



## Brainerd Housing and Redevelopment Authority BOARD MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, April 22, 2020

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 via Webex teleconference at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Marlee Larson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m
2. **ROLL CALL:** Board members present via remote video conference include Commissioners Marlee Larson, Bekah Kent, Ashley Storm, Patrick Wussow, Eric Charpentier, and Gabe Johnson. Interim Executive Director/Finance Director Karen Young, Executive Assistant LeAnn Goltz, Rental Assistance Manager Tania Eller, Housing Manager Shannon Fortune, Rehab Coordinator John Schommer, and Mary Reed with CliftonLarsonAllen were also present.
3. **Presentation:** Mary Reedy from CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) presented a summary of the 2019 audit and provided the full report to the Board. The report expressed an unmodified opinion with no findings, misstatements, or compliance issues.
4. **READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Wussow moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Commissioner Charpentier seconded the motion. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the minutes from the emergency meeting held on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Commissioner Kent seconded the motion. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.
5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**
6. **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - a. **Discussion on HUD Notice PIH 2020-05:** On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed the CARES Act into law, which further provides HUD with broad authority, in the context of the current public health emergency, to waive statutes and regulations for the Public Housing and HCV programs. The waivers implemented through this notice provide administrative relief and allow for alternative approaches to various aspects of PHA operations. HUD encourages PHAs to apply the waivers authorized in this notice based on local circumstances and needs.

PHAs are required to keep written documentation that record which waivers the PHA applied to their programs(s) and the effective dates. A PHA does not need to notify HUD or receive HUD approval to begin utilizing these waivers/alternative requirements. However, HUD may

subsequently require the PHA to provide information to HUD on the waivers used by the PHA and the date the PHA applied the waiver to its program(s). If a PHA chooses to apply any of the waivers provided for in this notice, the PHA is required to notify residents and owners of any impacts that the waiver and alternative requirement (where applicable) may have on them by whatever means it considers most effective as soon as practicable.

PHAs are not required to receive formal board approval to implement these waivers nor are they required to go through a public hearing process. These waivers can go into effect immediately as based on the local needs and conditions. Staff has gone through the Notice and selected the waivers that will currently benefit our programs for administrative relief with an effective date equal to the date of this Notice. The PHA may adopt the use of these waivers at any time throughout the period of availability as defined in the Notice.

## 7. **BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### a. **Financial Report:**

#### **CARES Act Supplemental Funding**

The CARES Act appropriated supplemental funding for PHAs. Funding notices are anticipated to be released towards the end of April with the first round of funding being available at the beginning of May. For Operating Fund subsidies – this should amount to the equivalent of approximately two months of funding. For HCV HAP and Admin Fees – this should also amount to approximately two month of funding. Additional guidance is anticipated as these funds are made available.

**Commissioner Wussow moved to approve the payments as presented, seconded by Commissioner Johnson. Via roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.**

- b. **HCV/Section 8:** The Unit Months Leased (UML) through March was 100% and HAP utilization was 24%.

#### **FYI Vouchers**

Two families have completed the briefing process and should be issued a voucher shortly. The goal is to have those two lease up for May.

### c. **Public Housing Report:**

#### **Resident Commissioner Candidate Search**

There were 16 self-nominations received for the position of Resident Commissioner. The election, initially slated to happen in May, will now be delayed until mid-June.

#### **Ongoing COVID-19 Response**

Most activities have continued, although with some modifications to allow for social distancing and minimized contact between residents and staff as well as between staff internally. Annual and interim recertifications are still being done using the drop boxes, mail, and email. Move-ins have continued, although thankfully there have only been two since the office was closed to the public, and we rely on a system of posted envelopes to exchange documents. In-unit work

orders are being evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with emergency and high priority tasks being assigned out to available maintenance staff and other tasks being temporarily postponed. Acquiring additional devices and software (i.e. Webex and Adobe) have allowed staff to stagger in-office time and complete many of their routine work tasks remotely. All common areas except the smoking area and the laundry room have been closed in the North Star Apartments. All tenant activities and educational events remain cancelled until further notice.

#### **ROSS Program Updates**

- Erik currently has 12 active participants in the ROSS program, including one newly enrolled in the past month. Before closing, Erik had created a resource packet related to healthy habits, hygiene practices, and general information on the COVID-19 virus. Of the 30 packets set out on a table outside his office, 12 have been taken. He also put out a new series of flyers and postcards with his email address and phone number to encourage continued engagement.
- There were no new outreach activities in March. All events and educational presentations for April have been postponed in response to guidance received related to slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- The Senior Nutrition Assistance program had 28 residents participating this past month. The nutrition seminars have been cancelled and will be resumed at a later date.
- Erik has been spending time resurrecting the ROSS Facebook page in an effort to provide as many options for contact to our tenants as possible.

#### **d. Executive Director Report:**

##### **Executive Director Search**

The job posting for the Executive Director position closed on April 15<sup>th</sup>. The hiring committee met with Gary Weiers on April 20<sup>th</sup> to determine the course of action for the next step. Gary suggested moving ahead with the video interview process since in-person interviews could not be held until sometime in May. The committee agreed and decided the video interviews would help them determine who they would want to bring in for a final interview. The hiring committee meets again on May 4<sup>th</sup> and interviews are scheduled for May 27<sup>th</sup>.

##### **COVID-19 Update**

Since approval of the Telework Policy on April 6<sup>th</sup>, most staff have moved to a remote work environment when possible. We have also established alternating schedules for each department to reduce possible exposure from being in the office during the same hours. Work with a closed door environment when in the office continues. Staff is also doing daily COVID-19 sanitizing and cleaning in the office building.

Maintenance staff is following a much reduced work schedule to limit the spread and are performing daily boiler checks, emergency work orders, and daily COVID-19 sanitizing/cleaning of the North Star.

##### **Request for Technical Assistance (RFTA)**

Staff submitted a RFTA to Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) on behalf of CWC HRA. MHP offers several rural capacity building programs and recently announced the availability of HUD's Rural Capacity Building 18 (RCB 18) program. The program is designed to build capacity in rural housing/economic development organizations to have greater impact. This application focused on our current CWC HRA initiatives as related to the Work Force Housing Study, creation of a Housing

Trust Fund, and the affordable housing shortage in CWC.

Staff reached out to Sourcewell, their sister organization - Resource Training and Solutions, and MHP regarding available assistance with our initiatives. This RFTA through MHP seemed like the most viable resource for consulting services for our CWC HRA initiatives. Applications were due April 15<sup>th</sup> and funding notifications are anticipated towards the end of May.

We also reached out to our consultant from Redevelopment Resources, Kristen Fish-Peterson, to inquire if she would be available/willing to possibly contract for services to prepare a video narrated presentation of the Work Force Housing Study. This could be similar to the PowerPoint presentation that she gave at the CWC HRA board meeting. She provided a cost to prepare a presentation and a cost for virtual interactive presentations of the study. We discussed this with the CWC HRA Board and they suggested we revisit this option at the next meeting to evaluate where we are at with the COVID-19 circumstances.

#### **Spring NAHRO Conference**

Minnesota NAHRO has cancelled the physical spring conference. They are considering possibly offering a virtual conference.

- e. **Rehab Update:** An update on the current rehab projects was provided to the Board. Schommer reported that Level Contracting recently purchased five more lots in Brainerd Oaks with plans to purchase more in the near future.

8. **Commissioner Comments:** Nothing to report.

9. **Adjournment:**

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Charpentier seconded the motion. Via roll call vote, all commissioners voted in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved and meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.**