

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of January 19, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cecil Johnson, Dale Rollie and Ione Schultz attended in person. Les Bakke and Mike Martin attended via Zoom

STAFF PRESENT:

Dara Lee and Sheila Laney.

9:30 A.M. REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

AGENDA:

A motion was made by Commissioner Bakke to approve the agenda. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 15, 2020 REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve the December 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Schultz seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Budget Reviews for the month of October were reviewed. Treasurer Martin reported that budgets for all projects are as expected.

Commissioner Schultz made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bakke and carried unanimously.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Director Lee provided project updates.

Houge Estates

As of January 1, there are five vacant units. Applications are being processed. There are 51 households on the waiting list. The waiting list is currently open.

Community spaces remain closed, and Daily Bread is still suspended. Staff is making plans to re-start Daily Bread deliveries with individually bagged deliveries to each unit. A Housing Success Specialist and a Service Coordinator each do portions of the Houge Estates Service Coordinator role. At least one person is on-site Monday through Friday. Our two Housing Success Specialists and our Service Coordinator are housed here.

Vaccinations from Walgreens for Covid-19 are arranged to occur on-site when available. Once enough tenants are vaccinated, we will re-open the community room.

Agassiz Apartments

As January 1, there is one vacant unit. Applicant covid complications are slowing the process of determining eligibility. No additional move-out notices have been received. There are 9 applicants on the waiting list.

Vaccinations from Walgreens for Covid-19 are arranged to occur on-site when available.

Clay County Affordable Housing, LLC

As of January 1, we have four vacant units in Hawley. Staff continues to encourage applicants and is advertising. We are processing one applicant at this time, but covid has complicated this process as well.

Residents of these units receive a preference for a Housing Choice Voucher if they are eligible for a 3 or 4-bedroom voucher.

Boyer Apartments

As of January 1, there are no vacant units. No additional move-out notices have been received. There are 12 households on the waiting list. The waiting list is only open for 2-bedroom units. Residents of Boyer Apartments receive a preference for a Housing Choice Voucher if they are eligible for a 2-bedroom unit.

Fieldcrest Townhomes

As of January 1, there are 3 vacant units. There are 108 households on the waiting list which is now closed. We will not be filling units until the rehab is complete.

The City of Moorhead recommended approximately \$70,000 in funding for sidewalk repairs and approximately \$40,000 in funding to install Wi-Fi at the development using CDBG funding. However, there is not sufficient cash revenue for the city to start these projects now. Improvements will occur as funding allows.

The project has been approved for \$1M in funding through the FHLB of Des Moines and over \$7M from Minnesota Housing. Intake meetings have not been scheduled yet.

Gateway Gardens

As January 1, there are no vacant units. No vacancies are expected.

Three staff are officed at Gateway Gardens but are primarily working remotely. CCRI and GSSC, a private security company, each provide 12 hours of staffing per day. CCRI staff is in the process of transitioning to Housing Stabilization Services through Medical Assistance. The HRA is conducting the Housing Stabilization Consultations.

Housing Choice Vouchers

For 2020, the HRA spent \$3,012,870 on regular HAP out of \$3,129,750 available. The remaining funds reflect the \$101,324 in CARES Act funds awarded in November and the unspent FYI funding. The HRA spent an additional \$396,470 on Mainstream vouchers. \$747,417 was available for Mainstream in 2020, but due to the new funding awards, vouchers were not able to be leased immediately. Over \$4M will be available to support Housing Choice Voucher in 2021.

As of January 1, 2021, there are a total of 591 households of a possible 675 leased from the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program; and 3 households leased from other housing authorities that we are administering with another 3 searching. There are 45 total households remaining on the waiting list who have not been contacted to begin the voucher issuance process.

Of the 591 vouchers currently leased, 435 out of 454 regular vouchers are under lease; 24 out of 24 Tenant Protection Vouchers are under lease; 12 out of 15 VASH vouchers are under lease. We have issued 3 regular and 1 VASH vouchers. We are working with 1 more household to issue a regular voucher. We were awarded 25 new VASH vouchers.

We have been approved for 4 Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative vouchers so far. Two youth are leased for January 1. A voucher has been issued to a third, and one has been challenging to maintain contact with.

118 out of 177 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We issued 25 Mainstream vouchers and are working with 21 additional households. 149 of these vouchers have been made available to us by HUD in the past year. All applicants who are eligible for a Mainstream voucher have been pulled from the waiting list.

We have 36 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We have had 45 FSS participants in the past 12 months. Staff is working with additional households to enroll them in the program. We can serve up to 50 households on the FSS program under our current Action Plan. Our application for the 2021 FSS Coordinator funding was approved.

Since our Mainstream Voucher program is not full (118 out of 177 filled and 46 more that are being processed for a total of 164), staff recommended opening the waiting list for the 1-point Mainstream Voucher preference for a one-month period of February 1 to February 28, 2021 for Clay County residents only. Applications received during that time-period would be put into a random drawing for the order they would be placed on the waiting list under that preference. Age and disability would be the only verifications needed for this process.

Commissioner Bakke made a motion to open the Section 8 waiting list for the one-month period of February 2021 to eligible Clay County residents and hold a random drawing to determine wait list order. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and carried unanimously.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes

As of January 1, there are no vacant units. Both an HRA and a CCRI staff person are officed at the site and provide supports to both Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and other HRA Cares scattered-site participants.

HRA Cares

We are authorized to serve 64 households with these funds. We are currently serving 58 households. Of the 58, 16 are at Prairie Horizons Townhomes; 2 are at Bright Sky Apartments; and 40 are in scattered-site units in Clay, Otter Tail, Wilkin, and Douglas Counties, and in Fargo. There are 25 singles and 33 families being served. Staff is accepting additional households to get back up to the 64 households. Referrals have been slow due to partner agency staffing issues.

We only are accepting applications through the Coordinated Assessment Referral and Evaluation System (CARES). Those with the highest needs (acuity levels) who meet program eligibility requirements will be accepted.

Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance

We are serving 68 of our authorized 70 households. There are 23 singles and 45 families currently being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay, Wilkin, Traverse and Douglas Counties. There are 18 households still searching for units.

The coordinated entry system shifted its priority during the Covid-19 emergency to households residing outside or in shelters.

Homework Starts with Home

We continue to operate 2 MHFA Homework Starts with Home programs, one which includes philanthropic funding.

As of January 1, 52 are leased; 14 households are searching for units; and 10 applications are being processed. CAPLP has identified an additional 17 potential referrals. Households are from Clay, Douglas, Becker, Wilkin, Wadena, and Otter Tail Counties.

Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units

As of January 1, a total of 136 households are being served by the Housing Supports program. There are 117 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 8 with the HRA (1 of these is shared with Summit); 22 with CAPLP; 9 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 11 with LMHC; 12 with Dorothy Day/Churches United; 7 with Metro Behavioral Health; 1 with Solutions; 1 with the Lotus Center; and 45 with Summit Guidance (of these 1 is shared with the HRA). In addition, CCRI serves 20 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens and two in scattered-site locations.

22 additional households are searching for units. Staff is meeting with partner agencies in January to discuss the upcoming changes to the program.

Minnesota DHS Community Infrastructure Grant

The HRA now has a 0.5 HRS and a 0.03 project manager. There are 2.5 FTE outreach workers through the CAP agencies. CAPLP and WCMCA have hired dedicated outreach workers. Mahube-Otwa is spreading the duties across several staff.

The grant ends on 6/30/2021. We have no information regarding potential renewal yet.

All agencies are actively preparing to enroll in the new Medicaid-billable Housing Stabilization Services. The CAPLP and the HRA are the only entities that have been approved to date.

Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services

The HRA was approved to provide Housing Stabilization Services – both Housing Consultation and Transition & Sustaining Services effective July 20. Six staff are currently trained on one or more Housing Stabilization Services roles. Staff has begun Housing Consultations. We have 2 staff members providing consultations. We have had limited consultations approved by DHS as everyone muddles through the new program.

We have four staff members who will provide billable Transition & Sustaining Services under the HSS program as a part of their job.

Owner-Occupied Rehab Program

Sabin

DEED awarded the City of Sabin SCDP funds to rehabilitate 10 homes. Seven projects are complete; and one is reviewing bids (homeowner had covid so it has been a slow process). One project is having its scope of work developed. There is funding available for two remaining homes.

Other DEED- CDBG

The HRA staff applied for funding on behalf of the City of Dilworth for 2021 CDBG funding to DEED through the Small Cities Development Program. We have received letters of interest from 53 homeowners and 7 commercial property owners. We applied for over \$800,000 on behalf of Dilworth to rehabilitate 21 owner-occupied homes and 5 businesses. DEED has invited us to submit a full application for this funding. The pre-application was deemed “competitive” and is likely to be funded.

The City of Barnesville contacted the HRA about administering some repaid DEED funds. We have agreed to do so and are billing Barnesville for all costs incurred in administering those funds. Currently working with one commercial property owner on a roofing project.

RLP

There are 7 applicants who are interested and being processed. Five applicants have been slow to respond/provide required information. One with emergency repair issues is out to bid. One appears to be over income, but final eligibility is being determined.

HPG

The HRA received a Rural Development grant through the Housing Preservation Grant program. It has primarily been used as match for the Barnesville and Sabin projects. There are \$5621 in funds remaining which have been committed to a Sabin homeowner. We received a one-year extension so funds must be spent by 9/28/2021.

Rental Rehab Program

Only one project (Rothsay) is outstanding. It has an exterior stairway remaining. Due to lack of material availability for entry stairs, this work needs to wait until spring to complete. MN Housing has granted the extension. We will close out the program once this project is complete. All 2021 expenses are being paid by the General account.

REVIEW OF 2020-2024 GOALS AND PROGRESS:

1. Preserve existing supply of quality housing that is affordable to those earning 80% of AMI or less.
 - Preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing (multi-family and single family). Goal of 10 per year.
Status Update: Rehabilitated 32 rental units and 6 single family units in 2020.
 - Maintain and rehabilitate units owned and managed by the Clay County HRA. Goal to maintain all 176 units and rehabilitate 20 of these units per year.
Status Update: Rehabilitated 3 units in 2020. Awarded funding to rehabilitate 40 additional units at Fieldcrest Townhomes.

2. Increasing supply of quality housing that is affordable to those earning 80% of AMI or less.
 - Subsidized units- Goal to consider project-basing HCV units as appropriate.
Status Update: Churches United's Silver Linings development was selected by Minnesota Housing for development. HRA has been requested to project-base 5 VASH units in development.
 - Increase availability of rental assistance. Goal to increase by 20 units per year.
Status Update: Added 105 Mainstream vouchers in 2020 and awarded an additional 40 for 1/1/2021; awarded 25 additional VASH vouchers for 1/1/2021; received funding for 71 units of rental assistance for Homework Starts with Home for 2020-2023; increased Housing Supports by 14 households. Total of 255 new vouchers which is 255% of 5-year goal.
 - Provide Homeownership opportunities for low-income people. Goal to maintain Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership units.
Status Update: HCV Homeownership program in effect with 13 active homeowners and 4 participants searching for homes.

3. End Homelessness in our Community – Goal to reduce homelessness by 5% per year.

Status Update: Due to Covid-19, this community data is unreliable for analysis at this point.

4. Organizational Sustainability – Goal to stabilize and increase resources to provide needed services.

Status Update: Minnesota Housing application to rehabilitate Fieldcrest Townhomes selected for funding which will lead to over \$600,000 in unrestricted funding.

5. Transfer the entire MN164 Public Housing Program to MN017, the Moorhead Public Housing Agency.

Status Update: Transfer completed on 6/30/2020.

2021 GOAL DISCUSSION:

The goals listed in Item #7 are the overall agency goals for the next four years. The HRA typically examines these goals each year to determine specific areas of focus.

Items to consider include but are not limited to:

- Applying for DEED Small Cities Development (CDBG) funding for Dilworth;
- Applying for additional Housing Choice Vouchers and state-funded vouchers as they become available;
- Requesting that current voucher grants be extended (Homeless to Housed, HRA Cares, Homework Starts with Home, Housing Supports);
- Continuing the HCV Homeownership Program;
- Developing new resources for ending homelessness;
- Determining whether an HRA Tax Levy is needed in 2021;
- Determining if software upgrades or changes are needed; and
- Determining what post-covid operations would look like.

Director Lee will do some checking to see if we meet the criteria for a small agency based on the number of vouchers we now have. HUD has different requirements for annual plans for small vs. large agencies.


OTHER:

Fond Farewells: Director Lee and various others said thank you and good bye to outgoing Board members Ione Schultz and Dale Rollie as this is their final meeting.

Staff Updates: We have no new staff; no staff that has quit; and no staff with a new covid diagnosis! We are off to a great start for 2021!

Minutes
January 19, 2021
Clay County HRA

Chair Rollie adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.



2/17/2021

Les Bakke, Secretary

Date

