

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of August 16, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tia Braseth, Anthony Dillard, Cecil Johnson and Kim Schlotfeldt in person, Les Bakke via Zoom.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Dara Lee and Jill Cossette.

9:30 A.M. REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

AGENDA:

A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to approve the agenda. Commissioner Dillard seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Additions to Agenda-Director Lee asked that Joint Powers Agreement with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension be added to the agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to add the item to the agenda. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

2021 AUDIT PRESENTATION:

Brian Opsahl from Brady Martz was present at the meeting to discuss the 2020 Audit Report.

A draft copy of the Audit Report was available. It was reviewed by the auditor who stated that an unmodified opinion will be issued on the financial statements with no findings. Brian stated there are no new accounting policies adopted for 2021. Edits to the report still need to be completed. The final report will be available at the September meeting.

No action was taken at this time.

MINUTES FROM JUNE 21, 2022, REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve the June 21, 2022, regular minutes. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Director Lee is hopeful to provide our financials in the very near future. Staffing complications here led to the delay.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Director Lee asked if there were any questions regarding the below updates. The Board had no questions.

Houge Estates

As of August 1, there were 6 vacant units. There are three potential lease terminations under way. Three full applications are being processed for the openings. Twelve more people have been contacted about the openings. There are 108 households on the waiting list. The waiting list is currently open.

The Houge Estates Service Coordinator is housed at this location.

Agassiz Apartments

As of August 1, there is one vacancy. It has been offered to an applicant who intends to move in on or before September 1. There are 13 applicants on the waiting list which closed 2/1/22.

Clay County Affordable Housing LLC/Boyer Apartments

As August 1, there is one vacant 2-bedroom unit at the former Boyer Apartments. There were 11 households on the Boyer 2-bedroom waiting list at the time of the transfer to CCAH. These applicants were contacted for the Boyer opening. One has responded and is completing the application. There are 25 households on the waiting list for the one-bedroom unit.

There is no specific subsidy tied to these units. Residents of these units receive a preference for a Housing Choice Voucher if their family size fits the available unit.

Fieldcrest Townhomes

As of August 1, there are 11 vacant units (five 2-bedrooms and six 3-bedrooms) which will be kept vacant during construction. One of the additional vacancies is due to an eviction for drug-related criminal activity. There are 16 households on the waiting list which is now closed. We will reopen the waiting list and start filling the openings when the rehab is complete.

The garages are in the process of being sided. Half the siding is currently being stored on the property. Windows will be delivered on August 17. Parking lot and excavation work are anticipated to begin the week of August 15.

Gateway Gardens

As of August 1, there are 4 openings. The lease of one additional tenant was terminated on August 8. The unit is infested with cockroaches that are spreading through the building. The tenant is a hoarder and until his unit is able to be thoroughly treated, we will be unable to end the infestation. In July, we received two OSHA complaints regarding the cockroach situation and provided

documentation regarding all the steps we have taken to irradicate the problem. Our responses have been deemed sufficient at this time. We will continue treatment until the problem is resolved.

Two applicants have been selected for the vacant units, but we would like to have the infestation resolved prior to moving people into the units.

In addition, we have had to move all supplies for the Housing Supports program to the main office conference room. The conference room is unavailable for other activities at this time.

The additional vacancies will be filled through the coordinated entry system.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes

As of August 1, all units are ready for occupancy. One tenant in an accessible unit is being transferred to the unit that was restored after the fire. Another tenant in need of the accessibility features will move into the accessible unit.

There are two vacant Easten units which are in the process of being filled.

A supportive services office is available on-site. One of our new employees will be taking over the HRA support role. The current employee doing this work will move to the Family Service Center to do Housing Navigation work under the new grant. CCRI continues to have a full-time employee providing supports to both Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and other HRA Cares scattered-site participants. Both support services providers also have been providing DHS Housing Stabilization Services to the participants.

Housing Choice Vouchers

As of August 1, 2022, there were a total of 655 households of a possible 743 leased from the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program. We are working with 8 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 551 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract; 177 under our Mainstream HCV contract; and fifteen under our HCV Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) contract. We were notified that we were awarded an additional 10 Mainstream vouchers effective November 1, 2022.

Of the 551 vouchers under our main contract, 477 vouchers are leased: 408 of 468 regular vouchers; 41 out of 41 Tenant Protection Vouchers; 0 of 1 FYI vouchers; and 27 of 40 VASH vouchers. We have issued 14 regular vouchers and 2 VASH vouchers. We are working with 16 additional households to issue a regular voucher. We have received a referral for the FYI voucher.

160 out of 177 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We have issued 26 Mainstream vouchers and are working with 10 additional households. It is our goal that with these additional households we will be able to fill the 10 new units that have been awarded. 15 of 15 EHV vouchers are under lease.

The HRA's goal is to focus on the 60 open regular vouchers after the Mainstream and FYI

vouchers are filled. VASH is dependent upon referrals from the VA.

We have 32 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We have had 43 FSS participants in the past 12 months. The HRA must update its current Action Plan by September 30 and cannot enroll new households until that time. The update is required due to changes in federal law and regulations. Staff is in the process of updating the proposed plan to present to the board at the September meeting.

There are 300 households on the waiting list. We have been adding about 60 households per month. The waiting list was opened to households who reside in Clay County and contain a member age 50 or older on January 4, 2022, and to those who have a disabled household member under age 50 on February 1, 2022. Due to staffing changes and shortages, Item #9 is a request to close the waiting list to those who have a disabled household member AND to those age 50-74.

HRA Cares

We are authorized to serve 64 households and are currently serving 54 households. Of the 54, 13 are at Prairie Horizons Townhomes; 5 are at Bright Sky Apartments; and 36 are in scattered-site units in Clay, Otter Tail, Grant, and Douglas Counties, MN, and in Fargo, ND. There are 26 singles and 28 families being served. Eleven households are searching for units, and 2 are being processed for the opening at the Easten Prairie Horizons Townhomes units.

Staff is investigating restructuring the funding with HUD to increase the funding available to provide supportive services to these households. Currently the HRA receives \$104,000 per year to serve 64 households. This has ended with case loads of 37 households per FTE. The best practices recommendations are no more than 20 households per FTE. We will need to transfer at least \$100,000 more to supportive services to meet this goal. The HRA currently receives about \$28,000 for administration but is eligible to receive over \$60,000 for this purpose. If we transfer \$130,000 from rental assistance, we will need to reduce the number of households served. This would reduce the number of households served from 64 to 49. Discussions are on-going with HUD and the CoC.

Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance

Our current grant is to serve sixty-two households through September 30, 2023. We are serving 54 of our authorized 62 households. Three households moved without telling us or failed to respond to our requests for information and were terminated. Nine households are currently searching for units. There are 18 singles and 36 families being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay, Traverse, Grant, and Douglas Counties.

Openings are filled through the coordinated entry.

Homework Starts with Home

The current grant term runs from 8/1/2020-9/30/2023. As August 1, 43 households are leased, and 3 households are searching for units. Leased and searching households are from Clay, Douglas, and Wadena Counties.

We have transitioned 35 households off the current grant: 24 moving to Housing Choice vouchers; 1 moved to Homeless to Housed; 1 moved to Bridges; 1 transitioned to a more intensive youth program; 1 purchased a home; 3 went off due to increased income; 3 moved to unsubsidized units; and 1 was evicted and disappeared. Eight more are in the process of transferring to an HCV unit.

Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units

As of August 1, a total of 125 households were being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 109 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 9 with the HRA; 17 with CAPLP; 6 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 10 with LMHC; 13 with Churches United; 12 with Metro Behavioral Health; 9 with the Lotus Center; and 31 with Summit Guidance/Greater Minnesota Community Services. In addition, CCRI serves 16 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens and 2 in scattered-site locations.

Churches United is ending its partnership with this program at the end of August due to staff transitions. All 13 of the participants have been matched with other partner providers.

Sixteen additional households are searching for units. Most of the people searching are people on the program who were asked to leave or terminated by their previous property owner. There have been numerous damage claims and non-renewal of leases now that the eviction moratorium has ended.

Minnesota DHS Community Living Infrastructure Grant

The HRA has 1.0 FTE Housing Resource Specialist and a 0.05 project manager. There are 2 FTE outreach workers funded who are employed by the CAP agencies, CAPLP (1.15 FTE) and WCMCA (.85 FTE). The grant also includes a full-time eligibility worker for Clay County Social Services. Staff has been working diligently on property owner engagement strategies and matching participants with available assistance.

The annual report for 6/1/22 to 6/30/22 was submitted to the Department of Human Services. There were 322 outreach contacts with 137 people obtaining housing through outreach. There were 235 housing resource specialist contacts with 99 obtaining housing.

Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. Staff has been performing annual renewal consultations. Due to staff transitions and an inability to recoup our costs, we are only doing on-going consultations and will not accept any additional HSS Transition & Sustaining Services participants at this time.

The Supportive Services Manager applied for and the HRA was awarded a \$50,000 capacity building grant to get the necessary infrastructure in place to re-start this program. The grant is for a 6-month period. Due to internal staffing challenges, the Supportive Services Manager reached out to CAPLP to partner on sharing this grant and the underlying work to get a system in place

for the area.

Through the GROWTH program, staff has been leading a region-wide group aimed at getting this program to work for those who need it throughout our region. This grant will fund the time needed for the in-depth research and planning.

Minnesota Housing - Housing Stability Grant

The HRA has been awarded \$189,544 as a sub-grantee of the West Central Minnesota Communities Action Agency (WCMCA) to provide Housing Navigation services from June 15, 2022, through June 30, 2023. WCMCA is the grantee with CAPLP, Presentation Partners in Housing, and the HRA as sub-grantees.

The HRA hired for the two new positions in June. One of them has accepted a job within the agency as an Assistant Housing Manager. A third person was hired and began on August 8.

The hope is that once the grant ends, the new staff will allow the agency to resume the HSS Transition and Sustaining Services and to provide additional Housing Support services.

Owner-Occupied Rehab Program

Dilworth

The HRA staff applied for funding on behalf of the City of Dilworth for 2021 CDBG funding to DEED through the Small Cities Development Program. We applied for and received \$922,000 on behalf of Dilworth to rehabilitate twenty-one owner-occupied homes and seven businesses. Twenty-three homeowner and 7 commercial property owner applications have been approved. There are 2 homeowner applications and 1 commercial application on the waiting list.

Of the homeowner applications received, 8 indicated they were extremely low-income; 5 were very low-income; and 9 were low-income. Staff has begun processing 16 homeowners including all the extremely and very low-income applicants. Three projects are under construction; 3 projects are ready to close; 3 projects are in the bid process; 2 are ready for the initial inspection; and 5 are still providing income and program eligibility information. The loan limit for homeowners is \$24,999 and for commercial owners is \$40,000. Contractors are expressing they are extremely busy and will have long turnaround times.

Physical property inspections have been completed on all 8 of commercial buildings. One project is in construction; 3 projects are finalizing bids; and 3 owners are reviewing the scope of work and bid information for the buildings. We will not bid the 8th project unless sufficient funds are remaining after the bids come in on the other projects.

RLP (Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program)

The Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program is funded by the state. MHFA made updates to the program effective August 1, 2022. The updates were targeted at easing some of the income eligibility requirements by adding additional allowable deductions.

One RLP household is ready for closing. Nine applicants are in the process of submitting income and other eligibility information.

PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE AGASSIZ APARTMENTS MANAGEMENT AND 5-YEAR MAINTENANCE PLAN

The HRA is required to update its Management and 5-Year Maintenance Plan for Agassiz Apartments on a regular basis. There are no substantive or policy related changes proposed. USDA RD does like the board to approve any changes.

The proposed updates to the plan are the following:

- Changed from “7 member Board” to “5 to 7 member Board”
- Changed from “Board of Commissioners of Clay County” to “Clay County Commission”
- Changed number of HRA subsidized projects from 6 to 5.
- Changed information on cleaning from contracted cleaner to staff
- Removed Thief River Falls as location of Rural Development District Office
- Replaced “Director of Administration” with “Finance/Administrative staff”

The full text of the plan was available for review at the board meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve changes to Agassiz Apartments Management and 5-Year Maintenance Plan. Commissioner Dillard seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

REQUEST TO CLOSE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER WAITING LIST PREFERENCE CATEGORY

The Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List is currently open to the following preference households:

- Households who are been terminated by the HRA from its HCV program due to insufficient program funding (*no one has ever been terminated for this reason so there are no eligible applicants.*)
- Households who live in Clay County HRA-owned or managed unsubsidized units or a former public housing unit through Moorhead Public Housing Agency (*by referral only*).
- Households whose head of household or spouse is 75 years of age or older.
- Households who are Clay County residents who are currently receiving time limited rental assistance (i.e., transitional housing) but will be terminated within 6 months due to reaching the time limit (*by referral only*).
- Households who are currently participating in a permanent supportive housing program in Clay County who, based upon a standardized assessment, are determined to no longer require permanent supportive housing (*by referral only*).

- Households who have participated in an HRA rental assistance program and been terminated by the HRA in the past two years due to an increase in earned income.
- Households applying to buildings with project-based vouchers;
- Youth ages 18-24 who are referred by Clay County Social Services for a Foster Youth Initiative voucher;
- Households whose head of household or spouse is 50 years of age or older. This preference category opened January 3, 2022; and
- Households who contain a disabled family member. This preference category opened February 1, 2022.

Staff requests that we once again close the waiting list to households who head of household or spouse is 50 or older (75 and older would still be open) AND to those who contain a disabled member who do not meet one of the other preference categories. The HCV is short staffed and has new employees who are still in training. We are attempting to hire 3 new staff. There are currently 300 households on the waiting list.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to close the Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List Preference Waiting List. Commissioner Braseth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT WITH MINNESOTA BUREAU CRIMINAL APPREHENSION ON BEHALF OF THE FBI

Director Lee requested the Board for approval to enter into an updated Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnesota Bureau Criminal Apprehension on behalf of the FBI. We are required to update this once every 5 years. We do not have the template ready for Board approval. We need this updated to resume our Background Checks.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to grant the Executive Director the authority to enter into an agreement with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

OTHER

Staffing:

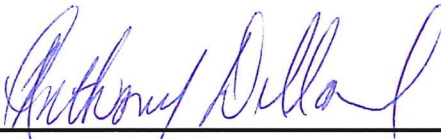
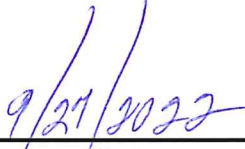
- Helen Stevenson was hired for Housing Navigation on May 31, 2022, was promoted to Assistant Housing Manager.
- Katie Lyman was hired for Housing Navigation on August 8, 2022, to replace Helen Stevenson.
- Nathan Herbrandson was hired for Maintenance Technician on August 8, 2022, to replace Joey Lauckner.
- Brandi Wilkie gave notice the end of July and her last day was on August 8, 2022.
- Bari Behling was hired as a Rental Assistance Specialist
- Currently interviewing on Thursday for FSS Coordinator position.

September Board Meeting:

- September Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, September 27, 2022.

10:47 A.M. MEETING ADJOURNED:

Chair Bakke moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 a.m. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Dillard.

	
<hr/> Anthony Dillard, Secretary	<hr/> Date