

## **HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY Regular Meeting of November 21, 2024**

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tia Braseth, Anthony Dillard, Cecil Johnson, Greg Lemke, Bethany Peterson, and Clay County Commission Liaison, Paul Krabbenhoft

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Dara Lee, Dawn Bacon, and Jill Cossette.

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

### **AGENDA:**

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

### **MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 17, 2024, REGULAR MEETING:**

*A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve the October 17, 2024, regular minutes. Commissioner Dillard seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.*

### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

None

### **TREASURER REPORT:**

Director Lee explained the Financial Officer was on his required 80-hour leave. The budget reviews were unavailable.

### **PROJECT UPDATES**

Director Lee provided project updates.

### **Houge Estates**

Houge Estates, 510 Center Ave E, Dilworth, MN 56529, is a 60-unit apartment building. All units are one-bedrooms (about 650 sq. ft.), and residents must have a disabling condition or be 62 or older to reside there. Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The remainder of the rent is subsidized by HUD through a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with HUD.

It was built in 1981 and is owned by the Elderly Housing Corporation of Clay County (EHC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit. The non-profit was created by the HRA to develop this project. The HRA has managed the EHC and Houge Estates since their inceptions.

Over the years, the composition of the building has shifted from primarily elderly to primarily younger disabled individuals. The Houge Estates Service Coordinator is housed at this location. Property maintenance staff are on-site one day per week.

Clay County SAHA funds were awarded to update the security cameras at the property. This work is almost complete.

There is an approximately \$775,000 mortgage on the property. The HUD subsidy contract is scheduled for renewal in 2026. Staff are exploring options regarding re-financing the loan and terminating the HUD contract with assistance replaced with Housing Choice Vouchers. The Houge Estates Service Coordinator grant will need to be considered as well.

As of November 1, there were 9 vacant units. There are now 7 vacant units, one pending eviction, and one pending move-out. All vacant units should be ready for occupancy by mid-December. We re-hired a former maintenance staff person to work part-time on getting the Dilworth rental units ready for occupancy.

The waiting list re-opened on October 1 and is now on-line. There are 44 applicants.

The management and occupancy review by Minnesota Housing is scheduled for December 5, 2024.

### **Agassiz Apartments**

Agassiz Apartments, 114 2<sup>nd</sup> St NE, Ulen, MN, is a 12-unit apartment building. Eleven of the units are one-bedrooms (about 650 sq. ft.) and one is a 2-bedroom, and residents must have a disabling condition or be 62 or older to reside there. Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The remainder of the rent is subsidized by HUD through a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with HUD.

It was built in 1978 with a loan subsidized through USDA Rural Development. It is owned and operated by the HRA. The building received a minor renovation in 2013 (primarily windows and kitchens) which was funded with a deferred loan from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency through the Rental Rehabilitation Deferred Loan program. The Rural Development loan is scheduled to be paid off in 2028.

Over the years, the composition of the building has shifted from primarily elderly to about half elderly and half disabled.

Clay County awarded SAHA funding for both roof replacement and security upgrades. Both activities are now complete.

The HUD subsidy contract on this property is scheduled for renewal on October 1, 2025. To keep all options open, staff held a meeting and gave tenants a one-year notice of subsidy cancellation. This cancellation can be revoked at ANY time prior to September 30 of next year. Cancelling the contract would result in significantly less administrative burdens and increased

income. Tenants would continue to pay the same amount for rent through the Housing Choice Voucher program. This is a topic for on-going board discussion.

As of November 1, there are no vacancies, one pending eviction, and 14 applicants on the waiting list. The waiting list is currently closed.

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

The Clay County Affordable Housing units are in Dilworth, Ulen, and Hawley; and include the Boyer Apartments in Moorhead. The CCAH units are composed of twelve duplexes located in neighborhood settings. The Dilworth and Ulen units were constructed in 1979 as Public Housing. The Hawley units were constructed in 1981 as Public Housing. Twenty-one units are 3-bedrooms and three are four-bedrooms.

CCAH units were operated by the HRA as Public Housing units until January 1, 2019, when the HRA “disposed” of its Public Housing units by “selling” them to the CCAH LLC, which is a non-profit LLC with the HRA as its sole member. The HRA opted to reposition its public housing and receive replacement Housing Choice Vouchers for the units. Maintaining the units as public housing was not financially viable. The HRA then transferred its public housing PROGRAM to the Moorhead Public Housing Agency on July 1, 2020. This was essentially the transfer of future funding streams from HUD since there was no property remaining.

The Boyer Apartments are two 4-unit buildings that are adjacent to each other and contain a total of seven 2-bedroom units and one 1-bedroom unit. They were built in 1975 and 1976. The HRA purchased Boyer Apartments in 2006. The HRA received over \$100,000 in funding from the local adult mental health initiative (BCOW) to assist with the initial purchase and operations. The buildings were rehabilitated in 2008 with HOME funding.

The HRA and CCAH Boards approved the sale of the Boyer Apartments to the CCAH at the time of the Fieldcrest Townhomes loan closing when it was released as collateral.

There are no outstanding debts on these buildings.

As of November 1, there is one vacant unit that is re-rented for December 1. The part-time maintenance person is working on this unit.

There are 9 people on the waiting list. The waiting list only opens when there are vacancies.

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**

In January 2017, the HRA purchased Fieldcrest Townhomes, 1828 34<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Moorhead, MN, when it exercised a Right of First Refusal when the prior owner decided to sell the development. There are 20 2-bedroom and 20 3-bedroom units. There are twenty detached garages as well.

Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The remainder of the rent is subsidized by HUD through a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with HUD. This contract dated back to 1980 when the building was initially constructed.

As of November 1, there are 2 vacant units for High Priority Homeless households. Applications are being processed. There is one pending eviction. One of the open units is ready for occupancy and the other should be completed before December 1.

There are 104 households on the waiting list which re-opened on October 1.

Four staff (Supportive Services Manager, Supportive Services Specialist, Supportive Services Assistant, and an Assistant Housing Manager) are housed at the property. There is another office at the location used by CAPLP for supportive services.

## **Gateway Gardens**

Gateway Gardens, 1817 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N, Moorhead, MN, is a 24-unit permanent supportive housing apartment building. The HRA constructed the building in 2010 using Minnesota Housing financing. The funding is in the form of deferred loans that will be forgiven in part after 20 years and completely after 30 years of operations. The front desk is staffed 24/7.

Rent and services are subsidized primarily through the Housing Supports program. There also are four project-based Housing Choice Vouchers attached to units. The HRA and GSSC, a private security company, each provide 12 hours of staffing per day. CCRI case management staff also provides Housing Stabilization Services through Medical Assistance.

The HRA staffs the front desk from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day. There are primarily 4 part-time HRA employees filling this role. From 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., a security company staffs the front desk. The security company monitors the cameras for the High Rise as well as for Gateway Gardens. Staff are looking into monitoring the Sharp View cameras from this location as well. The amount will be dependent upon input from GSSC regarding the proportion of time.

SAHA funds were received from Moorhead to update the Gateway Gardens security system. Upgrades are underway. The 2025 budget included \$75,000 in repurposed SAHA funds and tax levy funds to support building operations.

As of November 1, there are no vacancies. There are two pending lease terminations. New tenants are selected from the community Coordinated Entry list.

The Housing Supports supplies are located at Gateway Gardens. A supportive services staff and an assistant property manager are officed at this location. The CCRI case manager continues to have an office at the location.

### **Prairie Horizons Townhomes**

Prairie Horizons Townhomes are eight townhome permanent supportive housing units for families located in south Moorhead, across from Fieldcrest Townhomes. The HRA constructed the development in 2012 using Minnesota Housing financing. The funding is in the form of deferred loans that will be forgiven in part after 20 years. There is a small portion (\$337,076) that is deferred for 30 years at 0% interest that must be repaid. The HRA owns and manages these eight units (5 2-bedrooms, 2 3-bedrooms, and 1 4-bedroom). The rents in these units are subsidized with project-based Housing Choice Vouchers. Services are provided through the HRA Cares grant. They are sometimes referred to as East Prairie Horizons Townhomes or EPHT.

These units are adjacent to another 8-unit town home permanent supportive housing development, which are confusingly also called Prairie Horizons Townhomes or Easten Townhomes – south units. There are four one-bedroom and four two-bedroom units. The HRA owns 0.01% as a Special Limited Partner in the Easten Townhomes LLC. The HRA provided a \$330,000 deferred loan when the project was constructed in 2006. It bears 5% interest and is due in 2036.

There are an additional thirty units in this development located in north Moorhead. The HRA has project-based 8 Housing Choice Vouchers in the eight south supportive housing units and an additional eight in the 30 north units. Support services are funded through the HRA Cares program.

An HRA staff person and a CCRI employee are both officed part-time at the site. Due to the changes in the HRA Cares program, tenants can choose their own participating service provider.

As of November 1, there are no vacancies. Tenants are selected from the community Coordinated Entry list, so a waiting list is not maintained.

### **River View Heights (Moorhead Public Housing Agency)**

River View Heights, 800 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N, Moorhead, is part of HUD's low rent public housing program. It is a 14-story apartment building built in 1968 with 104 units.

As of November 1, there are 5 vacancies. One applicant is approved, two applications are being processed, and two applicants are being contacted to determine eligibility.

There are currently 232 people on the public housing waiting list which is shared with Sharp View. It closed October 30.

### **Sharp View (MPHA)**

Sharp View, 920 5<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Moorhead, MN, is a part of HUD's low rent public housing program. It is a two story, 47-unit apartment building designated for seniors aged 62 and over. The building was originally built as an elementary school in 1950 and rehabbed as an apartment in the 1980s.

As of November 1, Sharp View has three vacancies which will remain offline due to the upcoming rehabilitation. The waiting list is shared with the River View Heights waiting list.

The development has been selected to receive over \$1.4 million in bond funding to complete significant updates to the building. Preliminary work is underway.

### **Moorhead Affordable Housing LLC (MPHA)**

The Moorhead Affordable Housing LLC consists of 30 units ranging from single family homes, duplexes, and town homes. They were originally under HUD's public housing program but approved under the Section 18 Disposition in 2021 and sold to the LLC. Most of the units are three bedrooms and primarily house families with children.

As of November 1, there are two vacancies. Staff are processing an application and contacting others for the two remaining units.

While there is no specific subsidy tied to these units, accepted applicants do have a preference for an HCV voucher.

### **Maple Court Town Homes (MPHA and City of Moorhead)**

Maple Court Townhomes consists of 34 units of two, three, and four-bedroom townhomes. One parcel is owned by the City of Moorhead and the other parcel is owned by Moorhead Public Housing Agency. MPHA/Clay HRA manage all the units. This property utilizes on-site caretakers.

As of November 1, there is one vacant unit. The waiting list is closed due to the long waiting time to rent a unit. There are over 100 households on the waiting list.

Moorhead and the Cass-Clay Community Land Trust are actively working with renters in the 17 units Moorhead owns to determine their interest in homeownership. Staff have met with CCCLT as we envision how this may look.

### **Housing Choice Vouchers**

The HRA has administered a form of the current Housing Choice Voucher program since the mid-1970s. It is also known as Section 8. Tenants rent in the private market and pay at least 30% of their income towards rent and utilities. The HRA determines Payment Standards (rent limits) and utility allowances each year. HUD provides a fixed amount of funding based upon the federal budget approved by Congress each year.

This HRA program has more than doubled in size since 2017. It is the largest program operated

by the HRA and composes approximately 45% of the total agency budget. In June 2017, the HRA had 360 vouchers, and it now has 753 vouchers.

As of November 1, 2024, there were a total of 716 out of 753 units leased in the Housing Choice Voucher program. Since we were over leased at the beginning of the year, we will be unable to add any new households to the program in 2024. We can still issue nine VASH vouchers and two Stability vouchers. We have 14 open Mainstream units and 12 open regular vouchers that we can lease in January.

We are working with 15 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 552 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract; 187 under our Mainstream HCV contract; and 14 under our HCV Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) contract.

There are 15 households waiting to be scheduled for an intake, and 21 households on the main waiting list which is primarily closed. Staff intend to begin working with these 36 households in Decembers. The HRA will be able to start leasing new families as of January 1, 2025.

We have 68 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program and have had 76 FSS participants in the past 12 months. We can serve up to 75 households.

### **Becker-Clay-Otter Tail-Wilkin (BCOW) Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI) Rental Assistance**

The contract with the BCOW AMHI provides funding for rental assistance and administrative fees to assist households who contain a member who has a serious mental illness and is leaving an institution or is currently homeless.

The 2024 grant was changed to allow for housing navigation and case management services to be provided though the grant as well as rental assistance and administrative fees. A staff member works approximately 16 hours per week on this activity.

As of November 1, there are 22 participants. We will not accept any additional referrals until January. We have requested a significant increase in funding but have not heard whether it will be approved.

### **HRA Cares**

HRA Cares is a HUD-funded Continuum of Care program. It is for individuals and families who are literally homeless and have a family member with a disabling condition. There are no time limits on the supportive services. We provide supportive services at the two Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and in forty-eight scattered-site units. We are authorized to serve sixty-four households with these funds. The HRA administers the program and provides some of the supportive services. We have executed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with CCRI, West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP), the Lotus Center, Greater Minnesota Community Services, and Presentation Partners in Housing. The HRA also provides supportive services. This allows for tenant choices in service provider.

The grant has been in place since 2006. It provided rental assistance as well as supportive services from 2008 through 2023. The grant that began January 1, 2024, was reduced significantly during the past funding around. HUD agreed to amend the grant to transfer all funds into the supportive services and administrative categories.

We are currently serving 65 households. Six of these households are still searching for units. There are nine additional Clay County households who are being processed to determine eligibility. Of the 65 households, 53 are in Clay, 3 are in Otter Tail, and 2 are in Douglas Counties, MN; and there are 7 in Fargo, ND. There are 36 singles and 29 families being served.

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

Homeless to Housed is a Minnesota-funded rental assistance program for high priority homeless families, youth, and singles across the counties of Clay, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin. It is a time-limited program for households experiencing homelessness who are unable to immediately receive a Housing Choice Voucher. It operates similarly to the HCV program.

The grant was initially funded in 2008 to serve forty-five households. It has been renewed every 2 years since that time. Our current grant is to serve eighty-five households through September 30, 2025.

We are serving 76 households now. Twenty-six households are searching for units. There are 15 singles and 58 families being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay (59) and Douglas (14) Counties.

Openings are filled through the coordinated entry process. Staff are actively searching for eligible households. There is sufficient funding to serve approximately 100 households per month through the end of the grant term. Filling this program is our number one rental assistance priority. The HRA is working with Churches United to make sure all eligible families, youth, and seniors are screened for this program.

### **Homework Starts with Home**

Homework Starts with Home is a program offered by Minnesota Housing. In 2014, the HRA was one of three initial pilot locations for a rental assistance program that focused on families with school-age children. We participated in the pilot until it ended in 2018. At the end of the pilot, Minnesota developed Homework Starts with Home. The HSWH program was based primarily upon the pilot operated by the HRA.

The HRA was funded in each of three rounds of competitive funding. Throughout this time, the HRA has been the lead agency in a partnership that is working towards ending child homelessness. The initial pilot partners were Churches United for the Homeless, Moorhead Public Schools, and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP). We now have forty-five partner agencies including fourteen school districts across seven counties.

The current grant term runs from 10/1/2023-9/30/2025. We anticipated serving a total of thirty-two households during that time.

As of November 1, we are serving 38 households. Eight additional households are searching for a unit. The program can serve approximately 45 households for the remainder of the grant.

Households are from Becker (3), Clay (16), Douglas (3), Pope (1), Otter Tail (11), Wadena (2), and Wilkin (1) Counties. Homework Starts with Home families also live at Fieldcrest and receive services through CAPLP. They are not included in these totals.

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

Housing Supports is a Minnesota-funded program operated through the Department of Human Services. It provides room and board payments (which we refer to as Rate 1) and supplemental services payments (which we refer to as Rate 2). Rate 1 pays for rent, utilities, telephones, transportation, and all basic needs items. Rate 2 pays for supportive services. We have a contract with Clay County Social Services to provide this program. We began providing it when we opened Gateway Gardens in 2010. Twenty of the twenty-four units in the building use this funding source.

In 2016, we added a community option and started subcontracting for service provision with several area non-profit partners. The HRA does all program administration, administers all Rate 1, and provides some of the Rate 2 services. It is an extremely complex program to administer.

As of November 1, a total of 118 households were being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 98 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program –11 with the HRA; 17 with CAPLP; 6 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 3 with LMHC; 7 with Metro Behavioral Health; 10 with the Lotus Center; and 29 with Greater Minnesota Community Services. In addition, CCRI serves 6 scattered sites and 20 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens.

Fourteen households are searching for units, and ten are on a waiting list. Clay County Social Services has indicated that we are able to add up to 32 additional households at a rate of approximately 5-10 households per month. We anticipate returning to capacity by Summer 2025.

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

The Community Living Infrastructure Grant began in 2018. Clay County is the grant recipient and the HRA is the project manager and provides the Housing Resource Specialist. The funds were allocated to help communities build the necessary infrastructure so that individuals with disabilities can live fully integrated into the communities of their choice. The grant funds outreach workers, housing resource specialists, and administration. The original grant covered all ten counties in West Central Minnesota and the three Community Action Programs serving the counties who each performed outreach. Mahube-Otwa has chosen to remain a partner but not be a sub-recipient for the grant.

Funding for the current grant was extended until 6/30/25. The funding for the HRA supports 0.82 FTE.

No changes in the past month. In the July-September quarter, our Housing Resource Specialist worked with 47 households of which 35 have found housing. Our Supportive Services Manager, Gina Kautz, was appointed by the Commissioner of Human Services to the Simplifying Supportive Services Work Group.

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

Housing Stabilization Services are a Medicaid benefit available in Minnesota. It became available July 1, 2020. The HRA was the second agency in West Central Minnesota to become an approved provider. The HRA was approved to provide Housing Stabilization Services – both Housing Consultation and Transition & Sustaining Services effective July 2020.

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. Due to losing over \$50,000 in the initial operations of this program, we began doing limited housing consultations only. Payment is still pending on 6 consultations with approvals taking more than 100 days.

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

The HRA has operated and operates several distinct programs under the Owner-Occupied Rehab umbrella. The largest program is the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Small Cities Development Program (SCDP). Funds used for this program are federal HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that are allocated to the state for Greater Minnesota. DEED then holds annual competitive application rounds to award these funds to non-entitlement communities.

The HRA first started administering CDBG funds in 1974 or 1975. The agency stopped the program in the early 1990's due to local political challenges. The HRA once again started administering the program through DEED SCDP in 2008. Only cities and counties may apply for the funding. The HRA serves as the administrator. Clay County was the applicant for the 2008, 2010, and 2012 funding rounds. The City of Barnesville was the applicant in 2014, the City of Sabin in 2016, and the City of Dilworth in 2021. The HRA has utilized HRA Tax Levy funds in 2010, 2014, 2019, and 2020 to leverage these rehabilitation resources. Clay County allocated \$80,000 in ARPA funds for this purpose. Clay County has allocated SAHA funds and consented to tax levy funds to be used in 2024 and 2025.

All these loans have been deferred. Some have been forgiven after 10-15 years while others remain repayable. Each community application has different terms.

#### Barnesville

Barnesville has requested our services to apply for \$1.2 million from DEED to rehabilitate 21 homes and 14 businesses. The pre-application is due November 27. Information for the application is being gathered.

#### Dilworth

The HRA staff is administering a \$922,000 DEED grant for the City of Dilworth. It received funding to rehabilitate 21 homes and 7 businesses. DEED has approved an extension of the grant from September 30, 2024, until September 30, 2025. DEED also approved a request to transfer

\$140,000 from the commercial to the owner-occupied housing line item. This will allow the rehabilitation of approximately 6 additional homes. It is anticipated that 29 houses will be rehabilitated by the end of the grant period.

To date, 15 homeowner projects are complete; 6 projects are under construction; and 2 projects are bidding. With the approval of the transfer, applicants on the waiting list are being contacted. There are 10 applicants on the waiting list. Others were removed from the waiting list due to death, ineligibility due to higher income than limits, or voluntarily dropping.

The grant funded the rehabilitation of 7 commercial properties. Nine applications were received. Physical property inspections were completed on all commercial buildings. Only 5 of the applicants decided to follow-through. Four projects are complete, and the remaining project will only cost around \$9,600.

#### RLP (Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program)

The Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program is funded by the state. Four projects are in the bidding phase, four applications are being processed, and there are four remaining applications. Administrative staff have been assigned to assist the Rehabilitation and Maintenance Manager since her workload has increased significantly.

### **PERSONNEL POLICY**

There have been a number of changes in Minnesota law that impact employees. Our personnel policy has not been updated to include all these changes. None of these required policy changes impact the day-to-day operations or practice of the agency.

Rather, the changes solidify employee rights regarding Emergency Safe and Sick Leave, pregnancy and parental leave, expressing milk, and further protections such as the Crown Act. The policy language has been updated to be more inclusive (e.g., they/them instead of he/she, better language regarding mental health.) Other changes are meant to provide additional clarity to existing policy and procedures (use of agency equipment, internet, what is not included as work time.) The entire policy was re-organized to provide a better flow to the document and be more intuitive in its arrangement.

A copy of the proposed Personnel Policy with the changes were reviewed. Commissioner Braseth requested to make a change to Section 15-Hours of Work and Attendance to the last paragraph by adding “as needed”. It now reads; “Employees are entitled to break times to express milk in a clean, private, and secure area as needed”.

Paid Family Leave will be a discussion for future meeting.

***Commissioner Dillard made a motion to approve the changes to the Personnel Policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson and carried unanimously.***

## **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PRESENTATION**

This presentation was tabled due to time constraints.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF SABBATICAL**

Director Lee has indicated to the board that she would like to take a 12-week sabbatical from approximately May 27, 2025, through August 15, 2025. She proposed to continue to work one day per week during this time. All employees involved with HRA finances must take two weeks of uninterrupted leave each year, which would occur during this leave.

For HRA staff, the Executive Director approves all leaves. She is encouraging employees who have worked with the agency for more than 10 years and have accrued more than 600 hours of PTO to consider taking sabbaticals. She requested that the board consider the same factors.

The current HRA Personnel Policy language is below. Director Lee's comments are ***bold and italicized***.

### **SECTION 19 - LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

#### A. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Clay County HRA to provide for employees' temporary absence from work without severing their employment relationship. Because these leaves are typically provided as a convenience to employees at some additional expense and inconvenience to the employer, employees, except where otherwise provided by law, assume any and all risks related to such leaves. These risks include the elimination, reallocation, or reassignment of their duties, which may result in an employee being reassigned, demoted, or terminated upon completion of their leave.

All requests for leaves of absence are granted or denied based on the following factors:

1. Applicable state and federal laws and regulations.  
***No laws applicable***
2. The length of the requested leave (no request for leave of absence of more than 12 months will be granted; however, leave may be extended for a reasonable period of time).  
***12 weeks requested.***
3. The current and projected workload of the agency.  
***Always heavy.***
4. The expense and availability of any required replacement.  
***Deputy Director and five experienced and talented department managers are available. No additional staff will be hired. Executive Director proposes to be available one day per week and in critical situations.***
5. Any other legitimate business needs of the HRA.

If, after consideration of the above factors, the HRA grants a leave, except where otherwise controlled by state or federal laws or regulations, the following stipulations apply:

1. Whenever possible, employees shall return to their previous position upon completion of their leave. If their position is no longer available, the HRA will offer any other position of equal pay and benefits for which they are eligible.
2. If, during any leave of absence, permanent replacements are needed, the HRA will notify the employee on leave and give them the opportunity to return early if they are safely able to do so.

B. Procedure

All requests for a leave of absence, except for leave requests totaling ten days or less, are made to the Executive Director. Leave requests totaling 10 days or less are approved by the supervisor.

All leaves of absence are classified as either “paid” or “unpaid” in their entirety. However, employees may request a sequence of leaves, including use of accrued Paid Time Off and Extended Sick Leave when appropriate, which would result in a combination of both paid and unpaid leave, provided that the accrued Paid Time Off or Extended Sick Leave is used prior to the commencement of the relevant unpaid leave unless specifically addressed elsewhere in this policy.

1. Paid Leave

Employees on paid leave of absences receive the same compensation and benefits they would otherwise receive had the leave day(s) been covered by Paid Time Off. *The Executive Director currently has the maximum accrual (800 hours) of PTO available.*

*Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve sabbatical leave for the Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.*

**MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:00 A.M.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cecil Johnson, Secretary

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Date