

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of January 16, 2025

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Dillard, Cecil Johnson, Greg Lemke and Bethany Peterson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Tia Braseth and Clay County Commission Liaison, Paul Krabbenhoft

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 Lemke to approve the agenda. Commissioner Peterson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 16, 2025, REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve January 16, 2025, regular minutes. Commissioner Lemke seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER REPORT:

Director Lee reviewed the budgets through November.

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 live there. Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The rest 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. The EHC annual board meeting was held on December 20, 2024.

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 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 January 1, there were 8 vacant units, a termination, and a pending eviction. There are four units ready for occupancy, and staff are working with six interested applicants. Our new Maintenance Manager started on December 30, and a new Assistant Housing Manager starts on January 21.

The waiting list re-opened on October 1 and is now on-line. There are 75 applicants on the waiting list.

The cockroach extermination is complete.

Agassiz Apartments

Agassiz Apartments, 114 2nd 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 live there. Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The rest 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 January 1, there is one vacancy due to an eviction. The unit will need substantial repairs.

There are 8 applicants on the waiting list. The waiting list is being re-opened.

Clay County Affordable Housing LLC/Boyer Apartments

The Clay County Affordable Housing units are in Dilworth, Ulen, and Hawley, and 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 run 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 practical. 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 next to each other and have a total of six 2-bedroom units and two 1-bedroom units. 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 help 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 January 1, there are no vacant units.

There are 10 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 34th 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 rest 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 January 1, there are 3 vacant units which must be filled with households meeting the homeless definition. There is one pending eviction. Two of the open units are ready for occupancy. Staff and the supportive services provider are searching for households.

There are 134 households on the waiting list which re-opened on October 1 and closed on January 2.

Three staff (Supportive Services Manager, Supportive Services Specialist, and a Supportive Services Assistant) are housed at the property. CAPLP, the supportive services provider, has staff on-site part-time.

Gateway Gardens

Gateway Gardens, 1817 1st 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 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 watches the cameras for the High Rise as well as for Gateway Gardens. Staff are looking into watching the Sharp View, Houge Estates, Agassiz Apartments, and Fieldcrest Townhomes cameras from this location as well.

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 January 1, there is one vacancy and two pending terminations. New tenants are selected from the community Coordinated Entry list. It is likely that two current Clay County Affordable Housing tenants who moved from Gateway Gardens will move back to Gateway Gardens.

The Housing Supports supplies are found at Gateway Gardens. Supportive services staff and the Affordable Housing 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 part (\$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 next 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-bedrooms 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 January 1, there is one vacancy due to a decrease in household size, and the tenant transferring to a one-bedroom unit. There is one pending eviction for drug-related activities. Tenants are selected from the community Coordinated Entry list, so a waiting list is not kept.

River View Heights (Moorhead Public Housing Agency)

River View Heights, 800 2nd 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 January 1, there are 4 vacancies. One applicant has been approved with conditions and three more applicants have been contacted.

There are currently 202 people on the public housing waiting list which is shared with Sharp View. It closed October 30.

Sharp View (MPHA)

Sharp View, 920 5th 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 January 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's plumbing system. 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 January 1, there are two vacancies. One applicant has been approved, and one letter has been sent to an applicant.

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 manages all the units. This property uses on-site caretakers.

As of January 1, there is one vacant unit. Two applicants have been contacted. The waiting list is closed due to the long waiting time of more than a year to rent a unit.

Moorhead and the Cass-Clay Community Land Trust are actively working with renters in the 17 units Moorhead owns to figure out their interest in homeownership. Staff have met with CCLT and city staff as we decide 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 decides 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 run 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. 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.

As of January 1, 2025, there were a total of 714 out of 753 units leased in the Housing Choice Voucher program. We were notified on December 17, 2024, that we may not issue any other

vouchers for our regular HCV program until so informed by HUD.

We can still lease 11 VASH vouchers; 2 Stability vouchers; and 19 Mainstream vouchers.

As of January 1, there are 19 people on our waiting list. Anyone who is eligible for a Mainstream or Stability voucher will be contacted to be placed on those programs. We are working with 9 more households from other housing authorities.

We have 65 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program and have had 82 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 help households who have a member who has a serious mental illness and is leaving an institution or is currently homeless.

The grant was renewed for 2025 with a significant increase in funding. We plan to serve 35 households per month in 2025. As of January 1, we are serving 23 participants.

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 choice of service provider.

The grant has been in place since 2006. It provided rental assistance as well as supportive services from 2008 through 2023. Beginning January 1, 2024, the grant was amended to only provide supportive services and fund administration. The change was due to a decrease in HUD funding and the lack of available supportive services to pair with rental assistance.

The grant is for 64 households. We are currently serving 69 households. Five of these households are still searching for units. There are two households being processed for eligibility. Of the 69 households, 57 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 33 families being served. Six of these households currently live at Bright Sky Apartments.

It is expected that the grant will fund a 0.25 FTE at Bright Sky to help those households.

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 runs 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. The 2025-2027 application was submitted December 17.

We are serving 83 households now. Twenty-three households are searching for units. There are 16 singles and 67 families being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay (69) and Douglas (14) Counties. There are three households who have been approved for units and waiting to move in.

Openings are filled through the coordinated entry process. We believe we will be at maximum capacity after the households who are searching find units.

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 took part 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 run 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 first 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 predicted serving a total of thirty-two households during that time. The renewal application is due in January.

As of January 1, we are serving 39 households. Nine households are searching for a unit. The program can serve approximately 45 households for the rest of the grant.

Households are from Becker (4), Clay (17), Douglas (3), Pope (1), Otter Tail (12), and Wadena (2) Counties. There are 3 households who have been approved and are waiting to move into their unit. 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 run 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 January 1, a total of 117 households were being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 98 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program –12 with the HRA; 16 with CAPLP; 7 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 3 with LMHC; 6 with Metro Behavioral Health; 11 with the Lotus Center; and 36 with Greater Minnesota Community Services. In addition, CCRI serves 7 scattered sites and 19 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens.

Twelve households are searching for units, and five are on a waiting list. Clay County Social Services has indicated that we are able to add more households to this program.

The Housing Supports vendor agreement for the existing 15 households at the Bright Sky Apartments are in the process of being transferred to the HRA vendor agreement effective 1/1/2025. It is expected that an additional 7 households will be added through that program. The HRA is transferring an existing staff person to the Bright Sky Apartments location to provide case management services to these households.

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 distributed 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 still be 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. The grant provides funding for administration of the Housing Supports program for Clay County Social Services.

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. Staff are attending a January training on billing through the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) for better reimbursement outcomes. It is a state-wide issue.

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 distributed 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 stay repayable. Each community application has different terms.

Barnesville

Barnesville requested our services to apply for \$1.2 million from DEED to rehabilitate 21 homes and 13 businesses. The pre-application was submitted November 27. Preliminary decisions will be made by January 13, 2025, and full applications will be due April 16, 2025.

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.

To date, 16 homeowner projects are complete; and 7 projects are under construction. There is \$11,274 remaining in this budget line item. There are 10 applicants on the waiting list who will

not receive assistance. 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.

There are enough funds remaining to complete at least 3 more commercial rehabilitations. Since the remaining funds cannot be re-allocated to the owner-occupied housing, staff are reaching out to area businesses again to see if there is any new interest. One new application has been received.

RLP (Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program)

The Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program is funded by the state. Two projects are in the bidding phase, scope of works are being drafted for two projects, and six are being processed or notified that they will be removed from the list if they do not respond.

Now that the HRA has hired a Maintenance Manager, the Rehabilitation Manager will have significantly more time available to focus on these programs while continuing to oversee other HRA activities.

2025 BOARD DISCUSSION

Commissioner Cecil Johnson completed his 3rd five-year term as an HRA Commissioner on January 1, 2025. We are so grateful for the 15 years that Cecil has dedicated to the agency, those it serves, and its staff. He is a strong advocate for the HRA and a pleasure to work with! He agreed to continue to serve until a replacement has been appointed.

- The HRA is authorized to have 5-7 board members. With the end of Commissioner Johnson's third term, the board needs an additional person appointed. The board discussed whether they wish to remain at 5 people or expand to 7.
- In the past, the HRA has placed an ad in the local newspapers and on its website. Interested individuals have completed an application and then were interviewed by two HRA commissioners if several applications were received. The HRA Board of Commissioners has then made a recommendation to the Clay County Commission for the appointment. The board requested that the opening be advertised. They will decide on the number of members after applications are received.
- The board also discussed the upcoming election of officers. The HRA has 4 officers – chair, vice chair, treasurer, and secretary. HRA Board members have traditionally rotated all positions except treasurer every two years. The current officers agreed to complete another year in their current position. Commissioner Peterson agreed to hold the office of Secretary due to Commissioner Johnson reaching his term limit.

- The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2025. The Board reviewed the current by-laws. They decided no changes were needed. They agreed to have two meetings in February. The Annual Meeting is Tuesday, February 18, 2025, and the Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 20, 2025.

OTHER

Churches United Updates:

- One staff member will be located at Bright Sky providing supportive services.
- Churches United will staff the front desk

Staffing Updates:

- Lynn Stevenson, Property Manager resigned on 1/3/2025
- Scott Senger, Maintenance Manager started 12/30/2024
- Lindsey Christensen, Assistant Property Manager started 1/21/2025

MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:38 A.M.


Bethany Peterson, Secretary

2/20/25
Date