

RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY
Board of Commissioners
MINUTES
Regular Meeting
January 13, 2020

Chairman Markowski called the meeting to order at 8:10 AM on Monday, January 13, 2020 in the Sheldon Towers Community Room, 14 Sheldon Place, Rutland, VT.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS:

Board of Commissioners Present:

Chairman Kevin Markowski, 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; Kirsten Hathaway, Director of Finance & Human Resources; Becky Ladabouche, Section 8 Program Manager; and Barbara Richardson, Administrative Services.

Tenants and Members of the Public Present:

Susan Mattison, Patricia Warner, Ron Hemenway, and Ann Brzoza.

TENANT CONCERNS

Sheldon Towers tenants asked for an update on the non-working elevator. Mr. Loso and Ms. Sanderson acknowledged the tenants' frustration and concern and assured them that RHA is doing everything we can to facilitate Otis Elevator to attend to the repair. Unfortunately, we are beholden to them for assistance, as their parts and engineering are proprietary. Other tenant concerns related to: 1) odor on the fifth floor, for which Property Management will obtain more effective air freshener. 2) carpet cleanliness – RHA is planning to replace the carpets in the common areas. 3) pet waste – tenants were reminded to provide a written complaint form when they witness their neighbors leaving pet waste on the grounds. RHA will order a pet waste receptacle and supply the bags. 4) parking - Commissioner Johnson (absent) reported to Ms. Sanderson that she received a call from a Hickory Street resident regarding parking, which we are addressing. At Sheldon Towers someone had parked trailers illegally, and we had them removed over the weekend.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (pages 1.3 – 1.9)

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Carlson to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 11, 2019. There was unanimous approval, including the vote of Chairman Markowski.

CONSENT AGENDA: (pages 1.10 - 1.19)

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

**Manifests: Section 8 Checks #2418 through #2422 and
Direct Deposit #63390 through #63495
Manifests Public Housing #16467 through #16562
Credit Card Report 11/21/2019 – 12/20/2019
Manifests: Payroll: 12/04/2019, 12/18/2019 and 12/31/2019**

The motion was unanimously approved, including the vote of Chairman Markowski.

INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Loso introduced Kirsten Hathaway, who begins her role as RHA's new Director of Finance & Human Resources on January 21. She most recently served as Town Clerk and Treasurer for Rutland Town.

CORRESPONDENCE (page 1.20 – 1.22)

The letter from Elisabeth Kulas, Executive Director of the Housing Trust of Rutland County (HTRC), describes their plans to convert the former Immaculate Heart of Mary building into 19 units of permanently supportive housing with wrap-around services (e.g., mental health supports, job counseling, etc.). The target population is primarily people coming out of homeless status. The project will not move forward without subsidy (see Section 8 Program report for further discussion).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

RAD Update - Cell Phone Company Subordination Agreements – We have confirmed all subordination agreements, and await paperwork on one. Our hope is to complete the conversion by April 1, but we have an extension through June 30, 2020. These agreements ensure that the cell phone's interests are subordinate to HUD's. Ms. Brzoza expressed concern about health issues related to electromagnetic energy exposure. Mr. Loso assured her that engineers have approved the rooftop equipment.

Housing Awards Applications - (Page 1.23) – RHA has been awarded a Small Agency Excellence in Development award from Nan McKay, one of the nation's foremost affordable housing organizations. Ms. Keefe will accept the award. Mr. Loso acknowledged this as national recognition for the work of the RHA Board and staff, past and present. We have applied for NAHRO's Award of Merit/Excellence: Affordable Housing Development, and should be hearing from them in March.

Rutland Emergency Housing Restructure Meeting – The state spent \$1.3M for emergency housing (primarily hotels) in 2019 in Rutland County alone. The state wants to shift the management to the local level but the funding amount hasn't been determined. The RHA will continue to participate in these discussions.

Recovery Residences Meeting – RHA has convened a meeting for Friday, January 17 to explore initial steps for providing recovery residences in our community. We have invited representatives from: the National Association of Recovery Residences (best practices information and certification process); representatives from the VT Recovery Foundation; Dale Robb of Grace House; Jeff McKee of Rutland Regional Medical Center; Laura Kass and Clay Gilbert of Rutland Mental Health Services; and Eileen Peltier of Down Street Housing, which published the report that motivated this process. The group will tour three potential sites in the community. Mr. Loso reiterated that RHA is serving as a catalyst, and may eventually be involved in developing and managing the physical properties, but wrap-around services must be secured before any funding or development is pursued.

Housing Vermont Single Family Home Update – After last month's conversation with Kathy Beyer of Housing Vermont the Board advised that RHA not pursue the project under the terms presented. We were advised by the Vermont Housing Conservation Board, which was interested in funding the project, to resubmit another application for Tax Credits to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency in the spring. It is unclear as to what is happening on the state level to support this course of action.

Finance/Administration Report (pages 2.3-2.10)

Consolidated Budget Comparison and Variance Reports for November 2019 – See Ms. Buysse’s full report for details. The variance report shows rents running a bit low – the current volume of turnovers is unprecedented. Also, many applicants on the Public Housing waiting list are eligible for and being offered Section 8 Mainstream vouchers, depleting the candidate pool for Public Housing.

Cash Flow – Cash flow continues to be consistent. The current fiscal year surplus stands at \$89,216 and the ending bank balance for November was \$1,275,862.14.

Property Management (page 2.11)

Site Updates – Ms. Sanderson reported that we are making progress in filling what is an unprecedented number of Public Housing vacancies. Please see her report for occupancy details.

Regarding the elevator issue, Ms. Sanderson reported that she has a call with Otis today for a status update. Mr. Loso added that we have even considered finding a new elevator vendor, but estimates to replace both elevators start at \$80K.

Mr. Loso informed the Board that due to Ms. Buysse’s departure, Ms. Sanderson has stepped in to keep bills paid and rents invoiced, and subsequently Ms. Richardson has stepped up to support Julie with annual rent recertifications.

Section 8 Program (pages 2.12-2.13)

Ms. Ladabouche reported that, in the Housing Choice Voucher program, one family leased up in January and three families are still looking. There are two voucher holders currently at zero HAP (over income, no subsidy), and if their circumstances stay stable they will have to relinquish their vouchers, one in March one in April. Five of the 35 new Mainstream voucher holders have been leased up, with more briefings scheduled and a goal to have all of them filled within a few months.

Proposed Revisions to the Section 8 Administration Plan-Chapter 17: Project-Based Vouchers

(pages 2.14-2.84) – These revisions will help to better define the process of issuing Project-Based Vouchers (PBV) from our inventory of 268 Housing Choice Vouchers. Primarily the document outlines HUD regulatory compliance issues, but also covers the RHA’s requirements for applying for and securing the subsidy. The revisions have been publicly noticed and a hearing set for February 17, 2020 (the date of next month’s Board meeting).

HUD Project-Based Voucher Request (Pages 2.85-2.86) --

Regarding the correspondence from HTRC mentioned earlier, they are seeking 19 Project-Based Vouchers (PBV) to subsidize the IHM project. Without this subsidy the project will not be possible. Under HUD guidelines we may project-base 20 percent of our current inventory (20 percent of our current inventory is 54 units). Currently we have 8 vouchers project-based at Hickory Street. The Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) proposal is exempt from this cap in that they are for permanently supportive housing. Therefore, the RHA has the option of project-basing an addition 46 units. The benefits to this, and other PBV projects, are that they meet a community need for more affordable housing, rents are within our payment standards, units meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS), and they are easier for our staff to administer. Mr. Loso went on to review the draft Letter of Intent that requires HUD approval to convert additional vouchers to PBV.

Proposed Resolution 2020-1: to approve the submission of the RHA Notice of Intent to Expand the Section 8 Project-Based Voucher Program for 19 Additional Units Pursuant to HUD Requirements

Commissioner Richards made a motion to approve the resolution which was seconded by Commissioner Carlson, who asked what if HUD denies the request. Mr. Loso replied that the IHM project won't go forward if they HTRC doesn't receive vouchers from some source, but it is unlikely that HUD would deny it as we meet the regulatory requirements.

The votes, including that of Chairman Markowski, were unanimous to approve.

Resident Services Report (pages 2.85 – 2.110)

Ms. Keefe reported the good news that One Care has passed the SASH budget, and we now await Green Mountain Care Board to approve the budget which includes a 3.5% increase for SASH. This will include 1% for situations in which SASH Coordinators serve as the Lead Care Coordinator which will be at the discretion of the participant. The Templewood Court and Sheldon Towers SASH Coordinator, Stephanie Bertrand, has been with RHA for 6 months and is doing great work, connecting with tenants and launching fresh, creative programming. SASH will be hosting Health Self-Management workshops in January and February, and will be introducing a Tele-education program for Diabetes Prevention & Management in February focusing on lifestyle change.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: (pages 3.2 – 3.13)

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

- A. Consolidated Aged Delinquency Reports 1/2020
- B. Collections Report 1/2020
- C. Lease Violations/Evictions 1/2020
- D. Housing Occupancy Charts 12/2019

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Loso requested Board ratification of the appointment of Kirsten Hathaway to the position of Director of Finance & Human Resources.

Proposed Resolution 2020-2: to approve the appointment of Kirsten Hathaway as RHA Director of Finance and Human Resources effective January 21, 2020.

A motion was made by Commissioner Carlson and seconded by Commissioner Richards to approve. The votes, including that of Chairman Markowski, were unanimous to approve.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Upon a suggestion from Mr. Loso, Chairman Markowski requested a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss contractual or human resource issues, the premature disclosure of which could put the RHA at a significant disadvantage. Commissioner Carlson made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. There was unanimous approval including the vote of Chairman Markowski; Executive Session commenced at 9:10 a.m., and adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS – None.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

There being no other business to bring before the Board, Commissioner Richards moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval, including that of Chairman Markowski.

Date of next BOC Regular meeting: Monday, February 17th, 2020 @ the RHA Board Room, 5 Tremont Street, Rutland, VT at 8 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin L. Loso
Executive Director/Secretary

Approved by the RHA Board of Commissioners



Chairman's Signature

2/17/2020

Date

Prepared by Barbara Richardson, Administrative Services