



December 18, 2015

Mr. Ray Maxwell, Director
Gaston County Public Works
PO Box 1578
Gastonia, NC 28053

Dear Ray:

Thanks for the time recently to discuss the Old Orthopedic Hospital property on South New Hope Road. Specifically, I appreciate the conversation and joint brainstorming about the building known as the old nurses' dorm.

As you know, the building occupies a prominent spot near one of the county's busiest intersections, S. New Hope Road and Garrison Boulevard. From what I understand, the building has not been used since the 1970's when the campus was closed as an orthopedic facility. Over the past 15 years, Partners Behavioral Health Management, formerly known as Pathways, has used the main building on the property and has kept it in excellent repair. The county uses other buildings and a local behavioral health provider for citizens with severe and persistent mental illness occupies a building; all of which are maintained very well. The old nurses' dorm has not been used by Partners BHM or the county and has been in a steady state of decline. From recent tours you will recall that the building has significant water issues, contributed to in part from the old construction style with the interior gutter system as well as the lack of use for the past 3+ decades. Many of the lower level windows have been boarded up and many of the remaining windows are cracked or broken. The roof is in dangerously bad shape as is the general exterior of the building.

Several years ago, we explored, in partnership with one of the commissioners at the time, the feasibility of rehabbing the property and using it to once again serve the community. Due to the significant damage to the facility, materials used during original construction that would have to be corrected (asbestos, lead based paint, etc.) the costs of re-lifing the building were prohibitive. Estimates were provided at the time in the \$2.5 to \$3.0 million dollar range.

We are concerned about the property for a number of reasons. First, the building is a general eyesore. Again, occupying a place at a very visible intersection for the county and adjacent to the facility that we occupy, the building reflects poorly on us both. We have had numerous people call or come by and ask about the maintenance of the building over the years and have conveyed that it is not a building that Partners uses. They relay to us that it is a blemish on the area in their minds as well. Secondly, we are concerned about the safety of the facility. Again, from your tours over the years, you are familiar that frequent and consistent trespassing occurs

CORPORATE OFFICE:
901 South New Hope Rd.
Gastonia, NC 28054

ELKIN REGIONAL OFFICE:
200 Elkin Business Park Dr.
Elkin, NC 28621

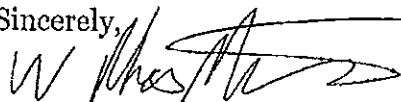
HICKORY REGIONAL OFFICE:
1985 Tate Blvd. SE, Suite 529
Hickory, NC 28602

at the facility and there are often signs of unauthorized people entering the property. It is not uncommon to go by the property and see individuals loitering about the area. Lastly, we feel that the building represents a significant liability issue, more so for the county than for Partners, but nonetheless a concern for us all.

Though, again, not our property or under our direct responsibility, we have concerns as the primary occupant of the old orthopedic campus. As you know, the state has authorized the property to be removed and bids have been obtained to determine the cost to do so. As a gesture of partnership on the current need to improve the situation and in order to attempt to resolve the current challenge the building brings to us both, Partners BHM is pledging to fund one half of the costs for removal of the building and cleaning up of the lot on which it sits. We hope that this offer is received favorably by the county and that the financial match shows meaningful collaboration by a key partner of Gaston County.

Please let me know if there is more information I can provide for you. We are eager to move ahead with this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Rhett Melton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

W. Rhett Melton
Chief Executive Officer