



Brainerd Housing & Redevelopment Authority BOARD MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, June 24, 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 video/teleconference at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 24th, 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, Patrick Wussow, Ashley Storm, 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 Eric Charpentier were also present. Absent: Bekah Kent.

Moved by Commissioner Johnson and seconded by Commissioner Wussow to amend the agenda by adding a second item to Unfinished Business: Formalize Offer of Executive Director Position. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

3. **READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the minutes from the meetings on May 27th, 2020. Commissioner Wussow seconded the motion. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Approve Revised Tax Forfeited Property Policy:** At the May meeting, the Board revised the Tax Forfeited Property Policy to encourage development and redevelopment by dropping acquisition prices to zero percent of assessed market value plus costs along with other changes to reflect more accurately how the process is working. After the HRA's attorney reviewed the policy, she had some additional recommended changes. In addition, Schommer realized the need to further clarify Acquisition Price being what the developer pays and changing the term for the price the HRA pays to Conveyance Price. A revised policy was provided to the Board with the proposed changes struck out where wording was removed and highlighted where it was added or changed.

Schommer also reported that there has been discussion at the County level regarding tax forfeited lots that were recently pulled off the County's list and put on hold for a developer interested in utilizing the Crow Wing County HRA's Tax Forfeited Property Policy. Other builders learned about it and voiced their concern to Crow Wing County commissioners saying it was unfair as they had not known about the policy. County Commissioners decided to deny the developer's application and place the lots back on the land auction sale.

Commissioner Wussow moved to adopt Resolution No. 2020-08 amending the Brainerd HRA Tax Forfeited Hold Policy and Sales Procedure. Commissioner Storm seconded the motion. Via roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

- b. Formalize Offer of Executive Director Position** - A meeting was held by the Brainerd HRA Board at 11:00 a.m. on May 27th in which the final interview for the Executive Director position was conducted by the Board with Eric Charpentier. During this meeting, interview questions were asked by the Board as prepared and directed by Gary Weiers, the consultant with DDA who led the Executive Director search.

Upon completion of the interview process, the Board was led through a deliberation process, which resulted in the Board reaching consensus to offer the Executive Director position to Eric Charpentier subject to approval of all necessary waivers from HUD.

Commissioner Johnson moved to formalize the offer of the Executive Director position to Eric Charpentier subject to approval of all necessary waivers from HUD. Commissioner Wussow seconded the motion. Via roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Consider Contract for Services between the Brainerd Lakes Chamber and the Brainerd HRA:** As a public agency, HRAs are not allowed to pay dues to the Chamber of Commerce. However, municipalities have been able to enter into a Contract for Services for services rendered through their local Chambers.

The Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce has spent a considerable amount on revitalization efforts in downtown Brainerd including Destination Downtown and the Small Business Revolution. Since one of the Brainerd HRA's goals is to revitalize downtown Brainerd, staff recommended entering into a Contract for Services with the Brainerd Lakes Chamber to support their efforts.

The Board had a discussion and although they agreed to supporting the Chamber through a Contract for Services, the letter and invoice both refer to it as an annual membership. They directed staff to request a revised letter and invoice that correctly references a Contract for Services, which is allowable under Minnesota Statute 469.191.

Commissioner Johnson moved to adopt Resolution No. 2020-09 authorizing the Contract for Services in the amount of \$252 between the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce and the Brainerd HRA, upon receiving a revised letter and invoice that correctly references a Contract for Services. Commissioner Storm seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, Commissioners Johnson, Storm, and Larson were in favor and Commissioner Wussow was opposed. The motion carried with a 3-1 vote.

- b. Approval of the Brainerd HRA COVID-19 Preparedness Plan:** Under Emergency Executive Order 20-74 issued by Governor Walz, critical businesses are now required to establish a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan beginning on June 29th, 2020. The Plan shall establish and explain the policies, practices, and conditions that will be implemented to meet the guidance for businesses based on CDC, MDH, and OSHA for workplaces.

The Preparedness Plan, which follows the template provided by the State of MN and mirrors the City of Brainerd Preparedness Plan, was provided to the Board.

Moved and seconded by Commissioners Johnson and Storm to approve the current Brainerd HRA COVID-19 Preparedness Plan and allow staff to make updates to the plan as required based on new guidance without Board approval. Upon roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

6. BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. **Financial Report:** The Crosby HRA audit fieldwork is being conducted remotely and primarily taking place during the weeks of June 15th and 22nd.

Moved by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner Johnson for approval of payments as presented. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor and none were opposed. The motion passed.

- b. **HCV/Section 8:** The Unit Months Leased (UML) through May was 99% and HAP utilization was 40%.

Bridges Program Report

Nine families are on our program with a HAP payment of \$4,031. Three families moved from the Bridges program to the HCV program.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program Report

There are 29 families on the program. For the month of May, 10 families were escrowing in the amount of \$1,714.

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program Report

The first two families were leased up for May with a total HAP payment of \$790. The amount of HAP received for these vouchers is based on the average HAP per month, which is currently \$395.

- c. **Public Housing Report:** Fortune reviewed the Vacancy Report and Property Performance Report for May 2020.

Fire Unit

All work has been concluded on the unit and as an added measure, the City building inspector did a review of the refinished tub, clearing it for safe use. The total outside vendor costs, including the hotel stay for the tenant, ended up costing \$5,721.02.

Ongoing COVID-19 Response

- The office remains closed to the public, however in preparation for future opening, a video intercom/access system is being installed on the exterior door front door that will allow staff greater control over who/how many individuals can enter the waiting area.
- A total of 307 reusable cloth face masks were purchased using the CARES Act funding. Caretakers distributed them to all household members of Public Housing units.
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing continues in high-traffic common areas and all community common areas remain closed.

- Since initial restrictions went into effect on March 18th, there have been 176 non-emergency work orders received and only one (routine scheduled check of fire extinguishers at Brainerd South) was adjusted by one day related to COVID-19 precautions or concerns.
- The biggest impact will be on annual inspections, which typically happen in May/June. These are being postponed, as is permitted by HUD waivers related to the CARES Act, and the hope is that they can be completed by early fall.

Public Housing Physical Updates

- North Star Smoking Area: The designated smoking area on the west side of the building was relocated back to be at least 25' from the building. The old concrete was removed, a tree in the way of the new location was removed, new concrete was laid down, and the benches and table were re-installed. During this same time the concrete apron near the pet walking area was replaced as well.
- North Star Retaining Wall: Updates to the east retaining wall will be completed later in June.
- Valley Trail & Scattered Site Driveways: Sections of deteriorating concrete driveways were removed and replaced at the Valley Trail and Scattered Site units. Also, tripping hazards that ranged from 1.5"–3" were removed.

ROSS Program Updates

- There are 14 active participants in the ROSS program, including one newly enrolled in May. Contact was made with five non-enrolled participants for more limited resource/referral work.
- No outreach happened in May and all educational events remain cancelled or postponed.
- Warner spent time this past month participating in training on unconscious bias, the ConnectHome program, and economic impact payments for older adults.
- The Senior Nutrition Assistance program had 28 residents participating this past month. The nutrition seminars are still cancelled, to be resurrected at a later time. Deliveries have been made directly to the apartments to prevent tenants from congregating.
- Facebook Stats: Three new posts on the ROSS Facebook page focused on pop-up food pantries, renter's insurance resources, and online educational opportunities through the University of MN Extension office. These posts reached a total of nine people. There are currently 11 followers of the page.
- Success Story: A North Star tenant approached Warner about wanting to distribute face masks to other residents but was unsure of how to proceed. He assisted the tenant in creating and posting signage advertising the availability of these free, homemade face masks. The tenant handled the "orders" and provided 18 face masks to others in the building.

d. Executive Director Report:

Crosby HRA Fire

On June 13th, the Crosby HRA had a fire at the family scattered sites units, in which three garages burned that were in close proximity to one another. The three structures were a total loss, but fortunately there was very minimal damage to the accompanying dwelling units and no tenants were hurt or displaced. Staff is assisting the tenants with any potential needs/resources that can help them with the loss of possessions.

CWC HRA Board

Theresa Goble has resigned from the CWC HRA Board and also the BLAEDC Unified Fund Board for personal reasons. She has notified Commissioner Koering of her resignation and the resulting vacancy on the CWC HRA Board.

Executive Director Search

The waiver request to HUD regarding the conflict of interest in the consideration of former board member, Eric Charpentier, as the next Executive Director was submitted to HUD on May 29th. The waiver was approved by the Minneapolis Field Office and submitted to HUD Headquarters in Washington DC on June 5th. The waiver request is currently in review at Headquarters and they did reach out with additional information requests regarding the advertising venues and the resumes of the final three candidates. This information has been submitted to HUD and we are awaiting further communication regarding their approval.

- e. **Rehab Update:** An update on the current rehab projects was provided to the Board.

SCDP Preliminary Proposal

The City of Garrison will be deciding if they are going to pursue a SCDP preliminary proposal this fall after their next council meeting Tuesday night, July 14th. It would be for single-family owner-occupied and commercial rehab.

FHLB

An application was submitted through the Federal Home Loan Bank's (FHLB) Affordable Housing Program (AHP) in conjunction with Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union. Just over \$171,000 for six units of owner-occupied rehab throughout Crow Wing County was requested. Funding awards are announced in December.

- 7. **Commissioner Comments:** Commissioner Johnson reported that the City of Brainerd is planning a strategic planning session in mid-July. City staff is requesting feedback from boards and commissions through a survey that will help the City Council set their goal priorities. Commissioner Johnson requested that the Board participate in the survey. Commissioner Wussow would like to discuss the Tax Forfeited Property Policy with the new Executive Director once he/she is in the new position.

- 8. **Adjournment:**

Moved by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 1:41 p.m. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

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