

RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY
Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
MINUTES
March 9, 2020

Chairman Kevin Markowski called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM on Monday, March 9, 2020 in the Sheldon Towers Community Room at 14 Sheldon Place, Rutland, VT.

ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS:

Let the record show the following:

Board of Commissioners Present:

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

Rutland Housing Authority Staff Present:

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

Tenants and Members of the Public Present:

Ron Hemenway.

TENANT CONCERNS

Mr. Hemenway says the Sheldon Towers elevators have been working after two months, and wanted to express appreciation for all the efforts of the RHA.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (pages 1.2 – 1.6)

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Karl Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Carlson to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 17, 2020. There was unanimous approval.

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 #2427 through #2430 and Direct Deposit #63603 through #63709
Manifests Public Housing #16660 through #16755
Credit Card Report 01/21/2020 – 02/21/2020
Manifests: Payroll: 02/12/2020 and 02/26/2020

Upon a roll call, the ayes were unanimous to accept as submitted.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

RAD Update – The closing is scheduled for March 12, and implementation is set for May 1. The Springfield Housing Authority is scheduled to perform Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections on March 31. Our management software will be converted to accommodate Project-Based Vouchers (PBV) rather than Public Housing and will take about 3 weeks. New sub-accounts are being set up in the General Ledger. Tenants will sign new leases that address requirements of PBV.

Resident Internet Access – Currently Comcast offers low-speed internet access to affordable housing residents for \$9.95/month and many are unhappy with the level of service. T-Mobile is offering a plan now: \$20/month for unlimited data (allowing streaming video) and it includes a free tablet. Ten additional devices can be connected to each device. The downside is that RHA would have to administer the payment through monthly rental statements, then pay T-Mobile. There is also an option for us to increase the fee to help cover our costs. Last month's offer also included a \$100 statement credit for each tenant who signed up. We plan to start with 50 accounts/tablets, providing some tenant education, and if more tenants show interest we can request more. We will likely bring a formal proposal to the board next month once we have completed due diligence. We'll survey tenant interest in the April newsletter.

E-mail Initiative – Mr. Loso and Ms. Richardson will be meeting to discuss details of obtaining e-mail addresses for all tenants who have them to allow for electronic communication in addition or in place of paper notices.

Sheldon Towers Elevator Update – There have been no further problems with elevators since Otis finally discovered the source of the problem. We will have our legal counsel review our contract with Otis, and also seek assistance with addressing the excessive anticipated repair charges.

Neighborhood Watch Hickory Street – There is interest among tenants to participate in this initiative, and they have been providing a de facto watch related to ongoing criminal activity at 19 Hickory Street #1. After six months, we finally have a writ of possession for this unit, and we are so grateful to residents for their patience and vigilance.

Rutland County Response on General Assistance for Temporary Shelter Proposal (Pages 1.16 – 1.18) – The state is proposing shifting management of emergency hotel vouchers to the local level. Last year the state spent \$1.5M on this program in Rutland, but is proposing to give just \$600K (an average of the last three years) to Rutland in the coming budget year. This is especially troubling because there are no emergency family shelters in our area. Fortunately, the relevant legislative committees have indicated the need to slow down and carefully review the proposal.

2020 Capital Fund Program Allocation – The 2020 Capital Fund Grant totals \$317,920 of which a portion is earmarked for Hickory Street 1 and 2 with the balance (approximately \$200k) used to fund RAD HAP payments through the end of 2020.

RHA Annual Meeting – At the Annual meeting we will have the election of officers. Commissioner Richard's term is due to expire, and Mr. Markowski will discuss his willingness to continue in this role. Ultimately the Mayor is responsible to reappoint Commissioner Richards.

Requests for Proposals: PBV for Permanently Supportive Housing – The RFP for the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) Program for Permanent Supportive Housing was issued on 2/18/2020 with a due date of 3/13/2020. It is anticipated that the Housing Trust of Rutland County will be the sole respondent. After a review and scoring of the proposals a recommendation will be made to the Board in April.

REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Finance/Administration Report (Pages 2.2 – 2.12)

Consolidated Budget Comparison and Variance Reports for January 2020 - Revenues and Expenses – Ms. Hathaway reported that while RHA rents have been down due to the number of vacancies, Section 8 income has been above budget. Payroll was under budget due to Ms. Buysse's departure and a short-term disability case that was covered by insurance.

Cash Flow – This is staying consistent month to month. The current fiscal year surplus stands at \$102,556 and the ending bank balance for January was \$1,287,385.42.

March ACH Issue – Due to an input error, rent payments automatically drawn on tenant bank accounts were withdrawn before benefit payments were deposited, resulting in overdrafts for 8 or 9 tenants. We will cover overdraft charges for tenants and have put some extra parameters in place to prevent a recurrence of this error.

Consolidated Budget FYE 03/31/2021 – The Consolidated Management Operating Budget for FYE 3/31/2021 was reviewed and approved. It was noted that this was a particularly challenging budget due to our transition from Public Housing to Section 8. It is likely that the Board will receive a revised budget in January 2021, once we fully convert to the Section 8 funding platform. It is also anticipated that the projected net loss of \$72,514 will be offset by 2018 and 2019 capital funds allocated for the Sheldon Towers unit conversions depending on the amount of the final bids. If the bids are lower than budgeted, savings will flow into Operations.

Proposed Resolution #2020-05 to approve the Rutland Housing Authority Consolidated Budget for FYE 03/31/2021.

Chairman Markowski requested a motion to approve the resolution, which was made by Vice-Chairman Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Carlson. The ayes were unanimous to approve.

Property Management (page 2.13)

Sheldon Towers Elevators – Ms. Sanderson has been in regular contact with the Otis Elevator Regional Manager, and we finally got results when they called in a veteran engineer to address the issue. He found that when the building was constructed the elevator relay switches were programmed using European codes. When Otis replaced the motherboard for the large elevator it was programmed with US codes: when one engaged it would result in the shutoff of both elevators. The situation was resolved and both elevators are running smoothly.

Rent Recertifications – We have completed all but a few of the Templewood Court recertifications and there are perhaps 20 left to do at Sheldon Towers. All will be completed prior to April 1.

RAD Leases – We’ve been communicating regularly with tenants about the upcoming conversion since last summer via meetings and the RHA Update. The new leases will be ready for distribution in March with an effective date of 5/1/2020.

Occupancy – Sheldon Towers will be at full occupancy by the middle of March. Templewood Court has two vacancies that will be filled by the end of the month. Hickory Street is at full occupancy. As mentioned earlier, we have a writ of possession for a duplex unit at Hickory Street.

Maintenance – We’ve determined that with current staffing levels we're able to bring lawn care in-house, and will purchase a zero-turn mower and trailer.

Section 8 Program (Pages 2.14 – 2.15) – Ms. Ladabouche reported that Housing Choice Voucher utilization is steady and there are 4 Mainstream voucher lease-ups scheduled for April. A new landlord was referred to us by the Homeless Prevention Center and Ms. Ladabouche will be performing a pre-inspection of his property. We still have trouble finding HQS-rated units that fall under our payment standards.

Area realtors are aware that we are interested in multi-family houses that Housing Initiatives, Inc. could purchase for development as Section 8 housing.

Resident Services Report (pages 2.16 – 3.56) – Ms. Keefe reported that the SASH diabetes pilot was used as evidence in a recent report (Regulatory Assessment: Evaluation of Pharmacist Prescribing Authority, Pages 2.25 – 2.33) that highlighted the benefits of pharmacists having prescriptive authority under certain circumstances. Through relationships with doctors’ offices, pharmacist did the prescribing and oversaw the program and patient progress (of those contacted only one physician refused to grant prescribing authority to the pharmacist). The recognition speaks to the impact SASH is making beyond the role of care management.

Our Norwich nursing student is wrapping up his internship. He performed a 4-part health talk for tenants at each site. SASH Coordinators recently received a training from the RRMC Orthopedic Liaison on hip and knee health related to discharge planning. The year-long Telehealth diabetes prevention program has solid participation to date.

Care Navigator – This is the One Care mandated software for tracking care plans between providers. Use of the platform is projected to expand to include Medicare participants.

Coronavirus Preparation – Various departments are developing response plans to COVID-19, including:

- Resident Services: Educational materials on prevention and response
- Property Management: Pandemic response plan
- HR: Employee safety and staffing
- Maintenance: Increased cleaning and sanitation

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 - 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; Executive Session commenced at 8:55 a.m., and adjourned at 9:05 a.m

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

There being no additional business to bring before the Board the meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Carlson. The votes were unanimous to approve, and the meeting was adjourned.

Date of next Regular Meeting of the BOC and Annual Meeting of the RHA: Monday, April 13, 2020 via Zoom Meeting at 8 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin L. Loso
Executive Director/Secretary

Approved by the RHA Board of Commissioners



Chairman's Signature

Date

Prepared by Barbara Richardson, Executive Administrative Assistant