

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of March 21, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Anthony Dillard

STAFF PRESENT:

Dara Lee, Dawn Bacon and Jill Cossette.

OTHERS PRESENT:

NA

9:31 A.M. REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

AGENDA:

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

MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 21, 2023, REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve the February 21, 2023, regular minutes. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The completed budget reviews through December were available (General is outstanding).

Director Lee reviewed the December financials in depth.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to accept and file the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bakke and carried unanimously.

PROJECT UPDATES

Director Lee provided project updates.

Houge Estates

As of March 1, there are 8 vacant units and one lease termination for March 31. Five applicants are being processed for eligibility. Twenty individuals have been sent letters to determine their interest. There are 63 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 March 1, there are no vacancies. There are 10 applicants on the waiting list which closed 2/1/22. Agassiz needs a new roof. Funding sources are being explored.

Clay County Affordable Housing LLC/Boyer Apartments

As of March 1, there are 9 vacant units. Almost all the openings are due to evictions and lease terminations for non-payment of rent. One of the Moorhead units is vacant due to a transfer. One person has submitted a move-out notice for the end of May.

There are three vacant units in Ulen; four in Hawley; one in Dilworth; and one in Moorhead. We have never had this number of evictions or vacancies at these properties.

Staff are determining eligibility for 4 applicants. Twenty-three others are considering the openings and are in communication with staff. There are still 4 households on the waiting list for the one-bedroom units at Boyer. All open units are 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units. Ads are running in February and March for the vacancies. Area agencies have been contacted.

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 March 1, there are 11 vacant units (five 2-bedrooms and six 3-bedrooms) and one pending lease termination. The units will be kept vacant during construction. 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.

Windows are installed; the sewer has been moved; new sidewalks are poured; the southeast parking lot is completed; the siding is complete; the new addition is roofed; rehab has been completed on 8 units; and 6 additional units are scheduled to be complete by March 24. The addition is framed with plumbing and electric rough-ins. The estimated date of completion is the end of July. The units should be complete by the end of June.

Gateway Gardens

As of March 1, there are 2 openings. Staff are searching for eligible participants. One potential tenant is being processed.

The Housing Supports supplies are located at Gateway Gardens. Two HRA staff have offices at this location. An HRA Assistant Property Manager will move his primary office to this location in March or April. The CCRI case manager continues to have an office at the location. The HRA continues to staff the front desk from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes

As of March 1, all units were occupied. There is one tenant who has been evicted due to drug-related activity. The court gave the tenant until February 24 to vacate the unit, but they failed to do so. The tenant is now evicted.

A supportive services office is available on-site. CCRI continues to have a full-time employee providing support to both Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and other HRA Cares scattered-site participants. She is officed at that location. CCRI has been providing DHS Housing Stabilization Services to the participants. An HRA employee also provides support to tenants participating in this program.

Housing Choice Vouchers

As of March 1, 2023, there were a total of 659 households of a possible 758 leased from the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program. We are working with 4 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 556 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract; 187 under our Mainstream HCV contract; and 15 under our HCV Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) contract. We are requesting that HUD reallocate 10 of our 40 VASH units to the Bemidji HRA as of July 1. Both the Bemidji and Clay HRA boards have approved this transfer. The formal resolution will be addressed in the next agenda item.

Of the 556 vouchers under our main contract, 481 vouchers are leased: 418 of 479 regular vouchers; 36 out of 36 Tenant Protection Vouchers; 1 of 1 FYI vouchers; and 26 of 40 VASH vouchers. There is one additional VASH participant between units; and two who have been issued an initial voucher. We have 9 existing regular HCV participants who are between units; we have issued 21 regular vouchers to new participants; and we are working with 42 additional households to issue a regular voucher.

167 out of 187 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We have 5 existing Mainstream participants who are between units; we have issued 15 Mainstream vouchers to new participants; and we are working with 27 additional households to issue a Mainstream voucher. Eleven of 15 EHV vouchers are under lease; two current EHV households are between units; and two vouchers have been issued to new participants who have both located units and are waiting to move in.

We have 36 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We have had 45 FSS participants in the past 12 months.

There are 189 households who remain on the waiting list. Staff intend to contact more households in the next week to begin working with them.

HRA Cares

We are authorized to serve 64 households and on March 1 were serving 64 households. One has been evicted since that time. Of the 64, 16 were at Prairie Horizons Townhomes; 5 are at Bright Sky Apartments; and 43 are in scattered-site units in Clay (31), Douglas (5), and Otter Tail (3) Counties, MN, and in Fargo, ND (4). Another household is searching for a unit.

Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance

Our current grant is to serve sixty-two households through September 30, 2023. We are serving 64 of our authorized 62 households. One of two households who are currently searching for units has located a unit for April 1. There are 19 singles and 45 families being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay (52), Douglas (10), Grant (1), and Traverse (1) Counties.

Openings are filled through the coordinated entry process.

Homework Starts with Home

The current grant term runs from 8/1/2020-9/30/2023. The renewal application has been released. As of March 1, 28 households are leased. Households are from Clay (24), Douglas (3), and Otter Tail (1) Counties. Three were evicted last month but are now housed.

We have transitioned 48 households off the current grant: 30 moved to a Housing Choice voucher; 1 moved to Homeless to Housed; 2 moved to Bridges; 1 transitioned to a more intensive youth program; 1 purchased a home; 3 went off due to increased income; 7 moved to unsubsidized units; 1 was terminated due to no contact; and 1 was evicted and disappeared. Ten of the current 28 households are working with the HCV program to obtain a voucher.

Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units

As of March 1, a total of 132 households were being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 114 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 10 with the HRA; 21 with CAPLP; 12 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 9 with LMHC; 10 with Metro Behavioral Health; 11 with the Lotus Center; and 22 with Greater Minnesota Community Services. In addition, CCRI serves 18 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens and 19 in a scattered-site location.

Ten additional households are searching for units. We will not be accepting any additional new clients until the HRA is able to catch up on the financial and support services work of the organization. We are hoping to accept new participants in April or May.

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 have been working diligently on property owner engagement strategies and

matching participants with available assistance.

The on-site DHS grant monitoring appears to have gone well. The new RFP is scheduled to be released this spring.

Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. Staff have 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 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. This grant was extended from February 28 to March 31.

They are working on getting a coordinated referral process in place, streamlined policies and procedures, training components, and effective billing practices. They have scheduled local “lunch & learns” for our area. The HRA applied for an additional grant of \$125,000 for April 1 through March 31, 2024. If awarded, the HRA will need to hire an additional supportive services worker.

Minnesota Housing - Housing Stability Grant

The HRA is 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 transferred 37% of its sub-grantee funding to CAPLP, which reduced our FTEs to 1.26. This grant ends on June 30, 2023, and it did not appear prudent to add additional staff. We may not reach our target numbers.

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-four homeowner and 8 commercial property owner applications were received. Three homeowners and one commercial applicant have withdrawn their applications so there are no waiting lists. The loan limit for homeowners is \$24,999 and for commercial owners is \$40,000. Contractors say they are extremely busy and will have long turnaround times.

For the owner-occupied home rehabilitations, 7 projects are under construction; 4 projects are

finalizing bids and preparing to close; and 2 households are in the eligibility process. Two households have asked to be moved to the end of the waiting list. All six other applicants have been contacted and will be processed in the order they respond.

Physical property inspections have been completed on all commercial buildings. One project is under construction; 5 projects are finalizing contracts; and one project has not started bidding.

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. Nine applicants are in the process of submitting income and other eligibility information. Two are closing in the near future.

RESOLUTION TO REALLOCATE 10 VASH UNITS

In April 2018, the HRA was awarded its initial 15 VASH vouchers. At the request of the Fargo VA, we applied for 25 additional vouchers which were effective January 1, 2021. The HRA had only wished to apply for an additional 10 vouchers, but the VA asked us to increase the request to 25 vouchers. The concept was that a portion of the VASH units would be utilized in Bemidji.

Since that time, Bemidji HRA applied for and received 5 vouchers. The Clay County HRA has never been able to lease more than 30 of the 40 VASH vouchers. The VA has indicated that it does not have the capacity to work with more than 30 VASH households in our operating area. In the past several years, there have been numerous opportunities to apply for more VASH resources when needed. The Clay County HRA Board approved proceeding with this allocation at its September 2022 meeting.

In August 2022, HUD released a notice indicating that a housing agency can voluntarily reallocate some or all its unused vouchers. Staff has made a request to the VA to reallocate 10 of its 40 VASH units to the Bemidji HRA. The VA is supportive of this reallocation. The Bemidji HRA has agreed to this transfer.

The vouchers can be reallocated on either January or July 1. Applications must be submitted three months in advance. The request due date for this reallocation is March 31.

Staff requested that the HRA Board of Commissioners approve Resolution 3-21-23-01 so that the request may be submitted.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bakke to approve attached Resolution 3-21-23-01. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

AGENCY BANK ACCOUNTS

HRA staff requested the Board of Commissioners open a new checking account at Bell Bank for the purpose of having staff medical expense spending funded by the HRA be automatically

deducted from the account.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve the addition to agency bank accounts. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

HRA/MOORHEAD PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY SHARED OPERATIONS

The Moorhead Public Housing Agency staff all became HRA employees as of March 1. The Moorhead Public Housing Agency Executive Director is a shared employee of the agencies also working for the HRA in the capacity of Deputy Director.

The HRA has assumed general operational responsibilities of the MPHA. The merging of functions is slowly progressing as staff figure out the most effective manner of doing so. The combination of the maintenance staff team is the most advanced since the parties were previously sharing the on-call duties.

After transferring the employment of staff to the HRA, the next large item is integrating our telephone and computer systems. Physically moving staff, equipment, and files between locations also is in process. Financial integration will begin after that time.

It is anticipated that for the next 1-2 years, the agencies will exam and determine the best mechanisms to meet their missions and deliver high quality housing and services.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO BY-LAWS

The HRA by-laws require that any changes may be made only after at least 10 days' written notice is given to the commissioners stating the proposed amendments. Such notice was sent out on February 23, 2023.

The following were proposed by-law amendments:

1. Line 6 of the first WHEREAS clause – change from “comprised of seven” to “comprised of five to seven” as indicated in state statute.
2. Article I. Section 2.- delete the work “Municipal” before Housing and add the word “Authorities” after Redevelopment to make consistent with current statutory language.
3. Article II. Section 3. – Add “HRA” prior to “Board of Commissioners” to make consistent with long-standing practice.
4. Article IV. Section 1. – add “and Deputy Director” after “Executive Director.”
5. Article VI. Section 2. – Amend to the following:
Disbursements of any funds shall only be made upon the signature of a current Commissioner of the Authority, the Executive Director, or the Deputy Director. All disbursements of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) or more shall require the signature of two of these parties, at least one of whom is a current Commissioner.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to approve the proposed changes to By-Laws. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ARTICLE IV. SECTION 1 of the HRA by-laws now allows the Chairperson with the consent of the Commissioners to delegate authority to the Deputy Director to execute all documents, contracts, and instruments on behalf of the Authority.

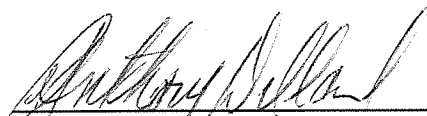
A motion was made by Commissioner Bakke to approve delegation authority approval to Deputy Director. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

OTHER

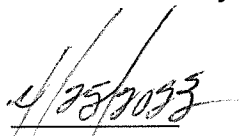
None

10:20 A.M. MEETING ADJOURNED:

Commissioner Braseth moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.



Anthony Dillard, Secretary



Date