

**RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**Board of Commissioners**

**MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting**

**September 14, 2020**

Vice Chairman Anderson called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM on Monday, September 14, 2020 in a Zoom meeting room to which the public had been invited via the RHA website and through notices posted at RHA properties.

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

**Board of Commissioners Present:**

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

**Rutland Housing Authority Staff Present:**

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

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

None.

**TENANT CONCERNS**

None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (pages 1.3 – 1.7)

A motion was made by Commissioner Carlson seconded by Commissioner Richards to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 10 2020. The vote, including that of Vice-Chairman Anderson, was unanimous to approve.

**CONSENT AGENDA** (pages 1.8- 1.17):

A motion was made by Commissioner Carlson seconded by Commissioner Richards to approve the Consent Agenda items for August 2020, including:

**Manifests: Section 8 Checks #2466 through #2473 and Direct Deposit #64266 through #64376**

**August, 2020 HAP Breakdown**

**Manifests Public Housing #17171 through #17260**

**Credit Card Report 08/12/2020 – 08/26/2020**

**Manifests: Payroll: 08/12/2020 &/ 08/26/2020**

The vote, including that of Vice-Chairman Anderson, was unanimous to approve.

**MEDIA**

Special Delivery, Rutland Herald, 09/04/2020, Jon Olender – Cover shot of Rotary Club of Rutland volunteers delivering cloth and disposable masks that the Rotary and BROCC had donated to RHA residents. Children's activity boxes were also delivered.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**BOC Resignation** – Mr. Loso announced that Commissioner Tina Johnson has resigned her Board assignment in order to focus on her health.

**Post RAD Conversion Modernization** – The August 27 bid opening low bidder was Wright Construction (\$514,713) which performed two of the previous phases of the Sheldon Towers unit upgrades. This phase will also include common area flooring replacement throughout Sheldon Towers.

**Resolution # 2020-18 to award the contract for Alterations to Select Units and Common Areas at Sheldon Towers, Rutland VT to Wright Construction Company the low bidder at \$514,713.**

The resolution was approved unanimously, and included the vote of Vice-Chairman Anderson.

The Notice to Proceed w/plans to start on November 1 with a completion target of March 1, 2021. Wright Construction will work on these units in 3 series of 5 units. We have met with Wright to review HUD's conditions for construction projects to which they can comply. Commissioner Richards asked about RHA's choice of architect, and if RHA had considered putting those services out to bid as well. NBF has been our firm of choice. Jay White recently retired and Brittany Bradley is handling Sheldon Towers and the Woodstock Avenue Bridge & Permanent Housing project as well. She's very talented, hardworking and focused. Future projects will be put out to bid, but for the previous RFP NBF was by far the low bidder.

Duncan Wisniewski Architecture performed the design of all three phases of Hickory Street. This project was put out to bid and Duncan Wisniewski was chosen by Housing Vermont and RHA. NBF has done significant work for us over the years, including the previous two upgrades at Sheldon Towers and porches and bathrooms at Templewood Court.

### **COVID-19 Vermont Economic Recovery Package – Bridge and Permanent Housing Proposal**

#### **Woodstock Avenue Bridge Housing**

- **ACT 250 Permit and Rutland Town MIQ** – Page 1.20 is a letter from Rutland Town in support of the Woodstock Avenue project. Initially the Select Board had issues with some municipal impact (e.g., public safety/police coverage and sidewalks that were not wheelchair accessible). RHA will submit a corrective proposal. We did finally submit the Act 250 questionnaire, but the new Act 250 coordinator for this region is being very cautious and we're not sure if she'll reopen the case to public comment. We're hoping for a permit by the end of week. We tied our Hickory Street development with Woodstock Avenue to bring it up over a 5-year threshold of acres/units. Attorney Jeremy Farkas wrote compelling position but the new commissioner remained cautious.

Diane Snelling of the Environmental Board has given go ahead to mobilize prior to the finalization of the permit. Mr. Loso has written a letter to the Rutland Town police chief. Mr. Loso reports that the majority of the Select Board is supportive; no members of the public or the abutting property owners (who were contacted directly) have submitted any comments. We have proposed a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) that is just \$4-5K less than full assessment. Vice-Chairman Anderson will attend the ZOOM meeting with Mr. Loso to add the Board's support.

- **Closing** - VHCBC is awaiting the outcome of the Act 250 permit and has not yet provided an allocation to cover closing costs for the Woodstock Avenue property. RHA secured a Board-

approved loan from RHA, and that, combined with developer fees from Housing Initiatives, Inc. (HII) covered the closing.

- RRMC Memorandum of Agreement with RRMC – We have negotiating a MOU finalizing our agreement with Rutland Regional Medical Center for two units reserved for patient discharge. CEO Claudio Forte attended a Select Board meeting advocating for the project, and RRMC is launching a capital fund campaign for associated costs.

Pine Street Permanent Housing – We are assisting five tenants with relocation, HII is involved to facilitate the project-basing of the vouchers, and work has begun at 15 Pine Street. However, Giancola Construction and RHA have differing visions for design standards specifically related to energy efficiency. We have secured BROOC weatherization assistance at no cost, but it's predicated on electrical and heating system upgrades. We have funds for this but we have to make sure we're on the same page with the contractor, and if we can't agree will have to discontinue the project.

For both projects the United Way and Mentor Connector have submitted to VCRHYP for a grant to hire a youth case manager. This would allow us to offer the two efficiency units to youth aging out of foster care, with United Way holding a master lease for those units as well as Mentor Connector case management services.

### **Hickory Street RAD Conversion**

Mr. Loso will be submitting the initial Hickory Street RAD conversion documents to HUD after we will host tenant meetings this week. The conversion requires amendment to the Annual and 5-Year plans, which we'll include it in the October Public Hearing along with the updates to the RHA Admissions & Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP), Capital Fund Program grants and Section 8 Administrative Plan.

Mr. Loso requested approval of the RAD Mixed Finance Affidavits for Phase 1 & 2 Public Housing units. This doesn't commit us to the conversion but allows us to, on partnership with Housing Vermont (Evernorth) and the LLPs go through the feasibility stage with HUD.

### **Resolution # 2020-19 to approve the submission of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Public Housing Program Applications for Hickory Street 1 (VT003000002) and Hickory Street 2 (VT003000003)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Richards and seconded by Commissioner Carlson to approve the resolution. The votes, including that of Vice-Chairman Anderson, were unanimous to approve.

**Amendment to Annual and Five Year Plan for the period 2020-2024** (pages 1.31 – 1.35) – This amendment has been submitted to our HUD Field Office representative for review.

### **Additional Development Opportunities**

Habitat for Humanity has asked to reopen discussions regarding developing single-family homes on the .43 remaining acreage at Hickory Street. We need to have some aesthetic control over the property, and there are challenges around HUD requirements and the perpetual affordability covenant to overcome.

### **REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Finance/Administration Report** (Pages 2.2 – 2.12)

#### **Consolidated Budget Comparison and Variance Reports for July 2020: Revenues and Expenses,**

**Variance and Cash Flow** – Ms. Hathaway reported that the budget variance remains consistent. Year-to-date we are running at a \$27,983 surplus with revenues for both rents and excess utilities above budget. Other Revenues are over budget (\$32,425) and Expenses under budget by \$1,172. The General Fund balance as of July 31, 2020 was \$1,095,913. RHA has expended \$36,058.21 of our special CARES grant

funding with a current balance of \$24,460.86. The balance in our CARES Act Section 8 HAP Grant is \$35,636.65 and the balance in the Hickory Street 1 & 2 Covid Operating Grants remain at \$4,608.00 and \$520.00 respectively.

### **Property Management Report (Page 2.13)**

In Ms. Sanderson's absence, Mr. Loso reported that in August, current vacancies include 1 at Templewood Court, 5 at Sheldon Towers (awaiting renovation) and 2 at Hickory Street 3. Maintenance staff continues to disinfect all common areas in the interest of COVID 19 prevention. ACOP changes are still being completed, though there is not a lot of substantive change aside from making preferences consistent between S8 and PH. These changes are in support of the Bridge & Permanent Housing Project and Lincoln Place programs. Maintenance is preparing for the September 16<sup>th</sup> RAD inspections at Templewood Court. Inspectors from the Springfield Housing Authority staff will follow CDC guidelines. They will complete the ST inspections after the modernization project is completed. Wright construction will comply with CDC safety guidelines during their unit upgrade work.

### **Section 8 Program Report (Pages 2.14-2.90)**

Ms. Ladabouche reported that effective August 1, 2020 we have leased up a total of 208 of the 219 regular Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) available and 41 of the 49 Mainstream Vouchers. Three families are at zero HAP due to seasonal employment that put them over the income limit. We received an additional 15 Mainstream Vouchers bringing the total under RHA management to 64. The substantive changes to the Administrative Plan are the addition new preferences and a point system giving greater weight to some preferences.

Ms. Ladabouche restated that the hardest part of the program is finding housing. One of the factors working against landlord recruitment is that HUP Fair Market Rents (FMRs) have actually gone down for 2021. We have discussed project-basing as many of our vouchers as possible with places like the Housing Trust of Rutland County to ensure adequate inventory, and we will project-base some at Pine Street. HUD has issued a NOFA for more Mainstream vouchers but we have to balance that with the market realities. Mr. Loso will speak with the Vermont State Housing Authority to perform a rent reasonableness survey to provide HUD with evidence that their numbers are not realistic. This may be the first time in 20 years that RHA might not have the budget authority to lease up all the vouchers. Commissioner Richards asked why vouchers aren't reallocated from PHAs that can't lease them up. Mr. Loso believes that such a move would require HUD to acknowledge that the program is not being funded adequately.

### **Resident Services Report (pages 2.91-2.)**

Ms. Keefe's reports that Anna Lang, our new Rutland Community Panel Coordinator is very competent and has a great attitude. She has shadowed another coordinator and has almost completed her onboarding training.

This month's report includes SAHS success stories, including one from Rutland. September is Sepsis Awareness Month and the Rutland Community Collaborative Engagement & Education group has a full schedule of activities and trove of resources: encouraging recently released hospital patients to keep a sepsis Journal; recording an episode of PEG-TV's Windows on Wellness and much more. Flu clinics are scheduled for all sites, including Hickory Street. A new food security resource, Everyone Eats, coordinates restaurants, agencies and volunteers to distribute meals

The Mr. Ding-a-Ling ice cream truck visited Templewood Court and Sheldon Towers, and residents were delighted. Several comments: "This is so much fun," "I haven't done this since I was a kid," and for one tenant it was a first!

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:** (pages 3.2 – 3.9)

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

- A. Consolidated Aged Delinquency Reports 08/2020
- B. Collections Report – 08/2020
- C. Lease Violations/Evictions 08/2020
- D. Housing Occupancy Charts 08/2020

Throughout the course of the pandemic, tenant account receivables have been not impacted because the vast majority of our tenants do not have employment income, and those who have had job-related income impacts have been willing to pay in installments. This is not the case for other PHAs around the state.

**NEW/OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Commissioner Carlson and seconded by Commissioner Richards, the Board entered Executive Session at 9:18 a.m. to discuss contractual or human resource issues, the premature disclosure of which could put the RHA at a significant disadvantage. There was unanimous approval, including the vote of Vice-Chairman Anderson.

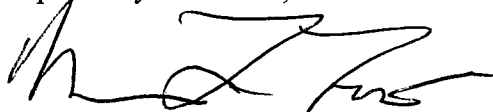
On a motion by Commissioner Carlson, seconded by Commissioner Richards, the Board came out of Executive Session at 9:35 a.m. There was unanimous approval, including the vote of Vice-Chairman Anderson.

**ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:**

There being no other business, Vice-Chairman Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 a.m. Commissioner Carlson seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval, including the vote of Vice-Chairman Anderson.

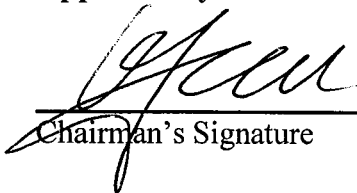
***Date of next BOC Regular Meeting and Public Hearing: Monday, October 19, 2020, 8 a.m. via Zoom Conference (public posting of meeting announcement to follow).***

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin L. Loso  
Executive Director/Secretary

**Approved by the RHA Board of Commissioners**

  
Chairman's Signature

10/14/2020  
Date

Prepared by Barbara Richardson, Executive Administrative Assistant