

**HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY**  
**Regular Meeting of February 21, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Anthony Dillard, Cecil Johnson and Kim Schlotfeldt in person, Les Bakke, and Tia Braseth via Zoom.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Dara Lee and Jill Cossette.

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Dawn Bacon, Executive Director of MPHA

**9:31 A.M. REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

**AGENDA:**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve the agenda. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.*

**MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 21, 2023, REGULAR MEETING:**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to approve the February 21, 2023, regular minutes. Commissioner Braseth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.*

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

None

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

The December financials (except for General, Housing Stabilization, Housing Navigation, Housing Supports 2, Cares and OOR) were available.

Director Lee reviewed the December financials in depth. She noted the increases for legal fees were due to evictions.

*Commissioner Johnson made a motion to accept and file the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.*

**PROJECT UPDATES:**

Director Lee provided project updates.

**Houge Estates**

As of February 1, there are 7 vacant units and two lease terminations for February 28. There is another tenant approved with a pending move-in. Nine other applicants have applications being processed for eligibility or who have expressed interest in moving in. There are 60 households on the waiting list. The waiting list is currently open.

The Houge Estates Service Coordinator is housed at this location. The grant has been renewed for 2023.

**Agassiz Apartments**

As of February 1, there are no vacancies. There are 10 applicants on the waiting list which closed 2/1/22. Agassiz needs a new roof. Funding sources are being explored.

**Clay County Affordable Housing LLC/Boyer Apartments**

As of February 1, there are 9 vacant units. Almost all the openings are due to evictions and lease terminations for non-payment of rent. One of the Moorhead units is vacant due to a transfer.

There are three vacant units in Ulen; four in Hawley; and one in Dilworth. We have never had this number of evictions or vacancies at these properties.

Staff are determining eligibility for 5 applicants. Eleven others are considering the openings. There are still 21 households on the waiting list for the one-bedroom units at Boyer. All open units are 2-, 3-, and 4-bedroom units. Ads are running in February and March for the vacancies. Area agencies have been contacted.

There is no specific subsidy tied to these units. Residents of these units receive a preference for a Housing Choice Voucher if their family size fits the available unit.

**Fieldcrest Townhomes**

As of February 1, there are 11 vacant units (five 2-bedrooms and six 3-bedrooms) and one pending lease termination. The units will be kept vacant during construction. There are 16 households on the waiting list which is now closed. We will reopen the waiting list and start filling the openings when the rehab is complete.

Windows are installed; the sewer has been moved; new sidewalks are poured; the southeast parking lot is completed; the siding is complete; the new addition is roofed; rehab has been completed on 8 units; and 6 additional units are under construction. The addition is scheduled to be framed in the coming week.

## **Gateway Gardens**

As of February 1, there are 2 openings. Staff are searching for eligible participants.

The Housing Supports supplies are located at Gateway Gardens. Two HRA staff have offices at this location. An HRA Assistant Property Manager will move his primary office to this location in February or March. The CCRI case manager continues to have an office at the location. The HRA continues to staff the front desk from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day.

## **Prairie Horizons Townhomes**

As of February 1, all units were occupied. There is one tenant who has been evicted due to drug-related activity. The court gave the tenant until February 24 to vacate the unit. A supportive services office is available on-site. CCRI continues to have a full-time employee providing support to both Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and other HRA Cares scattered-site participants. She is officed at that location. CCRI has been providing DHS Housing Stabilization Services to the participants. An HRA employee also provides support to tenants participating in this program.

## **Housing Choice Vouchers**

As of February 1, 2023, there were a total of 655 households of a possible 758 leased from the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program. We are working with 4 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 556 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract; 187 under our Mainstream HCV contract; and 15 under our HCV Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) contract. We plan to reallocate 10 of our 40 VASH units to the Bemidji HRA. Both the Bemidji and Clay HRA boards have approved this transfer. The formal resolution will be presented at our March meeting.

Of the 556 vouchers under our main contract, 476 vouchers are leased: 413 of 479 regular vouchers; 36 out of 36 Tenant Protection Vouchers; 1 of 1 FYI vouchers; and 26 of 40 VASH vouchers. There are two additional VASH participants who are between units; one who has been issued an initial voucher; and one pending referral. We have 10 existing regular participants who are between units; we have issued 14 regular vouchers to new participants; and we are working with 13 additional households to issue a regular voucher.

165 out of 187 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We have 7 existing mainstream participants who are between units; we have issued 11 mainstream vouchers to new participants; and we are working with 21 additional households to issue a mainstream voucher. 12 of 15 EHV vouchers are under lease; one current EHV is between units; and two vouchers have been issued to new participants.

We have 39 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We have had 46 FSS participants in the past 12 months.

We have contacted 40 households to begin working with them to issue a voucher. There are 208 households who remain on the waiting list. Staff intends to contact an additional 40-45 households in the next week to begin working with them.

### **HRA Cares**

We are authorized to serve 64 households and are currently serving 64 households. Of the 64, 16 are at Prairie Horizons Townhomes; 5 are at Bright Sky Apartments; and 43 are in scattered-site units in Clay (31), Douglas (5), and Otter Tail (3) Counties, MN, and in Fargo, ND (4). Two households are searching for units. One is scheduled to lease up shortly. After our struggle to get HUD to follow the law and re-allocate a portion of our rental assistance funding to other areas, HUD has changed its policies for all grantees.

### **Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance**

Our current grant is to serve sixty-two households through September 30, 2023. We are serving 62 of our authorized 62 households. Two of the three households who are currently searching for units have located units and will soon be moving in. There is one more household in the intake process. There are 19 singles and 43 families being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay (51), Douglas (9), Grant (1), and Traverse (1) Counties.

Openings are filled through the coordinated entry process.

### **Homework Starts with Home**

The current grant term runs from 8/1/2020-9/30/2023. The renewal application has been released. As of February 1, 26 households are leased. Households are from Clay (22), Douglas (3), and Otter Tail (1) Counties. Three households were evicted this month and may be searching for new units.

We have transitioned 48 households off the current grant: 30 moved to a Housing Choice voucher; 1 moved to Homeless to Housed; 2 moved to Bridges; 1 transitioned to a more intensive youth program; 1 purchased a home; 3 went off due to increased income; 7 moved to unsubsidized units; 1 was terminated due to no contact; and 1 was evicted and disappeared.

### **Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units**

As of February 1, a total of 126 households were being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 108 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 9 with the HRA; 21 with CAPLP; 12 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 9 with LMHC; 11 with Metro Behavioral Health; 11 with the Lotus Center; and 32 with Greater Minnesota Community Services. In addition, CCRI serves 18 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens and 3 in a scattered-site location.

Twelve additional households are searching for units. All the searchers are individuals who have been asked to leave or been evicted from their units. We will not be accepting any additional new clients until the HRA is able to catch up on the financial and support services work of the organization.

### **Minnesota DHS Community Living Infrastructure Grant**

The HRA has 1.0 FTE Housing Resource Specialist and a 0.05 project manager. There are 2 FTE outreach workers funded who are employed by the CAP agencies, CAPLP (1.15 FTE) and WCMCA (.85 FTE). The grant also includes a full-time eligibility worker for Clay County Social Services. Staff have been working diligently on property owner engagement strategies and matching participants with available assistance.

The on-site DHS grant monitoring appears to have gone well.

### **Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services**

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. Staff have been performing annual renewal consultations. Due to staff transitions and an inability to recoup our costs, we are only doing on-going consultations and will not accept any additional HSS Transition & Sustaining Services participants at this time.

The Supportive Services Manager applied for and was awarded a \$50,000 capacity building grant to get the necessary infrastructure in place to re-start this program. The grant is for a 6-month period. Due to internal staffing challenges, the Supportive Services Manager reached out to CAPLP to partner on sharing this grant and the underlying work to get a system in place for the area. This grant was extended from February 28 to March 31.

They are working on getting a coordinated referral process in place, streamlined policies and procedures, training components, and effective billing practices. The HRA applied for an additional grant of \$125,000 for April 1 through March 31, 2024. If awarded, the HRA will need to hire an additional supportive services worker.

### **Minnesota Housing - Housing Stability Grant**

The HRA is a sub-grantee of the West Central Minnesota Communities Action Agency (WCMCA) to provide Housing Navigation services from June 15, 2022, through June 30, 2023. WCMCA is the grantee with CAPLP, Presentation Partners in Housing, and the HRA as sub-grantees.

The HRA hired three new people for two new positions between June and August. One of these hires remains in the role. Existing HRA staff also perform some of these duties.

The HRA transferred 37% of its sub-grantee funding to CAPLP, which reduced our FTEs to 1.26. CAPLP recently lost funding on a significant grant so were looking for additional resources. This grant ends on June 30, 2023, and it did not appear prudent to add additional staff. We may not reach our target numbers.

### **Owner-Occupied Rehab Program**

#### Dilworth

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 applied for and received \$922,000

on behalf of Dilworth to rehabilitate twenty-one owner-occupied homes and seven businesses. Twenty-three homeowner and 8 commercial property owner applications were received. Two homeowners and one commercial applicant have withdrawn their applications so there are no waiting lists. The loan limit for homeowners is \$24,999 and for commercial owners is \$40,000. Contractors say they are extremely busy and will have long turnaround times.

For the owner-occupied home rehabilitations, 7 projects are under construction; 4 projects are finalizing bids and preparing to close; and 2 households are in the eligibility process. Two households have asked to be moved to the end of the waiting list. All six other applicants have been contacted and will be processed in the order they respond.

Physical property inspections have been completed on all commercial buildings. One project is under construction; 5 projects are finalizing contracts; and one project has not started bidding.

RLP (Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program)

The Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program is funded by the state. MHFA made updates to the program effective August 1, 2022. The updates were targeted at easing some of the income eligibility requirements by adding additional allowable deductions. Nine applicants are in the process of submitting income and other eligibility information. Two are closing in the near future.

*Commissioner Schlotfeldt made a motion to recess the Regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.*

*Commissioner Bakke called to order the Annual meeting to order at 10:00.*

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO BY-LAWS**

The HRA by-laws require that any changes to the by-laws may be made only after at least 10 days' written notice is given to the commissioners stating the proposed amendments. The current by-laws and proposed changes were reviewed.

The following by-law amendments were proposed:

1. Line 6 of the first WHEREAS clause – change from “comprised of seven” to “comprised of five to seven” as indicated in state statute.
2. Article I. Section 2.- delete the work “Municipal” and add the word “Authorities” to make consistent with current statutory language.
3. Article II. Section 3. – Add “HRA” prior to “Board of Commissioners” to make consistent with long-standing practice.
4. Article VI. Section 2. – Delete “or by” before “Executive Director” and add “or by the Deputy Director” at the end of the first sentence. All disbursements in excess of-change from of twenty-thousand dollars (\$20,000) to thirty-thousand dollars (\$30,000)-shall require signature by two of these parties, at least one of whom shall be a current commissioner.

### **BOARD OFFICERS FOR 2023**

The HRA by-laws require that no person serve in the role of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Secretary for more than two consecutive years. The board decided to elect new officers.

1. Chair – Tia Braseth
2. Vice Chair – Anthony Dillard
3. Secretary – Cecil Johnson
4. Treasurer – Kim Schlotfeldt; and
5. Past Chair – Les Bakke

*A motion was made by Commissioner Schlotfeldt to approve the above officers for 2023. Commissioner Dillard seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.*

### **UPCOMING MEETING DATES & TIMES**

Board meetings for the coming year are scheduled to be held on the following dates at 9:30 a.m.:

February 21, 2023  
March 21, 2023  
April 25, 2023  
May 16, 2023  
June 20, 2023  
July 18, 2023 (*tentative – may be cancelled*)  
August 15, 2023  
September 19, 2023  
October 17, 2023  
November 21, 2023  
December 19, 2023  
January 16, 2024

*Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the meeting dates listed above. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braseth and carried unanimously.*

### **LOCATION OF AGENCY BANK ACCOUNTS**

The HRA currently has checking accounts, savings accounts, and loans (office building, Fieldcrest Townhomes) located at Bell State Bank & Trust and Northwestern State Bank.

The location of Certificates of Deposit is based upon the best available rate at a financial institution located in Clay County at the time of the deposit. A minimum of 3 -5 bank rates are compared prior to making the deposit.

The checking and savings accounts are located at the two banks which have branches in Dilworth. Both locations are convenient and accessible to the HRA offices. The HRA has positive working relationships with both institutions.

Staff recommends that no changes be made to the location of the bank accounts at this time but that it be re-evaluated if terms, service, or other conditions change significantly.

*Commissioner Schlotfeldt made a motion to continue using the current locations for agency bank accounts. Commissioner Dillard seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.*

### **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

ARTICLE IV. SECTION 1 of the HRA by-laws allows the Chairperson with the consent of the Commissioners to delegate authority to the Executive Director to execute all documents, contracts, and instruments on behalf of the Authority.

ARTICLE IV. SECTION 2 of the HRA by-laws allows the Secretary to delegate authority to the Executive Director to maintain and keep records and the Seal of the Authority.

ARTICLE VI. SECTION 3 of the HRA by-laws allows the Chairperson to designate a petty cash fund, not to exceed \$100 to be maintained by the Executive Director and disbursed by the Executive Director without prior approval of the Commissioners.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve delegation of authority to the Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.*

### **ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CORE VALUES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS & CONFLICT DISCLOSURE**

HUD requires that every grant recipient have a plan in place to make sure that all Board members and staff are aware of our code of conduct. The Board has adopted the "Conducting Business in Accordance with Core Values and Ethical Standards" as its code of conduct.

The Code of Conduct was distributed and the two forms needing signatures were signed and returned by all Board members.

*Commissioner Schlotfeldt made a motion to adjourn the Annual meeting and resume the Regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braseth and carried unanimously.*

### **HRA/MOORHEAD PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY JOINT OPERATIONS**

MPHA and the HRA submitted a joint application to the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund requesting \$50,000 to assist with this process. The request was awarded.

Staff have retained Carla Pederson, an experienced attorney, to assist with the process. She did the initial draft of the management agreement with edits made by both Executive Directors.

The majority of MPHA staff will become HRA employees on March 1. The HRA will assume



general operation responsibilities of the MPHA. The HRA already hired a maintenance technician for MPHA.

It is anticipated that for the next 1-2 years, the agencies will exam and determine the best mechanisms to meet their missions and deliver high quality housing and services.

The proposed agreement was to be presented to the Moorhead PHA board of commissioners on Wednesday, February 22.

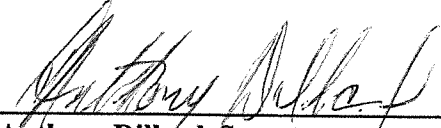
*Commissioner Dillard made a motion to approve the Contract for Services. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.*

**OTHER**

None

**10:30 A.M. MEETING ADJOURNED:**

*Commissioner Bakke moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Dillard, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date