

RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY
Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
DRAFT MINUTES
May 9, 2022

Kevin Markowski, CPA, Board Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:02 am on Monday, May 9, 2022 in the conference room at the RHA main office, 5 Tremont Street, Rutland, to which the public had been invited via the RHA website and through notices posted at RHA properties.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- Kevin Markowski, CPA/Board Chairperson
- Jessica Butterfield, Resident Commissioner
- Karl Anderson, Esq./Board Vice Chairperson
- Betsy Franzoni, Commissioner

RUTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY STAFF PRESENT:

- Kevin Loso, CEO
- Julie Sanderson, Property Manager
- Rebecca Ladabouche, Section 8 Manager
- Carol Keefe, Resident Services Program Manager and SASH Supervisor
- Kirsten Hathaway, Director of Finance and Human Resources
- Joy Hatfield, Executive Administrative Assistant & Finance Specialist

TENANTS PRESENT:

- None

TENANT CONCERNS:

- Jessica Butterfield inquired if RHA had investigated upgrading the coin-operated washers and dryers to accommodate preloaded cards. Julie Sanderson, Property Manager, addressed the question and remarked that it is being investigated and that RHA is also exploring other options such as installing a coin machine rather than having to upgrade all equipment to a card-only function. This would allow for the quarters to be recycled from machines back into the coin dispenser.

MEDIA:

- As reported by the Rutland Herald, Mr. Loso noted that the Board of Alderman did approve funding for a community planning process to determine the future of the College of Saint Joseph campus. Mr. Loso also commented that once the acquisition from Heritage Family Credit Union is complete the RHA will reengage in the process of developing housing on the site. It is hoped that at least 150 units will be built so that we can incorporate the 55 Faircloth to RAD vouchers into the project. Ideally, all 55 units

can be done at one time so we can avoid the time and expense of going through the HUD mixed-finance process more than once.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Franzoni, to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2022 meeting. The vote was in the affirmative.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- Mr. Loso pointed out that there is a different format for some of the reports in both the Consent Agenda and Informational Items because of the new PHA Web software, and the manner in which the reports are generated. With the Section 8 manifests report, the numbering format has changed. A motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Butterfield to approve the Consent Agenda. The vote was in the affirmative.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Policy on Conflicts of Interest and the Disclosure of Certain Interests:** All board members were provided with a copy of the Policy on Conflicts of Interest with tracked changes from the prior version. The policy outlines the definitions of what a conflict of interest would be and as an annual practice, Mr. Loso asked the Commissioners to sign the statement to identify any conflicts they may have. Discussion was opened for questions, none received, and Mr. Loso requested a resolution to approve the revised policy.

Resolution #2022-07: To approve the Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Disclosure of Certain Interests, effective May 9, 2022.

The resolution was moved by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commission Franzoni to approve. The vote was in the affirmative.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S REPORT:

- **Strategic Planning:** Mr. Loso reported that it has been some time since the organization has developed a strategic plan. Now that Hickory Street and Bridge Housing are complete; the SASH program implemented; significant growth has occurred in the Section 8 program and the Authority has converted to RAD, it is time to map out the next 3-5 years. His suggestion is to bring in an outside facilitator to help guide the process. A possible format would be to an evening presentation on industry trends which would include dinner followed by a half day to review staff reports and to set strategic goals based on that information. Much will depend on how much time the Board is able to commit to the process.
- **RFB/New Maintenance Truck:** Mr. Loso reported that Julie Sanderson has taken the lead in procuring a new truck for the Authority and despite the fact that the current truck has just 18,000 miles on it, they are very "hard miles" due to plowing, etc. The goal is to take advantage of the strong resale value toward the cost of the replacement. The Request for Bids, which included all required specifications, was advertised locally,

placed on our website and sent to area dealerships. Reports have indicated that delivery time can be as long as 20 weeks substantiating the timing for acquiring bids now rather than later.

- **Hickory Street RFQ:** Mr. Loso is working with Julie Sanderson, Property Manager and Jon Jordan, Maintenance Supervisor to obtain quotes for power washing and/or painting of specific buildings on Hickory Street. The Request for Bids was posted on the RHA website and sent to area businesses.
- **PHA Web Conversion:** The software conversion from HAB to PHA Web continues to move forward. The core functions are up and going and as a result of the conversion, Mr. Loso notes we are taking this opportunity to revisit Standard Operating Procedures not only regarding how to implement the software but also the functions associated with the software, including: work order processing in which we will be training our maintenance staff to do independently in the field with their cell phones; the lease-up process; waiting list management; inventory and purchase orders. The Landlord Portal is now included on the RHA's website. We will be sending out a letter to the Section 8 landlords making them aware it is now ready for utilization. Ms. Ladabouche highlighted a few of the features \landlords can now sign up for such as 1099's, monthly statements, changing their bank account information and their address. Landlords can also see the breakdown of their payments for each of their properties.
- **II. Development Update:** Mr. Loso commented regarding the **Sunset Home** project, RHA had done a feasibility study some time back and now the property is under a Purchase & Sales Agreement with a local landlord. Mr. Loso had the opportunity to speak with the potential buyer reminding them we would be interested in housing Section 8 voucher holders at the property if and when the time comes. The property requires significant renovations before it will meet code.
- **III. Griswold:** Evernorth came down to do a site visit and they are working with the current owner of the property to get a sense for what their expectations are around a purchase price. Once that is established, we will start a more detailed feasibility study including a Phase One Environmental Assessment, property appraisal and investigating whether or not the owner would be interested in dividing the three parcels. Our interest in the Griswold site and 92 Forest Street, but not the empty lot also on Forest Street.

RFQ Auditing Services: (See Financial/Administration Report)

Sheldon Towers: The Board was provided with the Engineering Services of Vermont report regarding the waste water disposal pipes. Their analysis showed considerable deterioration of the cast iron pipes which is consistent with the age of the building. We are continuing to meet with both the architect and the engineer to develop a plan. There are 8 risers in the building, the piping connecting the units at the top to the ground floor and out to the city water and sewer systems. When the project commences, it will be done one riser at a time. Resident relocation is unavoidable but, at the present time, the goal is to zero in on a definitive plan. Mr. Loso reported he has had conversations with Vermont State Housing Authority regarding the potential availability of VERAP landlord funds to offset the cost of the repairs but again, nothing can be done prior to receiving the full report from both the engineer and architect.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

- **Finance/Administration Report**

Ms. Hathaway reports that she received the Consolidated Budget Comparison from fee accountant after today's packet went out while she was away from the office. She provided an overview to the Board and will plan to have a full year-end report including variances for the June meeting. The rents are under budget by \$17,225.00, however the RAD subsidies came in \$44,854.00 over budget. Salaries came in slightly over budget due to changes in payroll. She did a review of the coding regarding the gas and electric charges from last meeting and reports there are no miscoded items and that the costs are accurate. The electric line item came in at \$6,442.00 under budget, the gas, \$1,483.00 over budget and the fuel is \$29,541.00 over budget but, this is due to the increasingly high costs. Our contract last year was \$1.83/gal and this year it came in at \$1.99/gal. Total administrative costs are over due to required upgrades to our computer hardware and some required changes in office procedures. Supplies are over budget by \$7,342.00. The elevators are under budget by \$12,008.00 and the collection losses are \$10,000 over due to one tenant's damage to their unit which was costly to repair. The reported balance is \$371,632.00 for FYE 03/31/2023 and the cash balance is \$1,015,563.28.

- **RFQ Auditing Services**

Ms. Hathaway reported that she has been working with Mr. Loso in finalizing the RFQ and that it will be posted on our website and distributed to a list of firms that specialize in PHA audits. The deadline to respond is June 3, 2022.

- **RHA Update**

Mr. Loso, once again, acknowledged the great work of Carol Keefe on the resident newsletter.

PROPERTY MANAGER'S REPORT:

- Ms. Sanderson reported the following:

TWCT is 100% occupied and with the small rise in COVID-19 cases, the hallways are now being disinfected regularly. There are a couple of dead trees close to the office building on site which are in the process of being removed for aesthetics as well as safety.

Sheldon Towers has one empty unit with an orientation and lease up scheduled and the tenant recertification process is complete. The annual elevator inspections were completed.

Hickory Street phase 1 has two vacancies, one of which is requiring substantial work, phases 2 & 3 are 100% occupied. Evernorth came down to tour Hickory Street as part of a capital project review to determine how best to use the old Capital Fund Grant proceeds that were transferred to phases one and two after the RAD conversion. Now that the good weather has arrived, we are gearing up for outdoor projects including grounds keeping, building repairs and site improvements.

SECTION 8 UPDATE:

- Ms. Ladabouche reports that she was able to accomplish some lease ups last month, but that most voucher holders are unable to find housing in Rutland. She finds that more and more are porting out to different states. With the ever-growing unavailability of units to

rent, each authority is absorbing what they can. She also reported that new landlords are asking highly-inflated rents such as \$1,500 for a 1-bedroom unit. She has a new Section 8 landlord that has come onboard and we have filled one of the two units but the other unit is in Proctor which makes it difficult to lease to a voucher holder due to the challenge of transportation. Mr. Loso commented on the utilization task force meeting which was held last week, identifying areas to focus on such as getting more Mainstream vouchers out on the street but, moreover the need to review the preference system for Section 8. Vermont State Housing Authority has put a request into the Boston Field Office, to modify their preference system so as to prioritize families in place but who are at risk of homelessness due in part, to the Vermont Emergency Rental Assistance program nearing its end. This would enable housing authorities to place those families at the top of the list, avoiding more inevitable homelessness as well as a subsequent eviction crisis. We are working on stronger language which will provide us maximum discretion without violating fair housing laws or HUD program regulations. The development of a strong tracking system and documentation for participant files will be critical.

RESIDENT SERVICES PROGRAM:

- Ms. Keefe submitted no written report for this month. She did, however, note that there may be funding for a new half panel sometime in July. Mr. Loso remarked there will need to be a SASH Local Table meeting with our program partners to determine where geographically the need is the greatest.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- A. Consolidated Aged Delinquency Reports 04/2022
- B. Collections Report - 04/2022
- C. Lease Violations/Evictions - 04/2022
- D. Occupancy Reports -04/2022

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

- Mr. Loso recently attended a PHA RAD meeting in Philadelphia regarding the Faircloth to RAD program. He met with the Under Secretary who designed the program and now has a direct contact to him giving RHA the ability to confirm what the anticipated project-based rents will be in a Faircloth to RAD transaction.
- RHA submitted a small grant application to Vermont Housing Finance Agency for the garden beds at Hickory Street, a needed piece of office equipment and the Little Free Library at Bridge Housing.
- A local landlord was in the media regarding some lead paint violations and Mr. Loso has confirmed with our Section 8 Manager that we do not have any children in those properties.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ACTION ITEMS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

- Commissioner Anderson made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 am. It was seconded by Commissioner Butterfield. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 am.

DATE OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

- Monday, June 13th, 8:00 am, RHA Conference Room, 5 Tremont Street, Rutland, VT 05701

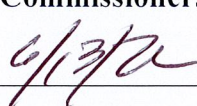
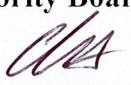
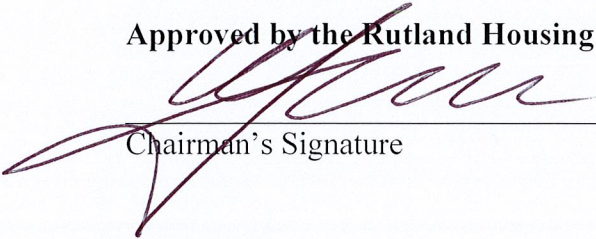
Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Loso

Executive Director/Secretary, Board of Commissioners

Approved by the Rutland Housing Authority Board of Commissioners



Chairman's Signature

Date

Prepared By:

Joy Hatfield, Executive Administrative Assistant and Finance Specialist