

Powell joins hospital board

Written by Kyle Arnoldy



Facing a steep learning curve as the only new member to join the East Phillips County Hospital District Board this year, Angela Powell is excited and eager to jump in to the mix and take on the new role.

Powell will be sworn into office at the Tuesday, May 27, board meeting. With an already full schedule—including a transition from high school English teacher to school counselor and returning to school to attain a master's degree in school counseling—Powell said she feels her broad perspective on health care could be an asset to the board.

“In order to have a sustainable community, you need a solid hospital,” Powell said. “We are very fortunate to have the community that we do and the hospital that we do. I just wanted to make sure that is sustainable for the long haul. A good way for me to do that is to become more involved in the hospital.”

With a young family at home, Powell believes she represents the early-to-mid-30s age group that may not have their voices heard. Working as an educator for the past 10 years, Powell said she believes her time in the classroom will also benefit her. She noted the similarities between how hospitals and schools are run with standards set at the state and federal levels and how they operate for the public.

Through the school district, Powell has been on multiple boards, committees and teams, including serving on Positive Behavior Interventions Support and on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee. She also was chairman of the Leadership Team.

“Just being able to work collectively with a small group of people to impact the greater number has really made a difference in how I view my role, not only as an educator, but as a community member,” Powell said.

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Already having attended three board meetings and one work session, Powell said she is enjoying her time at the hospital.

“I’m really finding it intriguing, and I leave every board meeting wanting to go research more because I feel like there is so much I can learn and so much that I can gain from being there and exposed to the things they deal with.”

Powell is a fifth-generation Holyoke native. After graduating from Colorado State University with an English degree with an emphasis in secondary education, she returned home to student teach. With no positions available in Holyoke at the time, she spent her first year teaching in Otis before returning to Holyoke where she has spent the last nine years as an English teacher.

She will move into a new role in the fall as the counselor at Holyoke JR/SR High School. At that time she will also begin taking online courses to earn a master’s degree in school counseling from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

Powell and husband Aaron have two sons, Mason, who will be in second grade in the fall, and Riley who will begin kindergarten.

Young, Woodhead return to board

With three seats up for election this year and just three candidates throwing their hat in the ring, the May 6 hospital district election was canceled.

Incumbent board members Steve Young and Mike “Woody” Woodhead, along with Powell, were automatically elected to four-year terms.

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Sheryl Farnsworth chose not to seek re-election after nearly nine years on the board.

Young was appointed to fill a vacant seat on the hospital board in 1993, making him the longest-tenured current board member. He currently serves as board president. Woodhead was appointed to fill a seat for the remainder of a term in the fall of 2012.

“I’ve seen a lot of good things happen, with the new building and new doctors, but we can always do more,” Young said.

After more than 20 years serving on the board, Young said that as a healthy person with the time to help, he feels this is a way he can contribute to the community.

Another driving factor to return for Young and Woodhead is to see the hospital through a series of big changes. Specifically, they noted that addressing changes in the way insurance is handled is one of the most important issues that the hospital will face.

With the need for good quality health care, Woodhead said he felt obligated to help and saw an opportunity when a seat became available in 2012.

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