

Brainerd Housing and Redevelopment Authority
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 20, 2019

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) in and for the City of Brainerd, Minnesota, was held at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 20, 2019, at the Brainerd HRA Administrative Office, 324 East River Road, in Brainerd, Minnesota.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Marlee Larson called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Board members present: Chair Marlee Larson and Commissioners Gabe Johnson, Bekah Kent, Patrick Wussow, and Ashley Storm. **Others present:** Executive Director Jennifer Bergman, Finance Director Karen Young, Housing Manager Shannon Fortune, Rental Assistance Manager Tania Eller, and Finance Assistant Roberta Piekarski; and Interim City Administrator Jim Thoreen. **Absent:** Eric Charpentier and Krista Brodal.

3. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the minutes as amended from October 23rd.

Commissioner Wussow seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Nothing to report.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approval of 2020 Budget:

Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Storm to adopt the 2020 General Fund, Housing Choice Voucher and Bridges budgets. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion passed.

Commissioner Johnson moved to adopt the 2020 Public Housing budget by approving Resolution No. 2019-08 PHA Board Resolution Approving Operating Budget, seconded by Commissioner Kent. Via roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

b. Adoption of Resolution No. 2019-09, Approval of Cash Management Policy Revision:

Included in this Cash Management Policy are the Cash Receipts Policy and Procedures. Based on the recommendation of the HUD field office, staff proposed to transition to a no cash policy effective January 1st. The recommendation was based on multiple factors, including physical safety, audit concerns, insurance liabilities, and is in line with industry standards related to rent payment. To help facilitate this transition, staff will hold a meeting to help residents understand their options for rent payment, including automatic payment, and invite representatives from local

banks for residents that may not yet be connected with a bank. The handbook will be updated with this information as well, which will require a 30-day comment period for residents.

Commissioner Kent moved to approve Resolution No. 2019-09 revising the Cash Management Policy, seconded by Commissioner Wussow. Via roll call vote, all commissioners voted in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion passed.

- c. **Approve Resolution No. 2019-10, Adopting the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan:** Staff receives annual revisions to bring current all recent HUD requirements and guidance. Changes relating to regulation language and punctuation were made in the plan, which was posted to the agency website for review, but there were no policy changes made.

Commissioner Wussow moved to approve Resolution No. 2019-10 adopting the Housing Choice Voucher Program Administrative Plan, seconded by Commissioner Kent. Via roll call vote, all commissioners voted in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion passed.

6. **BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. **Financial Report:** Young met with Bremer this month to discuss the investment options per their RFP package. The HRA is opening a savings account to complement the operating checking account. A minimum balance will be kept in the checking account to reduce fees and maintain the balance in the savings account to maximize interest earnings. Staff anticipates incurring some fees at year-end, but the goal is to maximize our earnings at a greater rate in the savings account.

Commissioner Wussow moved to approve the payments as presented. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

- b. **HCV/Section 8:** Eller reported that UML through October was 98% and HAP utilization through October was 86%.
- c. **Public Housing Report:** Jim Kozinski was hired to fill the North Star caretaker position effective November 1st.

ROSS Program Updates

Warner spent time with the maintenance staff doing follow-up inspections in scattered site units so he could introduce himself, talk about the ROSS program, and be available for families that had questions or were struggling with the annual inspection process. He enrolled two new households in the program. In October, the second in a series of nutrition-related seminars was held in conjunction with the Senior Nutrition Assistance Program food box distribution and eight tenants participated. Monthly participation in the Senior Nutrition Assistance Program ranges between 25–30 tenants. The program can continue so long as at least 20 tenants participate on a monthly basis. Fortune had hoped to present a statistical review of the recent six-month program report submitted to HUD at the end of October for the period of 3/18/2019–9/17-2019; however, there was a problem with getting the cumulative data from the HUD inForm system. She and Warner are waiting for guidance on how they can retrieve summary data and hope to have the information ready for the December Board meeting.

d. Executive Director Report:

Homeless Shelter Discussion

A group of partners and parishioners throughout the county have convened several meetings and focus groups to discuss the concerns of the homeless population in Crow Wing County. With the exit of New Pathways, there has been a gap in services. Bergman attended a meeting on November 4th in which the group discussed the need for a short-term solution and a long-term solution. Several community partners have agreed to work together to begin discussions and to form a plan to address the issues.

NDC Enterprise Academy

The Initiative Foundation received a \$273,000 grant from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to implement the Enterprise Academy Program, which will provide tools and support to prepare low-income and minority business owners to succeed. Jeff Wig is convening a stakeholders meeting on Friday, November 22nd, to help the Initiative Foundation plan the expansion of the Enterprise Academy program in downtown Brainerd.

Housing Trust Fund

Staff is working on an ordinance for the Housing Trust Fund. The intention is to have a draft to the Crow Wing County HRA Board in December, present the ordinance to the County Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting in January, and have the ordinance adopted in January.

Destination Downtown

The three finalists for the Destination Downtown Business Challenge were announced: Crow Wing Food Co-op, Loide' Oils & Vinegars, and Minnesota Makerspace. You can view finalist and voting info on the website, www.downtownbrainerd.org. Also, the Chamber is using the new Destination Downtown Brainerd Facebook page to share contest info, previews, voting updates, etc. WSN's outstanding finalist videos have been posted and the Brainerd Dispatch ran a story. The voting took place from midnight to midnight, November 11–15.

Upcoming Resignation

Bergman reported that she applied for the city administrator position at the City of Brainerd. She was one of the five finalists, interviewed on November 19th, and was ultimately selected for the position. She will give a 30-day notice once negotiations have been finalized and a contract has been signed. The Board asked that Bergman also inform the Crow Wing County HRA and Crosby HRA boards.

Thoreen congratulated Bergman and pledged to be around until she is comfortable and he is not needed.

Bergman encouraged the Board to consider looking at using a consultant to assist in the job search. The City of Brainerd used David Drown and Associates and were pleased with their work. The Board discussed the possibility of requesting funding from Sourcewell to offset the consultant fees. They also asked for a recommendation on an interim executive director. Chair Larson added that although her term ends this year, she would like to continue serving on the board and will see the staff change through.

e. **Rehab Update:** Schommer reviewed his report and shared that there were not enough interest letters received from owner-occupied properties in the City of Pequot Lakes, so he will not be able submit the preliminary proposal. However, there were three people who may qualify for a MHFA loan, so he will follow-up with them. Garrison is the next logical city to explore interest for the SCDP program.

7. **Commissioner Comments:** The Board asked for an end-of-year report on staff time spent on Crow Wing County HRA.

8. **Adjournment:**

Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Storm, the meeting was adjourned to the Celebration of Excellence Masquerade, A Night of Magic & Mystery to be held at 5:00 p.m. on November 21, 2019, at Cragun's Resort, 11000 Cragun's Drive, Brainerd, MN 56401.