

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of August 15, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tia Braseth, Anthony Dillard, Cecil Johnson and Kim Schlotfeldt

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Dara Lee and Jill Cossette

OTHERS PRESENT:

None

9:32 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.

MINUTES FROM JUNE 20, 2023, REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve the June 20, 2023, regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Director Lee reviewed the June and July budget reviews in depth. (General, Fieldcrest, Housing Supports 1 and Housing Supports 2 are outstanding).

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

PROJECT UPDATES

Director Lee provided project updates. She communicated Fieldcrest estimated completion date is September 30th. Board Meetings in the future will be held at Fieldcrest and a Grand Re-opening will be held upon completion.

Houge Estates

As of August 1, there are 6 vacant units and one eviction pending. Staff are working with 6 additional households to determine eligibility. There are 72 households on the waiting list. The waiting list is currently open.

The Houge Estates Service Coordinator is housed at this location.

Commissioner Dillard made a motion to close the Houge Estates Waiting List and reopen in November. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.

Agassiz Apartments

As of August 1, there is one vacancy. The 10 applicants on the waiting list were contacted with no response. Staff are in the process of re-opening the waiting list which closed 2/1/22.

Agassiz needs a new roof. Funding for the replacement is part of the 2024 levy request.

Clay County Affordable Housing LLC/Boyer Apartments

As of August 1, there are 8 vacant units. Staff are determining eligibility for 6 applicants and working with an additional 8 households. All open units are 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units. The 4 households on the 1-bedroom waiting list have been contacted as well.

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 13 vacant units (seven 2-bedrooms and six 3-bedrooms); and a pending eviction. The units have been kept vacant during construction. All but 12 of the units are now complete. Staff have contacted the 16 households on the waiting list and have only heard back from one. We need to re-open the waiting list.

28 of the 40 units are complete. The remaining items are the 12 units being rehabbed, the community space and offices, and landscaping. The estimated date of completion is now the end of September.

27 tenants have moved into completed units and are pleased with the work that has been done and the addition of washers, dryers, and dishwashers. One or two tenants may be transferred back to their original units after those are completed.

Gateway Gardens

As of August 1, there are 2 openings and a pending move-out. There is another lease termination for the end of the month. One applicant has been offered a unit. Tenants are selected from the community Coordinated Entry list.

The Housing Supports supplies are located at Gateway Gardens. Two supportive services staff and an assistant property manager are officed at this location. The CCRI case manager continues to have an office at the location. The HRA staffs the front desk from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day. From 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. the office is staffed by a security company. The security company will now be monitoring the cameras at the High Rise as well as the Gateway Gardens cameras.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes

As of August 1, there are 4 open units. One is due to a tenant transferring to a Clay County Affordable Housing unit, and three are due to tenant behaviors that resulted in evictions or lease terminations. Tenants are selected from the community Coordinated Entry list.

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 also provides DHS Housing Stabilization Services to eligible participants. An HRA employee also provides support to tenants participating in this program.

Housing Choice Vouchers

As of August 1, 2023, there were a total of 705 out of 757 units leased in the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program. We are working with 10 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 555 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract; 187 under our Mainstream HCV contract; and 15 under our HCV Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) contract. We have requested that HUD reallocate 10 of our 40 VASH units to the Bemidji HRA as of July 1. We were notified that HUD intends to transfer on January 1, 2024.

Of the 555 vouchers under our main contract, 513 vouchers are leased: 453 of 480 regular vouchers; 34 out of 34 Tenant Protection Vouchers; 1 of 1 FYI vouchers; and 25 of 40 VASH vouchers. We have 9 existing regular HCV participants who are between units; we have issued 28 regular vouchers to new participants; and we are working with 14 additional households to issue a regular voucher.

184 out of 187 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We have 5 existing Mainstream participants who are between units; we have issued 14 Mainstream vouchers to new participants; and we are working with 10 additional households to issue a Mainstream voucher. Eight of 15 EHV vouchers are under lease; one current EHV household is between units; and eight vouchers have been issued to new participants who are searching for a unit. The staff are working with an additional 2 households.

Staff successfully transferred the 16 Bridges participants to other programs by the end of June.

We have 45 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We have had 53 FSS participants in the past 12 months.

There are 90 households who remain on the waiting list.

Becker-Clay-Otter Tail-Wilkin (BCOW) Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI) Rental Assistance

On April 1, 2023, the HRA began administration of the BCOW AMHI Rental Assistance program. The contact was transferred from the MPHA to the HRA.

The contract provides funding for rental assistance and administrative fees to assist households who contain a member who has a serious mental illness and is leaving an institution or is currently homeless.

As of August 1, there are 20 participants; one household with a voucher who is in-between units; and three new participants who are searching for units. Staff are actively reaching out to all applicants to start the process with them.

HRA Cares

We are authorized to serve 64 households, and on August 1 were serving 61 households. Of the 61, 12 are at Prairie Horizons Townhomes; 5 are at Bright Sky Apartments; and 42 are in scattered-site units in Clay (32), Douglas (5), and Otter Tail (3) Counties, MN, and in Fargo, ND (4). Two participants are between units and three households are searching for units.

The grant, which begins January 1, 2024, was cut significantly during the past funding round. The HRA has submitted a request to HUD to amend the grant to transfer all funds into the supportive services and administrative categories. All households receiving rental assistance through this program would need to transfer to a different rental assistance program prior to January 1.

Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance

Our current grant is to serve sixty-two households through September 30, 2023. Our grant was increased to 85 households for October 1. We are serving 61 households now. Five households are currently searching for units. There are 18 singles and 43 families being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay (51), Douglas (8), 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 grant was renewed through September 30, 2024. The grant renewal process was extremely competitive. We are funded to serve 32 households.

As of August 1, 11 households are leased. Households are from Clay (9), Douglas (1), and Otter Tail (1) Counties. One household is searching for a unit. We will begin taking referrals again due to the grant renewal and the start of a new school year.

Seven households were transferred to a Housing Choice Voucher in the past two months, and one went off voluntarily. We have transitioned 66 households off the current grant: 41 moved/are

moving 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; 5 went off due to increased income; 8 moved to unsubsidized units; 2 were terminated due to no contact; and 1 was evicted and disappeared. Most of the current 11 households are working with the HCV program to obtain a voucher.

Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units

As of August 1, a total of 114 households were being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 97 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 8 with the HRA; 19 with CAPLP; 8 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 7 with LMHC; 7 with Metro Behavioral Health; 11 with the Lotus Center; and 33 with Greater Minnesota Community Services. In addition, CCRI serves 3 in scattered-sites and 17 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens.

Seven additional households are searching for units. We will start accepting new clients once we hear from Clay County Social Services that they have the capacity to handle more.

Minnesota DHS Community Living Infrastructure Grant

Funding of the current grant was extended until 6/30/25 at approximately 75% of the initial funding for the next 2-year cycle. The HRA will be able to absorb this reduction without reducing existing staff. The new FTE is about 0.82 FTE.

The annual report was submitted for the June 30 grant year-end. The project met or exceeded all grant goals.

Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. Staff have been performing annual renewal consultations. Four were completed in June and July. We are only doing limited on-going consultations and will not accept any additional HSS Transition & Sustaining Services participants at this time.

Minnesota Housing - Housing Stability Grant

The HRA was 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.

This grant has been extended, but the HRA is not continuing to participate due to staffing capacity. It is very administratively burdensome. Due to staff turnover, there was about \$20,000 in grant funds for salary that were not expended during the grant period. The HRA activities are now complete.

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 8 commercial property owner applications were received. Four 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 if they are even willing to bid.

For the owner-occupied home rehabilitations, 5 projects are complete; 2 projects are under construction; 5 projects are finalizing bids and preparing to close; and 1 household is in the eligibility process. One household has asked to be moved to the end of the waiting list. The 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. Two projects have been completed in 2023; 2 projects are under construction; 2 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. Two projects are complete; three are in the bidding process; and nine applicants are being processed.

River View Heights (Moorhead Public Housing Agency)

River View Heights is part of HUD's low rent public housing program. It is a 14-story apartment building built in 1968 with 104 units.

As of August 1, there are 5 vacancies at River View Heights, and an additional 2 that will become vacant. Two of the vacancies are considered off-line by HUD due to insurance claims. One unit has been re-rented for move-in once it is ready.

There are currently 269 people on the public housing waiting list. Staff are processing applications to fill the vacancies.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to close the Moorhead Public Housing Agency Waiting List. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.

Sharp View (MPHA)

Sharp View is a part of HUD's low rent public housing program. It is a two story, 47-unit apartment building designated for seniors aged 62 and over. The building was originally built as an elementary school in 1950 and rehabbed as an apartment in the 1980s.

As of August 1, Sharp View has one vacancy. An applicant has been approved and will move in as soon as the unit is ready. The waiting list is shared with the River View Heights waiting list.

Moorhead Affordable Housing LLC (MPHA)

The Moorhead Affordable Housing LLC consists of 30 units including single family homes, duplexes, and townhomes. They were originally under HUD's public housing program but were approved for a Section 18 Disposition in 2021 and sold to the LLC. Most of the units are three bedrooms and primarily house families with children.

As of August 1, this program has one vacancy. A tenant has been approved for a September 1 move-in.

Maple Court Town Homes (MPHA and City of Moorhead)

Maple Court Townhomes consists of 34 units of two, three, and four-bedroom townhomes. One parcel is owned by the City of Moorhead and the other parcel is owned by Moorhead Public Housing Agency. MPHA/ Clay HRA manage all the units. This property utilizes on-site caretakers.

As of August 1, there were two vacancies at Maple Court. Applications are being processed.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT FUNDS FROM MN HOUSING FOR HOMELESS TO HOUSED RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Minnesota Housing has notified us that our application to continue to operate the Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance program from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025, has been approved. We have been awarded \$1,697,000 to serve 85 households during this period. This is an increase in households from 62 to 85. For this funding round, priority is given to homeless families and youth with the highest barriers to housing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve Resolution 08-15-23-01. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT HOMEWORK STARTS WITH HOME GRANT FUNDING

Minnesota Housing has notified us that our application to continue to operate the Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance program from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025, has been approved. We have been awarded \$748,093 to serve 32 households during this period. This is an increase in households from 62 to 85.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve Resolution 08-15-23-02. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.

2024 HRA TAX LEVY DISCUSSION

On June 20, 2023, this board approved a Special Benefit Tax for 2024 in the amount of \$500,000. The statute requires the consent of the Board of Commissioners of Clay County, the City of Moorhead, and the City of Barnesville. Local Governments must certify their tax levies to the County Auditor by September 30.

Chair Braseth, Director Lee, and Deputy Director Bacon presented to the Clay County Commission on August 1. Commissioner Johnson was in attendance. The commissioners had numerous questions concerning the levy. The request was tabled for possible consent at the time of the overall budget approval which is scheduled for September 19.

Chair Braseth also recommended that the HRA Board and Clay County Commission have joint meetings two times per year. The Clay County Commissioners were very supportive of this idea. They also discussed the possibility of a formal liaison between the commissioner and the HRA.

The HRA is on the agenda for the Barnesville City Council meeting on Monday, August 14; and for the Moorhead City Council meeting on Monday, August 28.

Proposed uses of the levy funds are as follows:

- \$100,000 – Re-roof Agassiz Apartment in Ulen, MN. This is a subsidized Rural Development apartment building for seniors and those with disabling conditions. Its roof has needed replacement since 2015, but there have been insufficient funds to make this repair.
- \$150,000 - Other rehab activities include collaborating with local communities (Hawley, Barnesville, etc.) to submit applications to MN DEED to obtain funds to rehabilitate homes and businesses.
- \$75,000- Continue to work towards the goal of ending child homelessness by supporting programs targeted at this population such as Homework Starts with Home and Homeless to Housed. The Barnesville School District is a partner in this grant, and its students have benefitted from the program.
- \$100,000- Increase security at properties. Post-pandemic we have seen an increase in acute mental health issues. The increase in behavioral issues is concerning. The safety of our tenants and staff is our top agency priority.
- \$75,000- Leverage and support accessing a portion of the over \$1 billion in new state housing resources to benefit Clay County citizens.

- \$500,000 Total Levy Request.

A special September Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 5, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.

REPLACEMENT OF RESIGNING COMMISSIONER

An ad was placed in the Extra, Hawley Herald, Barnesville Record, and the Clay County Union for the open board position. Members of the MPHA board also were sent the ad.

We received two applications by the June 30 deadline. Both are Moorhead residents. We received a third application after the deadline from a current resident of Moorhead Public Housing Agency.

The timely applications were sent out to all board members for their consideration. The board discussed the appropriate total number of board members and the appropriate geographic distribution of board members.

The board tabled this item for further discussion at the September board meeting.

HRA/PHA UPDATE

The joining of the two agencies continues to slowly progress.

- March 1, 2023 – HRA assumes general operational responsibilities of the Moorhead Public Housing Agency (MPHA).
- March 1, 2023 – all MPHA employees except the Executive Director, became HRA employees. The MPHA Executive Director is a shared employee of the agencies who also works for the HRA in the capacity of Deputy Director.
- April 1, 2023 – BCOW AMHI grant transferred from MPHA to the HRA.
- May 2023– the MPHA and HRA boards mutually agree to decline the new award from Minnesota Housing for the Bridges Program.
- Spring/Summer 2023 – financial integration of the two agencies slowly began.
- Summer 2023- Employees physically move to new locations; telephone systems and some computer systems are integrated. Staff determined the best software system to transition all programs.
- October 2023 – anticipated software conversion for both MPHA and HRA programs.
- January 2024 – anticipated additional integration of financial systems and switch from in-house to contracted payroll services.

MPHA continues to own Public Housing (River View Height & Sharp View), Moorhead Affordable Housing units, and Maple Court Townhomes. The next anticipated transfer is the Moorhead Affordable Housing units. These are 30 scattered-site units.

Director Lee and Deputy Director Bacon will continue to analyze and make recommendations to each board on how and when these transfers should occur.

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.

OTHER


Director Lee requests board approval of out-of-state travel for Lee, Stanfill, and Wilkie, to travel to the National NAHRO annual conference in New Orleans in October. The conference and

travel will be paid from the FSS Coordinator grant for Wilkie and Stanfill that has funds available in 2023 for such conferences.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to approve Director Lee, Stanfill and Wilkie to travel to New Orleans for the NAHRO conference in October. The motions was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.

11:20 A.M. MEETING ADJOURNED:

Commissioner Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 a.m. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.



Anthony Dillard, Secretary



Date