

RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY
Board of Commissioners
MINUTES
Regular Meeting
September 23, 2019

Chairman Markowski called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM on Monday, September 23, 2019 in the Rutland Housing Authority Board Room, 5 Tremont Street, Rutland, VT.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS: Let the record show the following:

Board of Commissioners Present:

Chairman Kevin Markowski, Vice-Chairman Karl Anderson, Commissioner Tina Johnson, Commissioner Jim Richards and Commissioner Rev. Andrew Carlson.

Rutland Housing Authority Staff Present:

Kevin Loso, Executive Director; Julie Sanderson, Property Manager; Carol Keefe, Resident Services Program Manager & SASH Supervisor; Staci Buysse, Director of Finance & Human Resources; Becky Ladabouche, Section 8 Program Manager; and Barbara Richardson, Administrative Services & Occupancy Specialist.

Tenants and Members of the Public Present:

None.

TENANT CONCERNS

Commissioner Johnson asked if RHA still has a tenant cleaning the residence hallways at Templewood Court. Another request is for clearer apartment numbering. The current system is confusing to visitors, and more importantly, to emergency personnel. Ms. Sanderson will pursue both issues.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (pages 1.3 – 1.8)

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Richards to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 12, 2019. There was unanimous approval.

CONSENT AGENDA: (pages 1.9 - 1.26)

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the Consent Agenda items for September 2019, including:

Manifests: Section 8 Checks #2402 through #2405 and Direct Deposit #62967 through #63071

Manifests Public Housing #16116 through #16200

Credit Card Report 07/22/2019 – 08/20/2019

Manifests: Payroll: 8/14/2019 and 8/28/2019

The motion was unanimously approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

PHADA 2020 Commissioner's Conference (see folders) – The RHA will cover costs for Commissioners who wish to attend this training in January.

Hickory Street Update

- Forest Park Drive Discontinuance/Transfer – A public hearing that addresses the transfer is scheduled this month, and the City has asked us to notify the abutting property owners.
- Single-Family Home Update – Last month we learned that the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) did not approve Tax Credits for this project. However, Housing Vermont is setting the groundwork for a different strategy.

Audit Update (see Finance report for details) – The August audit revealed no issues or findings. The auditors offered a couple of helpful suggestions, but mostly compliments on the quality of our preparations and audit materials.

2020 Five-Year Plan Update (Page 1.17) – We have prepared the schedule for this update. The Five-Year Plan that we are accustomed to will no longer be required after the complete RAD conversion. We will still be required to do a 2020-2024 Five-Year Plan because of the public housing units at Hickory Street that will not be converted.

Recovery Residences – We continue to work with service providers to generate interest around recovery residences. We have identified three potential properties, but until service provider support is secured no development will occur. There's much more to be done before anything is formalized.

RAD Update

Disposition/Retention Action: Hickory Street – HUD's Special Application Center (SAC) continues to be silent on the status of our request. We will now engage Senator Leahy's intervention to secure a response. We don't have an immediate plan for the .43 acres, and we know the SAC is focused on processing a flood of RAD applications, including RHA's.

Conversion Commitment – We submitted the financing plan in mid-August, and we received the 30-page conversion commitment letter within a week (which includes the closing process for finalizing the conversion). We've engaged Celia Daly, an attorney experienced in Vermont RAD conversions, to guide us through the closing, including the release of the Declaration of Trust. We would like to get this wrapped up before the end of the year. We'll schedule follow-up meetings in November to update tenants.

2019 Mainstream Voucher Application – We have applied for 35 additional Mainstream Vouchers for non-elderly disabled adults, a population that is historically hard to house. We met HUD's requirement to obtain MOUs with service providers who will agree to support the voucher holders, including Rutland Mental Health Services (RMHS), the Homeless Prevention Center (HPC), and the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) and Rutland Regional Medical Center's (RRMC) Community Health Team.

Tenant Protection Vouchers for Foster Youth to Independence Initiative – For two reasons, we are cautious in pursuing this Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) funding opportunity: a number of Family Unification Vouchers, for which foster youth are eligible, are available through the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA). Additionally, strong youth service providers are needed in order to ensure participant success. It is critical that we protect the good relationships that we have with our landlords.

HAI Group Low Loss Ratio Award (page 1.18) – This letter from our insurance company acknowledges our low-loss history for 2015-2017.

Housing Vermont Annual Meeting – Mr. Loso presented a framed print of Peter Huntoon's painting of Hickory Street to Housing Vermont at their recent annual meeting. They expressed gratitude to the Board for the acknowledgement.

Planned October Write-off – We will be requesting a significant write-off next month for, among other things, a major unit remediation at Sheldon Towers. It was a very challenging situation: The tenant involved didn't transition successfully out of assisted living, despite promises of sufficient supports. The unit was in such deplorable condition that Mr. Loso contracted with G.W. Savage to complete the work.

Senate Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs Committee Roundtable – Mr. Loso will be participating in this discussion scheduled for September 24th.

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Finance/Administration Report (pages 2.3-2.12)

Consolidated Budget Comparison and Variance Reports for July 2019 – See Ms. Buysse's full report for details. Highlights: Revenues from rents were down by \$10,427 due to 6 vacancies at Sheldon Towers and 3 at Templewood Court. We have since filled a number of these units. The write-off mentioned earlier affects the Miscellaneous Revenue/Tenant Charges as well. This also impacted Extraordinary Maintenance expenditures.

Cash Flow – Cash flow is generally consistent, though in July there were three payrolls. The year-to-date bottom line surplus is \$94,341, and the ending bank balance for July was \$1,277,962.43.

Report on Summer Hours (page 2.8) – As the Board requested when they approved piloting summer hours, Ms. Buysse provided an assessment report based on a staff questionnaire. Participation in summer hours was optional (though commitment to one's choice was required), and most staff chose the altered schedule. Comments were positive overall, including from tenants. It boosted morale. The sense from Maintenance staff is that they will probably opt for regular hours. Mr. Loso agrees that it was positive and he is inclined to continue it, with the caveat that it's important to evaluate this benefit on an annual basis. We appreciate the Board's support, and if they approve we will try this again next year.

BDO RAD Training Update – RHA hosted this RAD Budgeting, Finance & Accounting training for which we had a full house. By hosting we were able to save significant training dollars (\$5K-\$6K) while gaining prestige for the Authority. Ms. Buysse, who needed to take the training, coordinated bringing it to Rutland. The instructor was knowledgeable and the training well received.

We hosted a lunch meeting of Executive Directors, Finance Directors and Property Managers to discuss RAD challenges and plans for moving forward after our fee accountant Howard Gordon retires. One concern discussed is that the computer software company that two PHAs utilize was purchased and we don't know how long the new ownership will support it. We started

conversations about how to cooperate and collaborate to reduce expenses in the future. We established a group that will continue to meet regarding issues of mutual concern.

Property Management (page 2.13)

Site Updates – Ms. Sanderson reported that in August we had a total of 8 vacancies at Sheldon Towers and Templewood Court, with three lease ups scheduled and one orientation scheduled and offers out for the rest. Hickory Street phases 2 and 3 have no vacancies. Housing Vermont was very happy with the results of their inspection of Hickory Street.

Projects – Maintenance has been prepping for the patching/sealing/line painting of parking and drives at all sites. They are also tackling a list of mandatory repairs that resulted from the Capital Needs Assessment done for the RAD conversion. The Red Flag list must be completed before closing (replacing cabinets in handicap-accessible apartments at Templewood Court; pavement sealing/lining). There is also a list of non-critical projects (unit upgrades at Sheldon Towers - we requested a reserve of funds to cover this before the conversion) which must be finished during the first 12 months after the RAD conversion.

Section 8 Program (pages 2.14 – 2.15)

Ms. Ladabouche reported that there was little change for the month. The family that ported to Florida had not yet found housing and their voucher is due to expire. Finding housing in Rutland that meets HUD's Housing Quality Standards while affordable for voucher holders is very difficult, especially 1-bedroom units. Fortunately, Ms. Ladabouche has great relationships with area landlords and is skilled and successful in negotiation. Mr. Loso commented that, due to the lack of affordable housing in communities throughout the nation, PHAs are starting to build their own housing for their Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) holders.

Resident Services Report (pages 2.16 – 2.48)

SASH will celebrate its 8th anniversary in October. Ms. Keefe reported that SASH has now been rolled out in nonprofit housing in Minnesota. It's already operating in Rhode Island, and a few other states are looking to bring it in.

Deep Dive on Diabetes – Through a partnership with the Vermont Department of Health, last year a hypertension education and wellness initiative had great success. This year's initiative focuses on controlling cholesterol and diabetes. Forty SASH participants are enrolled. Ms. Keefe attended a workshop given by a certified diabetes educator given for the Castleton/Fair Haven panel. There was a great turnout and SASH Coordinator Colleen Loper has initiated follow up visits with participants.

The Rutland Community and Fair Haven/Castleton panels are open for referrals. RHA's panel participation will bounce back once empty public housing units are filled and residents become comfortable with the new SASH Coordinator.

RHA and the Housing Trust of Rutland County are setting up a meeting with the Southwest Vermont Council on Aging (SVCOA) and the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of the Southwest Region to review the program and identify areas for possible improvement. We have restated some guiding principles and invited a few of the case managers and coordinators to a facilitated discussion on how to ensure that participants get the services they need. Effective collaboration is important, more so now with heavy caseloads that include participants with high-level needs and multiple chronic conditions.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: (pages 3.2 – 3.11)

The following informational items were sent out prior to the meeting, and they indicate that trends are good:

- A. Aged Delinquency Reports 8/2019
- B. Collections Report 8/2019
- C. Lease Violations/Evictions 8/2019
- D. Housing Occupancy Charts 8/2019

The reports show low rates of delinquency, few collections from past tenants, lease violations and evictions. There were a lot of turnovers and maintenance dealt with them quickly.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS - None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – On a motion by Vice-Chairman Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Richards, the board entered Executive Session at 8:53 a.m. to discuss contractual or human resource issues, the premature disclosure of which could put the RHA at a significant disadvantage.

On a motion from Commissioner Carlson, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board came out of Executive session at 9:14 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

There being no other business to bring before the Board, Commissioner Richards moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 a.m. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

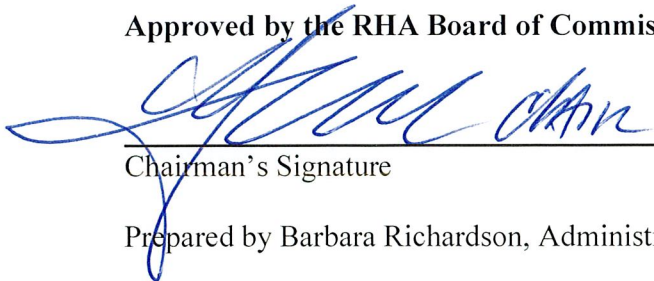
Date of next BOC Regular meeting: Monday, October 14 @ the Sheldon Towers Community Room, 14 Sheldon Place, Rutland, VT at 8 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin L. Loso
Executive Director/Secretary

Approved by the RHA Board of Commissioners



Chairman's Signature

10/14/19

Date

Prepared by Barbara Richardson, Administrative Services & Occupancy Specialist