



Brainerd Housing & Redevelopment Authority
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 18, 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, November 18th, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Marlee Larson called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Present: Commissioners Marlee Larson, Patrick Wussow, Bekah Kent, Janet Decker, Michael Duval, and Gabe Johnson. Absent: Ashley Storm.

Others present include Executive Director Eric Charpentier, Finance Director Karen Young, Executive Assistant LeAnn Goltz, Rental Assistance Manager Tania Eller, Housing Rehab Coordinator John Schommer, and Housing Manager Shannon Fortune.

Moved and seconded by Commissioners Johnson and Wussow to reorder the agenda so that the oaths of office could take place before the public hearing. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion with the exception of Commissioner Duval who abstained. The motion was approved.

3. **OATHS OF OFFICE:** Janet Decker and Michael Duval were appointed to the Brainerd HRA Board by the Brainerd City Council at their November 16th meeting. Conducted by Charpentier, both Decker and Duval took their oaths of office and they were welcomed by the board and staff.
4. **PUBLIC HEARING: Approve the Annual Plan and Adopt Resolution No. 2020-11:**

Chair Larson opened the public hearing at 1:12 p.m.

The agency is required to create an Annual Plan every fiscal year and a public hearing must be held prior to the approval of the Annual Plan. The Notice of Public Hearing was posted in the Legal Notice section of the Brainerd Daily Dispatch and a copy of the Annual Plan was provided to the board.

After Chair Larson called for speakers in opposition three times, there was no one speaking in opposition of the Plan. Chair Larson then called for speakers in favor three times and there was no one speaking in favor of the Plan.

The public hearing was closed at 1:13 p.m.

Moved by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner Kent to approve the Annual Plan and Adopt Resolution No. 2020-11. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

5. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the minutes from the meeting on October 28th, 2020. Commissioner Kent seconded the motion. Through roll call vote, Commissioners Johnson, Kent, Wussow, Decker, and Larson voted in favor of the motion and Commissioner Duval abstained. The motion was approved.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Nothing to report.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **Approve Premium Pay:** Per direction from the board, staff determined that additional compensation pay would be considered reasonable for employees who have worked during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff recommended additional compensation of a one-time payment of \$500 for full-time employees and a one-time payment of \$250 for part-time employees. The cost of the premium pay including taxes and retirement was estimated to be approximately \$10,100, which would be paid out of discretionary General Fund dollars.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the absence of an executive director, three employees have gone over the allowed vacation accrual limits with one of those employees also carrying comp time hours. Staff recommended the pay out of excess vacation accruals and comp time to those employees. The cost, estimated at \$4,910, would be allocated per payroll allocations.

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve premium pay of one-time \$500 payment to full-time employees and one-time \$250 payment to part-time employees out of the General Fund for essential work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Duval seconded the motion. Through roll call vote, all commissioners were in favor of the motion and none were opposed. The motion was approved.

Commissioner Kent moved to approve payment of vacation accruals and comp time for employees over the accrual limits with an estimated cost of \$4,910. 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.

- b. **Adopt 2021 Budgets:** Young reviewed the budgets with the board.

Moved by Commissioner Kent and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adopt the 2021 General Fund, Housing Choice Voucher and Bridges budgets. Through roll call vote, Commissioners Kent, Johnson, Decker, Duval, and Larson voted in favor of the motion and Commissioner Wussow abstained. The motion was approved.

Moved by Commissioner Kent and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adopt the 2021 Public Housing budget by approving Resolution No. 2020-12 PHA Board Resolution Approving Operating Budget. Through roll call vote, Commissioners Kent, Johnson, Decker, Duval, and Larson voted in favor of the motion and Commissioner Wussow abstained. The motion was approved.

8. **BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

a. **Financial Report:**

Anderson Brothers Payment

The fourth Pay Application in the amount of \$11,426.90 was processed in October for the Anderson Brothers project for Public Housing. The funds were drawn out of the 2018 Capital Fund Program (CFP) grant.

CARES Act Funding

The agency received an additional \$42,091 in Public Housing Operating Funds and \$84,999 in HCV Admin Fees. The funds can only be used for eligible expenses back to March 27th and expire at the end of 2021. To date, an additional \$20,760 in coronavirus-eligible expenses have been incurred. For HUD reporting purposes, the funds for eligible operating and coronavirus expenses will be shown as been fully spent in 2020.

Moved and seconded by Commissioners Kent and Johnson to approve the October payments as presented. Through roll call vote, Commissioners Kent, Johnson, Decker, Duval, and Larson voted in favor of the motion and Commissioner Wussow abstained. The motion was approved.

b. **HCV/Section 8:**

HCV Report

Through October, the Unit Months Leased (UML) was 98% and HAP utilization was 81%.

Bridges Report

There were 10 families on the program with a monthly HAP payment of \$4,088. Three families were issued a voucher and are now searching and two that were notified.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Report

Of the 29 families on the program, there were 11 escrowing in the amount of \$1,710 per month. There is still no news on FSS award announcements.

Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) Report

There were three families leased up with a total HAP payment of \$1,110 per month.

c. **Housing Manager Report:**

Ongoing COVID-19 Response

The addition of the contactless in-building paperwork table located in the vestibule area has been well received. Staff contacted Service Master for additional surface cleaning services in the North Star building. Maintenance staff continues to inquire about exposure and symptoms before proceeding with work orders. State and federal level orders precluding evictions, except in cases of violence or imminent threat of damage, are still in effect. Inspections are on hold for the time being and waivers will likely be extended. Staff continues to review webinars, mailing lists, and other communications for the latest in industry-specific guidance related to COVID-19 risk management.

ROSS Program Updates

- There were 16 active participants (no newly-enrolled and no new contacts with non-enrolled residents). The community resource/info sharing bulletin board theme was breast cancer awareness.
- The annual plan was submitted at the end of October. During the 12-month period, 20% of participants were seeking help in obtaining furnishings or household items and another 20% were seeking access to food resources, such as the NAPS program.
- The Action Plan will be reviewed by staff this month with a goal to have a draft ready for board approval by the end of the year.
- Erik is working with local community service providers to host a flu shot clinic in November.
- The Senior Nutrition Assistance program had 27 residents participating this past month.
- Facebook Stats:
 - » Erik made 16 new posts on the ROSS Facebook page this past month that focused on breast cancer awareness, food resources, closures or adjusted availability for local resources/community service providers, and announcing a new resource board voting feature to hopefully increase engagement of North Star residents (which garnered 37 “sticker votes”).
 - » The posts reached 36 individuals and four people actually clicked through to follow links, but the posts received no additional likes or shares.

d. Executive Director Report:COVID-19

In response to the sharp rise of cases in our county, the City of Brainerd has closed its offices to the public and moved to a work-from-home model. HRA staff will continue working at the office with their doors closed and communicating as much as possible via phone or email. Board meetings will continue to be held virtually.

Destination Downtown Business Coalition Request

The DDBC is requesting funding for a downtown coordinator position that will be a liaison for the downtown businesses as well as creating and coordinating marketing material, social media engagement, and the planning of events in the downtown corridor. The group is currently seeking non-profit status through the State of Minnesota and expects this to be completed by year-end. They are requesting that the Brainerd HRA fund them at an amount of \$15,000. They will also be looking for funding from the Initiative Foundation as well as the Brainerd EDA. Historically, the board has designated funds for downtown initiatives.

The board agreed the initiative was worth exploring and had a discussion about the proposed downtown coordinator position. They were aware that in the past there had been efforts or individuals who held similar positions but wanted to know more information. And because the 2021 budget had already been established and adopted, they asked Charpentier to inform the DDBC they will not be funding the position for 2021 but will consider their request in future discussions. In the meantime, Charpentier offered to research what has been done in the past.

- e. **Rehab Update:** Updates on the rehab programs as well as the Brainerd Oaks/Serene Pines Developments were provided to the Board.
- 9. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:** Nothing to report.
- 10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chair Larson declared the meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Charpentier
Executive Director