

**RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**Public Hearing and Regular Meeting**  
**MINUTES**  
**February 17, 2020**

Chairman Kevin Markowski called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM on Monday, February 17, 2020 in the Templewood Court Board Room at 5 Tremont Street, Rutland, VT.

**ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS:**

Let the record show the following:

**Board of Commissioners Present:**

Chairman Kevin Markowski, Commissioner Jim Richards, and Commissioner Tina Johnson.

**Rutland Housing Authority Staff Present:**

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

**Tenants and Members of the Public Present:**

None.

**RHA Section 8 Administrative Plan Revisions** - Due to the absence of any members of the public, Chairman Markowski requested that the Board dispense with the reading of the Public Meeting Notice (attached) and to have it included in the minutes of the Public Hearing.

The Board reviewed proposed changes to the Section 8 Administrative Plan at the January Board meeting. The updates include new HUD guidance and changes that will better enable RHA to convert regular Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to Project-Based Vouchers (PBV) for appropriate developments (e.g., the 8 PBVs we have at Hickory Street 3).

**Resolution #2020-03 to approve revisions to the Rutland Housing Authority Section 8 Program Administrative Plan effective February 17, 2020.**

Chairman Markowski requested a motion to approve the resolution, which was made by Commissioner Johnson, and seconded by Commissioner Richards. The ayes, including that of Chairman Markowski, were unanimous to approve.

This concluded the Public Hearing and the Regular Meeting of the BOC commenced.

**TENANT CONCERNS**

Commissioner Johnson asked if there was resolution for the tenant who had contacted her regarding parking at his building. Ms. Sanderson confirmed that we have received the

Reasonable Accommodation verification from the tenant's physician and we are proceeding with assigning him a parking spot.

Chairman Markowski followed up on a call he received from a HCV tenant. Ms. Ladabouche reported that the issue had been resolved. It was noted that the situation was complex as this participant has had several difficult tenancies.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (pages 1.2 – 1.6)

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 13, 2020. There was unanimous approval, including the vote of Chairman Markowski.

### **CONSENT AGENDA:** (pages 1.7 - 1.15):

Chairman Markowski asked if there were any questions regarding the items in the Consent Agenda for the month of February 2020 (including an updated Credit Card register):

**Manifests: Section 8 Checks #2423 through #2446 and Direct Deposit #63496 through #63602**

**Manifests Public Housing #16563 through #16659**

**Credit Card Report 01/21/2020 – 01/21/2020**

**Manifests: Payroll: 01/15/2020 and 01/29/2020**

Upon a roll call, the ayes, including that of Chairman Markowski, were unanimous to accept as submitted.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**RAD Update** - Cell Phone Company Subordination Agreements – We have secured the final cancellation of leases previously held by NEXTEL, and will finalize the closing paperwork in early March. We need to schedule our third-party inspector to view all Public Housing units, and then execute new leases. The Manchester HUD office attorney has reviewed the closing paperwork; the attorney in DC has yet to review it.

**Nan McKay Development Award (Small Agency)** – Ms. Keefe attended the Nan McKay Conference and accepted this award on behalf of RHA. Hickory Street was recognized as the best new, small PHA development for 2019. Additionally, Ms. Keefe attended workshops on leadership, disaster preparation and other topics.

**Recovery Residences** – The stakeholders who came together on January 17<sup>th</sup> shared productive discussion about the development of recovery housing. Now the task is to turn interest into commitment. It is hoped that Serenity House will lead service provision. RHA will continue to act as a catalyst and convener of energy and resources in support of this community priority.

**Hickory Street III Affordable Housing Program** – We have closed out the grant with the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston Affordable Housing Program, specifically related to

resident empowerment, which we were able to fulfill. We will continue to explore ways to secure tenant involvement in building the Hickory Street sense of community.

**RHA-HII Amendment #2 to Lease** (Pages 1.16 – 1.17) – Housing Initiatives, Inc. (HII) met recently to update the lease to include the new storage shed at 9 Tremont Street. The rate reflects fair market value of storage space in the Rutland area plus a portion of the purchase and installation charges. Rent went up slightly in order for HII to recover their costs within 4 years. It is still lower than what RHA would pay for storage on the open market.

**Proposed Resolution #2020-04 to approve Amendment #2 to the Lease Agreement between RHA and Housing Initiatives Inc. for Use of the Parking Lot and Storage Unit at 9 Tremont Street, Rutland.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to approve the lease amendment. There was unanimous approval, including the vote of Chairman Markowski.

**REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**Finance/Administration Report** (Pages 2.2 – 2.11)

Consolidated Budget Comparison and Variance Reports for December 2019: Revenues and Expenses – Ms. Hathaway reported that revenue from rents continued to trend low in December due to vacancies, but that HUD and HAP funding was still higher than budget.

Cash Flow – This is staying consistent month to month. The current fiscal year surplus stands at \$85,254 and the ending bank balance for December was \$1,219,016.01

**Property Management** (page 2.12)

Sheldon Towers Elevators – Ms. Sanderson reported that the irregular operation of the Sheldon Towers elevators, and the poor customer service from Otis Elevator, have created serious challenges for tenants and RHA staff. Fortunately Ms. Sanderson, the maintenance staff and Resident Services/SASH have been able to make sure tenants are safe, calm and kept informed at each step. Ms. Sanderson has been in constant contact with the Otis regional manager throughout the process. Mr. Loso stated that the service contract we hold with Otis is more than 20 years old: The terms are not favorable to RHA and he will have our attorney review it. We will be calling in an engineer as well to help us form a course of action.

Occupancy – Vacancies at Sheldon Towers are being filled, and now Templewood Court is having a spate of openings. Hickory Street is at full occupancy. We have an eviction in process at Hickory Street. There is an order for rent to be paid into court, and we have requested a writ of possession.

**Section 8 Program** (Pages 2.13 – 2.14) – Ms. Ladabouche reported that Housing Choice Voucher utilization is steady. As of January 31 18 of the 35 new Mainstream vouchers were leased up, though it is getting harder to find apartments that fall under our payment standard of \$800 (including utilities). We may need to increase the standard to \$850 sometime soon. We hope to see more opportunities come spring when people generally start moving and apartments

open up. Voucher holders have a maximum of 120 days to find an apartment before we rescind their voucher unless a reasonable accommodation is requested.

Project-Based Voucher Update (Pages 2.15 – 2.37) – The Board’s approval of Resolution 2020-03 and HUD’s confirmation of the PBV limits set the stage for us to provide the Housing Trust of Rutland County (HTRC) with 19 vouchers for permanently supportive housing. We can now issue a RFP to fulfill the requirements of the competitive bidding process. The HTRC will be developing 1-bedroom and efficiency units. RHA’s resource of Section 8 funding is critical to making this project possible. HTRC has secured the commitment of the Homeless Prevention Center and Rutland Mental Health Services for the provision of supportive services. We are working to ensure that RHA gets recognition for its vital role in this project. We hope to have a resolution to award the PBVs at the April Board meeting.

**Resident Services Report** (pages 2.38 – 3.64) – Ms. Keefe reported that SASH has a Norwich University nursing student intern for 42 hours this semester who has been offering programming such as Hearth Health talks, and is shadowing Ms. Bertrand and the Wellness Nurse at Templewood Court and Sheldon Towers.

20 residents took advantage of the AARP tax preparation sessions offered at Templewood Court. The Diabetes Telehealth class has launched. Participants who are food insecure will receive Price Chopper gift cards for produce purchases. Eight people have enrolled and we are still accepting referrals.

At a recent SASH Coordinator meeting staff received training in sepsis awareness from RRMC.

Program and QA consultant Mariana DuBois is bringing SASH partners back to the table to facilitate next steps. The impetus for this is the challenging relationship with SVCOA since SASH was launched. We’re putting considerable resources into improving this relationship so as to ensure that SASH participants are being well served. We are taking a Quality Assurance approach in order to identify and act on program strengths and weaknesses.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:** (pages 3.1 – 3.10)

The following informational items were sent out prior to the meeting:

- A. Aged Delinquency Reports 2/2019
- B. Collections Report 2/2019
- C. Lease Violations/Evictions 2/2019
- D. Housing Occupancy Charts 2/2019

**OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS** – None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** - None required.

**ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:**

There being no additional business to bring before the Board the meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Johnson. The votes, including that of Chairman Markowski, were unanimous to approve, and the meeting was

adjourned.

*Date of next Regular meeting of the BOC: Monday, March 9, 2019 @ 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**



*3/9/2020*

Chairman's Signature

Date

Prepared by Barbara Richardson, Executive Administrative Assistant