

And it’s not just the hospital, I hope people who are new to the community out see that Hudsonians have always had a commitment to the entire community. Furlong said. I hope people who are new to the community out see that Hudsonians have always had a commitment to the entire community.
The Wardes also purchased the Hudson Star-Observer in order to promote the hospital campaign. Contracts for building the special hospital design were let on July 19, 1951. Herman Haggard Jr. of River Falls supervised the construction which began Aug. 30, 1951. The 36-bed hospital opened its doors to patients on Jan. 16, 1953. More than 1,700 people went through the new two-story building that Sunday between 9 and 9 p.m.; another 600 more toured the building in the next two days.

The original board of directors consisted of: Harry Blakeman (president), Yvette Ward, Hugh F. Ward (vice-president) and Donald Ward (treasurer).}

Another expansion to the new campus is currently underway. A new $10 million structure will house many of the campus' specialty physicians. The new $41,000 square-foot medical office building is scheduled to be completed in November of this year.

Later this year the hospital is planning festivities for both the 10-year anniversary of the current campus and the opening of the new office space. The 10-year celebration is planned for June 29, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the office space open house is yet to be determined later in the year.

The hospital board chair sees bright future

The current expansion will make Hudson Hospital and Clinics an even stronger organization.

Dr. Bill Gold of Hudson is chair of the Hudson Hospital Board of Directors and proud of the progress the hospital has made in the past. He looks forward to an even brighter future.

"We always want to do what is best for our community," Gold said. "I've seen the hospital and caregivers adapt to changing times, but the vision has been, and always will be, to provide the best care to the community and region."

Gold has been on the board since 2007 and became chair in April 2008. "I'm more familiar with the past, but I've seen a number of things that have been extremely important to our success."

He noted three recent milestones: first, the move to the current campus 10 years ago; second, that came the initial association with HealthPartners in 1999 and the good relationship with the community physician partners. Second, came the even closer relationship with HealthPartners in 2008 when Hudson Hospital joined the organization.

Third is the current construction and expansion of services with the new addition scheduled to open later this year.

"Joining HealthPartners allowed us to associate with a strong organization without giving up a lot," Gold said. "It allows us to be part of the HealthPartners family and solve problems together. We have nearly 10 years to get together before joining. We knew them and they knew us. This was not an acquisition, but a partnership. It was best for our community."

He said the current expansion will make Hudson Hospital and Clinics an even stronger organization and clinician and have been providing care for more years. It is part of offering the highest quality of services to our community and region."

Being associated with HealthPartners has already paid dividends, including the construction and operation of the Cancer Center in New Richmond.

"At first we had some concerns about the location," Gold said. "But it became apparent that by working with other partners, we could offer the same or better care as is offered in the Twin Cities, in a local setting. Patient response has been very positive and the care has been excellent."

"By working with HealthPartners we have
Doctor spends career in Hudson

By Meg Heaton
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Dr. Stephen Schmutz has been a part of Hudson healthcare since 1983. His work and that of the Hudson Hospital and Clinics have been a successful collaboration for more than three decades.

Schmutz, who today is one of Hudson Physicians 18 family medicine doctors, was one of four doctors at the Hudson Clinic back in 1981. Those days Hudson also had doctors at the St. Croix Valley Clinic. The two organizations merged in 1987 and built a new facility adjacent to the former Hudson Hospital on Wisconsin Street.

Today Hudson Physicians, a division of Western Wisconsin Medical Associates, has a staff of doctors and health professionals that specialize in family and internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, geriatrics, women's healthcare and sports and occupational medicine.

As the hospital marks its 60th anniversary, Schmutz took some time to reflect on his own professional history in Hudson.

After completing his residency at St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, Schmutz, then 30, came to practice in Hudson and never left. 'I have grown up here. When we came it was a small bedroom community where a

NEW CAMPUS OPENS IN JUNE 2003

Ken Heiser and Hudson Mayor Jack Breault pretend to cut a ribbon to mark the opening of the Hudson Health Campus on June 26, 2003. Participating in the ceremony were, from left, Pat Sherley, Kendall Hicks, Sheila Paul, Scott Wagner, Mary Ellner, Jim Dixon, Steve Muelkerle, Marian Farbring, Mayor Breault, Tom O'Connell, capital campaign chair Heiser, John Marnell, Colleen Maloney, Mary Claire Olson, Randy Pinowski, Dr. Elizabeth Schertz, Dr. Kristin Severson, Dr. Dana Dahl and Betty Ziske.

Bob McGrew has been part of Hudson Hospital since it began

By Meg Heaton
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Bob McGrew has been part of Hudson's community hospital since the site first opened back in 1953.

Back when he was the advertising manager at the Hudson Star-Observer, his boss and the paper's then owner Yvonne Ward was heading up an intense effort to build Hudson's first hospital. A photo from a newspaper at the time the facility first opened shows McGrew and John Bonfim, then Hudson Booster Club members, putting up the first directional sign. Some fifty years later, another photo showed McGrew putting up a sign for the new facility that opened in 2003.

McGrew, 88, said volun...
Board / Future looks good

Continued from page 5A

a regional perspective.”

In addition to Hudson, other HealthPartners facilities in the area include Westfield Hospital in New Richmond and Lakeview Hospital in Stillwater.

As far as the future is concerned, Gold believes Hudson’s HealthPartners is in an excellent condition.

“We are well positioned,” Gold said.

He noted the strong working relationship with many physicians and specialists. With the HealthPartners Board, Gold said the local hospital is prepared for future changes — be it treatments, legislation, re-imbursements, demographics or health care.

“Of course, I have learned as a board member that the success of our organization begins with very dedicated staff,” Gold said. “They define who we are.”

Dr. Bill Gold

Dr. Bill Gold is a health care consultant with expertise in health plan care management, quality management and organizational effectiveness. He operates his business, Bill Gold, out of his Hudson home.

His background includes practicing in obstetrics and gynecology, with advanced training in high risk pregnancy. He left practice in 1990 and joined Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota and served as chief executive officer of HealthPartners.

He has served as a regional vice president of insights and was president of HealthPartners’ consulting business in 2008.

A native of Davenport, Iowa, Gold earned a bachelor’s degree from Cornell College and a medical degree from the University of Iowa. He completed his residency at Northeastern University in Boston.

The Hudson Hospital Board of Directors includes members of the medical staff, HealthPartners and the community. Gold is considered a community member.

In addition to Gold, the current board includes Linda Zietz, Susie Gilbert, Ruth Misenko, Marian Furhong, Dr. Mark Statula, Dr. Burke Kealey, Steve Kirby, John Clymer, Scott Schnackle, Brock Nelson, Mike Selman, Dr. Greg Young and Dr. Dennis Hartung.

Longtime employee has grown with the hospital

Kathy O’Brien started in the "white house."

By Meg Heaton

Kathy O’Brien’s first day as an employee of Hudson Hospital was Nov. 10, 1975, the day the Edmands-Fingerland sank. There is only one other employee who has worked there longer and only by a year.

O’Brien’s daughter was a year old when she was ready to go back to work but she didn’t want to commute into St. Paul. “I decided working at the community hospital would be more interesting and meaningful.” And her neighbor who worked there and recommended the position.

Back then O’Brien was known as a "white house" employee. The hospital, then located on Wisconsin Street near Neopack Park, was out of space, and the administrative and business offices were located in a two-story white house adjacent to the hospital. She is the last of the employees who worked there to still be on call.

Over her 37 years with the hospital, O’Brien has done many jobs working in personnel, with the medical staff, as executive assistant to both the hospital administrator and assistant administrator as well as providing support for the hospital board of directors and the hospital foundation board. Today she is the medical staff coordinator and Life Assistant Program coordinator.

She said she doesn’t have a favorite among the many jobs she has held over the years. “All of my experiences here has been good. I’ve had the opportunity to work with so many dedicated people from doctors and the medical staff to board members and volunteers. It has been a wonderful experience.”

During her tenure, O’Brien has worked with three of the five administrators in the hospital’s 60-year history. Among the things she is proud of, however, is the new hospital and health campus, specifically the move from the old facility. “The effort that went into building this was tremendous, I am still amazed on how we moved an entire hospital in June 2003.”

O’Brien has seen a lot of changes over the years, not the least of which has been the impact of technology on almost every hospital job. “Back when I started, I was thrilled to have a self-correcting typewriter. But it has been fun to see the changes in a new and better way.”

When she came to Hudson Hospital, there were 30 on the medical staff. Today there are some 300. She believes that while the hospital has evolved with new technology and new methods of care and treatment, they have stayed true to their mission of caring for the health of the community.

“A stay in the hospital may be short but there is more survival in more specialty areas. And everyone continues to focus on safe, quality patient care.”

O’Brien said it has been exciting to see the progress and growth of Hudson Hospital and Clinics. From her mother and her children, she has seen the people she works with make "exceptional care in a healing environment." She sees it as a team effort to improve the community’s health, deliver a good experience and make health care more affordable.

“I’m very proud of Hudson Hospital and Clinics and I’m proud to be a employee.”
OPEN HOUSE DRAWS CROWD
When the first Hudson Hospital opened on Jan. 28, 1953, more than 1,700 toured the facility during an open house that began at 3 p.m. and ended at 9 p.m. More than 500 people went through the facility on the following Monday and Tuesday. The building and later additions were razed shortly after the new hospital was built.

‘68 ADDITION
This 1966 drawing by local architect firm of Hirsch & Stevens shows what the convalescent home would look like after an addition. The first floor was actually opened in 1963 and the second floor was added in 1968. The front of the hospital itself was on the back side of the photo taken from Wisconsin Street. It was announced in 1978 that the convalescent home would close three years later in 1981.

BASIC ROOM IN 1953
Hospital rooms were pretty basic when compared to todays standards. There were essentially no single-bed rooms in the 1953 hospital.

FACTS & FIGURES

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Healing Arts program uses hospital & clinics for a gallery

By Randy Hanson
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First-time visitors to Hudson Hospital & Clinics may be surprised by the amount and quality of original art on display in the corridor and waiting areas. It’s so abundant and expertly exhibited that a person might think they had wandered into a gallery, if not for the hustle and bustle of the medical facility.

The unique environment is the creation of the Healing Arts program, a collaboration between the hospital and The Phripps Center for the Arts. Hospital President & CEO Marian Furlong is a believer in the connection between the healing process and a patient’s physical surroundings. She wanted to enhance the hospital’s healing environment by bringing in artwork.

Margaret Weibhaus has directed the program since 2004, working out of a shared office behind the information desk in the hospital’s main corridor. At any given time, Weibhaus has 150 to 200 pieces of art by a dozen or more artists to keep track of. The paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, pottery, fabrics and more are exhibited in corridors, waiting areas, offices and patient procedures and conference rooms.

Weibhaus, a former nurse, plans the exhibits, communicates with the artists, installs the art and tracks over the inventory.

“I think it’s important that we relate to the people who come here, that we recognize not just our clinical needs for treating them, but their needs for healing,” Weibhaus said.

Stress is an impediment to healing, she said, and calming artwork reduces it.

The exhibit in a particular area is rotated every three months so that the benefit of the hospital staff. Weibhaus wants the work environment to remain engaging and interesting for them.

For the public, the art provides a pleasurable experience at a place that is more often associated with negative feelings. It helps make people comfortable.

Almost all of the art pieces on display are for sale, and the proceeds benefit the arts program.

Furlong / Hospital grows

Continued from page 5A

Health care is never far in isolation,” Furlong said. “It takes a true team. The employees are the ones who make this place go.

The health care network continues to expand with Health Partners. The network has an acquired Wepf Fields Hospital in New Richmond and Lakeview Hospital in Stillwater.

Health is also part of the creation of the Western Wisconsin Cancer Center, located in New Richmond. Six western Wisconsin hospitals collaborate in the effort. In addition to Hudson Hospital and Clinics, the other partners are Amery Regional Medical Center, Baldwin Area Medical Center, Osceola Medical Center, St. Croix Regional Medical Center and Wepf Fields Hospital (New Richmond).

Hudson Hospital is also in the midst of a large expansion project. With the increase in specialty services and the growth of Hudson Physicians, Hudson Hospital is constructing a new two-story, 41,000 square foot structure on the campus. It is scheduled to open in November.

“We continue to focus on patient needs,” Furlong said. “We are always looking for the best way to deliver great care, in the most affordable way. If we keep focused on that, it will keep us on track.”