

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of April 20, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cecil Johnson attended in person. Les Bakke, Tia Braseth, 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 Martin to approve the agenda. Commissioner Braseth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

MINUTES FROM MARCH 16, 2021 REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Martin to approve the March 16, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Braseth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The completed January and February 2021 financials were reviewed. The budget adjustment for the Housing Choice Voucher program made at the March meeting was included in the budget reviews.

Commissioner Braseth made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Martin and carried unanimously.

OPERATING LINE OF CREDIT:

Our General Account reserve balance at the end of 2020 was approximately \$600,000 under funded. The project developer fee for the Fieldcrest Townhomes refinance/rehab is expected to be \$622,520. There will be an anticipated \$50,000-\$100,000 in costs incurred prior to closing that will be reimbursed once the loan is closed. After that project is complete, our reserves and cash on hand should return to adequate levels.

We have made equity transfers from Clay County Affordable Housing and Housing Supports 2 to the General Account to cover the beginning of the year cash needs including our liability and workers' compensation insurance for the year and our annual taxes.

Director Lee is in conversation with Bell Bank regarding establishing a line of credit on or before May 14, 2021. The timing of some incoming funds is uncertain at this time.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Director Lee provided project updates including making the Board aware of an unresolved billing issue with State Farm Insurance due to a revenue recapture. We are not responsible for the issue and are currently working with our local agent who hopes for resolution in roughly a week. We are also currently looking at bids for insurance coverage for next year.

Houge Estates

As of April 1, there are eight vacant units and one more potential move-out. Seven applicants are being processed and letters have been sent to 9 of the 50 households on the waiting list for the remaining openings. The waiting list is currently open.

Community spaces re-opened on Monday, March 15. 92% of the residents in the building received the vaccine for covid. Walgreens also vaccinated 92% of staff.

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. A Homeless Programs Assistant will be moving her office from Gateway Gardens to Houge Estates.

Agassiz Apartments

As of April 1, there are no vacant units and no known upcoming move-outs. There are 9 applicants on the waiting list.

Clay County Affordable Housing, LLC

As of April 1, we have two vacant units in Hawley. One has been re-rented for June 1. There will be another opening in August. Staff continues to encourage people to apply and is advertising to fill the remaining units.

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 April 1, there is one vacant unit which is in the process of being rehabilitated after significant damages. There is one additional upcoming opening. An application is being processed for the opening.

There are 3 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 their family size fits the available unit.

Fieldcrest Townhomes

As of April 1, there are 5 vacant units (three 2-bedrooms and two 3-bedrooms). We will keep 4 two-bedroom and 4 three-bedroom units vacant. There are 109 households on the waiting list which is now closed.

Fieldcrest has been approved for \$1M in funding through the FHLB of Des Moines and over \$7M from Minnesota Housing. The initial intake meeting with Minnesota Housing was on March 24. Minnesota Housing and HRA staff, the service provider (CAPLP), and the architects met at this time. Our goal is to have all closing documents submitted by June with an anticipated September closing. The architectural documents are approximately 75% complete. The Phase I environmental assessment and geotechnical survey/sampling should be completed by the end of April. Staff is getting quotes for asbestos testing and an ALTA survey.

The City of Moorhead previously recommended \$110,000 in funding for sidewalk repairs and Wi-Fi installation 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.

Gateway Gardens

As of April 1, there are no vacant units and no known upcoming move-outs. Two staff are officed at Gateway Gardens. CCRI and GSSC, a private security company, each provide 12 hours of staffing per day. CCRI case management staff is in the process of transitioning to Housing Stabilization Services through Medical Assistance.

Housing Choice Vouchers

As of April 1, 2021, there are a total of 603 households of a possible 699 leased from the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program; and 3 households leased from other housing authorities that we are administering. We are working with 3 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 522 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract and 177 under our Mainstream HCV contract. There are 80 households remaining on our waiting list that have not been contacted to issue a voucher.

Of the 522 vouchers under our main contract, 469 vouchers are currently leased: 431 out of 455 regular vouchers; 24 out of 24 Tenant Protection Vouchers; 2 out of 3 FYI vouchers; and 12 out of 40 VASH vouchers. We have issued 8 regular and 3 VASH vouchers. We are working with 18 more households to issue a regular voucher; working with one more to issue an FYI; and are waiting for more VASH referrals. VASH vouchers represent 53% of our open vouchers under our main HCV contract. We were awarded 25 new VASH vouchers effective 1/1/2021, but the majority are intended to be used in the Bemidji area since we lack demand.

134 out of 177 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We have issued 16 Mainstream vouchers and are working with 30 additional households. We have contacted 15 more households to begin working with them. 149 of these vouchers have been made available to us by HUD in the past year.

We have 37 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.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes

As of April 1, there are no vacant units and no known upcoming move-outs. 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. Both have been providing DHS Housing Stabilization Services to the participants.

HRA Cares

We are authorized to serve 64 households with these funds. We are currently serving 57 households. Of the 57, 15 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 27 singles and 30 families being served. Two households are searching for units. We have received an additional four referrals.

We only are accepting applications through the Coordinated Access, Referral, Entry and Stabilization System (CARES). Those with the highest priority that meet the eligibility criteria will be accepted.

Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance

We are serving 72 of our authorized 70 households. Five more households are searching for units. We are over leased due to being under leased during the first portion of the grant term. There are 25 singles and 47 families currently being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay, Wilkin, Traverse and Douglas Counties.

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 April 1, 61 are leased; 15 households are searching for units; and 11 applications are being processed. Households are from Clay, Douglas, Becker, Wilkin, Wadena, and Otter Tail Counties.

Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units

As of April 1, a total of 138 households are being served by the Housing Supports program. There are 118 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 9 with the HRA (1 of these is shared with Summit); 30 with CAPLP; 7 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 10 with LMHC; 10 with Dorothy Day/Churches United; 8 with Metro Behavioral Health; 1 with Solutions; 2 with the Lotus Center; and 39 with Summit Guidance (of these 1 is shared with the HRA). In addition, CCRI serves 20 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens and 3 in scattered-site locations.

22 additional households are searching for units. Staff has sent notices to partner agencies regarding the upcoming changes to the program. Supportive Services Manager Gina Kautz has testified in both the MN House and Senate DHS Committees regarding the program and needed improvements.

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. The renewal application was submitted by Clay County on April 9, 2021. We are applying for funding for 1.1 FTEs. Both the Supportive Services Manager and a Housing Success Specialist would spend half their time working as Housing Resource Specialists. CAPLP is proposing to expand to 2.15 FTEs and WCMCA to 0.9. Mahube-Otwa requested to withdraw from the application but remain a partner. Due to staff turnover and other commitments, they prefer to focus on other activities for the next two years. They will still be a partner but will not be funded through the grant. Clay County applied for a full-time position to administer the Housing Supports program.

All agencies are actively preparing to enroll in the new Medicaid-billable Housing Stabilization Services. CAPLP and the HRA are the only entities that have been approved to date. WCMCA has submitted its application. One of the areas Mahube-Otwa will focus on is becoming an approved provider.

Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services

The HRA was approved to provide Housing Stabilization Services – both Housing Consultation and Transition & Sustaining Services effective July 2020. Six staff are currently trained on one or more Housing Stabilization Services roles.

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. To date, we have 30 approved consults. We have 2 staff members providing consultations. We have begun billing for transition and sustaining services. We have 15 approved clients. We have four staff members who will provide billable Transition & Sustaining Services under the HSS program as a part of their job. The participant eligibility/billing approval has been an extremely slow process state-wide.

Owner-Occupied Rehab Program

Sabin

DEED awarded the City of Sabin SCDP funds to rehabilitate 10 homes. Seven projects are complete; and one is in construction. Three new applications have been received. There is funding available for two remaining homes. Funds will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis.

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 received letters of interest from 67 homeowners and 9 commercial properties. We applied for \$922,000 on behalf of Dilworth to rehabilitate 21 owner-occupied homes and 7 businesses. Funding announcements should be made in June.

The HRA is administering some repaid DEED funds for Barnesville and are billing them for all costs incurred in administering those funds. We are currently working with one commercial property owner on a roofing project.

RLP

One complex project is under construction. It is about 50% complete.

HPG

The HRA received a Rural Development grant through the Housing Preservation Grant program. All funds are committed at this time. 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. 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.

FIELDCREST TOWNHOMES LLC:

One of the conditions of the funding we were awarded by Minnesota Housing and the Federal Home Loan Bank is that the HRA sell the property to a single entity owner. Attorney Dan Plambeck has created the Fieldcrest Townhomes LLC, a non-profit Minnesota Limited Liability Company. The HRA is proposed to be the sole member of the LLC.

The Operating Agreement/Bylaws of Fieldcrest Townhomes, LLC and the Certificate of Organization were available. The Board appointed three officers to the newly formed LLC. Commissioner Mike Martin will serve as President. Commissioner Les Bakke will serve as Secretary. Commissioner Tia Braseth will serve as Treasurer.

A motion was made by Commissioner Martin to approve the Operating Agreement/Bylaws and to confirm that the HRA of Clay County will be the sole member of Fieldcrest Townhomes, LLC, and that the HRA will sell the development to the LLC at loan closing time with Minnesota Housing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braseth and carried unanimously.

OTHER:

Board of Commissioner Member Update:

Due to the death of Commissioner John Wilkie, the HRA Board of Commissioners no longer has a tenant representative or a formerly homeless representative. Federal law requires that we contact our Housing Choice Voucher program participants to see if any are interested in serving on the board, and that at least one commissioner has experienced homelessness. The same person may fill both roles. Commissioner Wilkie's term expires 1/31/2022.

We mailed information to all Clay County residents participating in our Housing Choice Voucher program (approximately 600 households) and requested that interested individuals complete a brief application to serve on our Resident Advisory Board (RAB) or Board of Commissioners. We also advertised the openings in local newspapers and posted the information and application on our website.

Applications were due April 5. We have received applications from two Housing Choice Voucher participants who have both experienced homelessness; one applicant who resides in a Moorhead Public Housing Agency unit and has experienced homelessness; and one applicant who is a community member. One applicant currently serves on the HRA Resident Advisory Board.

Commissioners Bakke and Martin have reviewed the applications. They have asked that interviews be set up Monday and/or Tuesday morning the last week in April.

Staff Update:

The HRA has placed an advertisement for two rental assistance positions. We have received 16 applications to date. Applications are due by the end of today, April 20, 2021. Ten interviews have been scheduled. We need only hire one person as one of our interns has agreed to stay on at least through December as a temporary full-time employee.

Since our last meeting, a part-time Homeless Programs Assistant put in her notice. The position will be offered to an applicant that was interviewed previously for this position was not hired because she wanted full-time, and we decided to hire three part-time staff. Due to growth in the Housing Supports program, this position will become full-time.

Four of the six interns/temporary employees are no longer at the HRA. One will complete their work at the end of April. One will be staying on as noted above.

All thirteen of the staff who work in the main office were fully immunized effective 4/14 (last shot 3/31). Eleven of the 13 remaining staff who primarily work at another location are at least partially immunized.

One staff continues to be out on medical leave due to surgery. No staff have contracted Covid-19 in 2021.

Minutes
Apr 20, 2021
Clay County HRA

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m. by Commissioner Martin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braseth and carried unanimously.



5/21/2021

Tia Braseth, Secretary

Date