Shelly Larson has decided to step down from her position as Melissa Memorial Hospital’s CFO. Until a more permanent employee can be found to replace her, Jim Rush of Oregon will be acting as interim CFO.

A resolution allowing the temporary hiring of Rush was approved by the East Phillips County Hospital Board when they met Monday, Dec. 22.

With Larson already gone, Rush started the position on Monday, Dec. 29. At the latest, he is expected to stay until March, though administrator John Ayoub hopes a permanent replacement can be found before then.

In other staff news, it was noted by Ayoub he has made some operational changes within the hospital and clinic positions. Three new positions have been created, which will be filled by employees already working at MMH.

At the hospital, a new position was created for Pat Notter. Though no official title has been given to her yet, Ayoub said Notter will be doing a combination of pharmacy, care coordination and swing bed work.

Two employees at Family Practice Clinic will also be promoted to supervisory positions. The reason for this, said Ayoub, is to allow clinic manager Melissa Mayden more time for other things. “We want to give her more time to focus on providing quality service, including faster response times for patients,” he said.

As a side note, Ayoub added he still continues to search for another new physician to join Family Practice. He is currently talking with one particular physician about the position, and sought approval from the hospital board to pay the doctor’s agent if hiring occurs.

“However,” he said, “We’re just talking at this point. I don’t want to get people’s hopes up prematurely.”

CEO reports big expenses

Two big accounting expenses threw hospital board members for a loop when the monthly financials were presented to them Monday night. However, it was explained to the board these are one-time necessary accounting expenses that are not actually paid for out of pocket. It was also noted that even with their inclusion, the hospital still ends up with a positive bottom line.

The first expense involves the finished componentization of depreciated items in the new hospital building. The huge amount of $253,539 was split in half between November and December’s expenses.

The second expense is the figured difference between the appraised selling price of the old hospital building and what they think the actual selling price will be.

Committee updates

Members of the Quality Care Committee reported on a presentation they received from the parent of a former patient at MMH. The committee had asked the parent to give an honest report on the quality of care the child received during time in the hospital, and also to ask others in the community about their experiences.

The goal of the committee in doing so was to find out the areas in which the hospital needs to work on to provide better quality care to patients.

According to Ayoub, the parent put a lot of research and effort into the presentation.

“It was very eye-opening,” said Ayoub, adding some parts of it were painful for the committee to hear. However, he said it was very good for the staff and the board, who now have a better idea of the areas that need work. This particularly includes communication between the different departments.

“We’re always continuing to strive to get better,” said Ayoub. “We’re pleased that parent was

willing to come in and do it and that so much research was put into it.”

Meanwhile, the Community Linkages Committee reported on its efforts to reach out to the community. Discussion this month centered on the education classes offered by MMH.

On Monday, Dec. 15 a diabetes education class was taught by Judi Sudmeier, but it was not well attended. As such, the committee would like to take a different approach by creating classes based on what the community wants.

“Rather than having the people come to us,” said Ayoub, “we’ll go to the people.”

They are particularly interested in contacting local clubs and organizations to see if they would like to set up education classes. Ayoub urges anyone who is interested in sponsoring one of these classes to contact Sheryl Farnsworth.

Credentials approved

A long list of credentials that needed to be approved by the board was granted Monday night. It was also noted Ted Lin, MD—Family Practice and Scott Faulkner, MD—Sleep Studies six-month provisionals had ended.

Two-year reappointments included the following: Byron Barksdale, MD—Pathology; Lyle Barksdale, MD—Pathology; Kelby Bethards, MD—Family Practice; David Dalzell, MD—Radiology; Arlin Hatfield III, MD—Radiology; Gary Luckasen, MD—Cardiology; R. Scott Pace, MD—Allergist;

Charles Palmer, MD—Ophthalmology; Daniel Possehn, MD—Radiology; James Schiefen, DO—General Surgery; Warren Tripp, MD—Ophthalmology; Todd Whitsitt, MD—Cardiology; and Delane Wycoff, MD—Pathology.

New appointments included Hakumat Kakkar, MD—Neurology; Judith Sudmeier, FNP—Family Practice; and Deana O’Gorman, FNP—Family Practice.

Other business

In other business, the EPCHD board:

—received a letter from the state that said MMH is now in compliance with two out of three surveyed standards taken recently.

—heard a report from Terry Barth on the Materials Management Department.

—established the mill levy at 13.7 mills.

—approved a revised version of the budget to be sent to the state.

—discussed the sale of the old hospital building. It was noted there has been interest shown in the purchase of the specialty clinic.

—agreed to sell the hospital’s extra walk-in fridge to the Holyoke School District.

—heard a report from Steve Deaver of the corporate compliance committee. He updated the board on the progress made on the 2008 work plan and what needs to be on the 2009 plan.