

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Elkhart Housing Authority
September 19, 2024

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority, City of Elkhart met in regular attendance at 4:30 p.m.; on Thursday, September 19, 2024.

Board Members present: Willie Brown, Loria Mayes, Dan Boecher, Helenia Robinson, and Cynthia Billings

Board Members present via dial-in: None.

Staff members present: Angelia Washington, Todd Fielder, Erik Mathavan, Amy Gonzalez, Julie Stebbins, Alicia Kimble, Tasha Andrews, Nekisha Roberson, Stephanie McMorris, Tiphany Trivet, Teri Ivory, and Morgan Gibson-Day.

Harris Law Firm Attorney present: Nick Snow

Audience members present: None.

❖ **Audience Concerns:** None.

❖ **Approval of Minutes**

Exhibit A — Approval of Meeting Minutes — August 29, 2024, Regular Meeting

All commissioners present voted to approve the August 29, 2024, meeting minutes.

❖ **Approval of Vouchers**

Exhibit B — Approval of Vouchers — August 29, 2024

All commissioners present voted to approve the August 29, 2024, vouchers.

❖ **Executive Director's Report**

Exhibit C — Executive Director's Report

- **Human Resources:** Angelia reported three new hires, James MacDonald, Groundskeeper, Stephanie McMorris, Asset Property Manager, and Terri Nelson, Interim Intake Specialist, and three ended employment, Kevin Coomes, Tony Smith, and James MacDonald.

Angelia stated that we are still short-staffed in the maintenance department, but our public housing department is fully staffed. Commissioner Robinson asked if we did exit interviews and if there was a common reason people quit. Angelia said that we conduct exit interviews when we can, some people just turn in their keys and leave.. She said that she makes sure that HR clearly communicates during the hiring process. Angelia introduced Olesia to the board. She said that she is our only current custodian, and she takes care of all of our buildings including the main office. She said that Olesia is very hard-working and dedicated. Commissioner Billings agreed.

- **Comprehensive Improvements:**

Scattered Sites: No work during this time.

Riverside Terrace: R. Yoder commenced the kitchen upgrade project to replace and upgrade the first five selected units with new kitchen cabinets, countertops, sink basin, faucet, kitchen plumbing, and range hood. Erik stated that he has gotten the wait time down to one week.

Washington Gardens: The City of Elkhart provided a certification of occupancy for the newly rehabilitated 334-A Chapman Ave. burn unit. Angelia informed the board that directly across the street from 334 Chapman A, she had to take 335 Chapman A offline due to a car crashing into the building it is structurally unsound for habitation but hopefully it will not be offline as long. She said that she directed Erik to go after the responsible person's insurance for the repair costs. Commissioner Brown asked if it was a resident that hit the building. Erik said no, it was a resident's visitor. Angelia said that maintenance has gone in to make sure that it is safe for the surrounding units. She said that she will continue to provide the board with updates.

Waterfall High-Rise: Schwartz Electric continued work on the fire panel upgrade with the installation of new conduit and speaker boxes on floors 2 through 7. EJ White commenced the enhancement work of the boiler room to provide for needed combustion air and venting modifications for adequate draft control to the boilers and water heater.

Rosedale High-Rise: EJ White commenced work on the expansion tank replacement, new water heater installation, and new water heater control installation.

COCC: No work during this time.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Angelia reported for the month of August, 55 Annual Certifications were completed, 67 Interim Certifications Completed, 2 Unit transfers, 5 New Admissions and Absorbed Incoming Portabilities, 7 End of Participations, 42 Applications Remaining in Process, 678 Lease Ups on the last day of August and 92% Lease-Up Percentage.
- **Family Self Sufficiency Programs:** Angelia reported the Family Self Sufficiency program is currently serving 54 participants of which 32 participants are currently employed, 4 participants are attending college, 6 participants are disabled or unable to work, 21 participants are currently earning escrow, \$6,342 earned in escrow funds in August, and \$172,703.22 total current escrow balance. EHA partnered with the YWCA to sponsor Financial Literacy classes for FSS participants. Six participants completed the course. Upon completion, participants may receive up to \$100 as an incentive and access to a secure loan through Lake City Bank. Commissioner Brown asked if this was a one-time thing or if we were doing it monthly. Amy said that it will not necessarily be monthly, but we are going to continue to do it. She said that this month it was only open to FSS participants, but they want to open it up to all public housing and HCV participants as well. She said that they will have another class next month called "Getting Ahead" and this class focuses on choosing the mindset of poverty. Angelia said that they also want to train staff so that they can help our program participants map out goals for self-sufficiency and homeownership so that they can be credit-ready for all of the redevelopment that takes place so that our public housing and HCV participants can get out of subsidized housing. Commissioner Boecher asked who was providing the counseling. Amy said that the YWCA was providing it.
- **Public Housing:** Angelia reported Rosedale's Occupancy rate for the month of August is 95%, Washington Gardens Occupancy rate for the month of August is 95%, Waterfall Occupancy rate for the month of August is 94%, Scattered-Sites Occupancy rate for the month of August is 95% and Riverside's Occupancy rate for the month of August is 97%. Angelia went on to say Public Housing's overall Occupancy rate for the month of August is 95%. She also stated that public housing received 58 applications, mailed 75 orientation letters, processed 113 applications, approved 23 applications, denied 181 applications, and 5 applications were withdrawn. We received no homeless applications, and 2 application(s) were approved and waiting for an available unit. Angelia reported there were 25 new admissions and 11 move-outs in August.

- **Maintenance:** Angelia reported that 11 move-outs were received and nine were completed, two emergency requests were received and completed, 755 tenant requests were received and 750 were completed; and there were 401 annual inspections received and 30 completed, totaling 791 completed work orders. Commissioner Mayes asked what a work order was. Angelia stated that a work order is a maintenance request by the tenant, they can call it in, or they can send it in electronically. She said when the managers go out and do inspections, they may see a deficiency and that would be a manager-requested work order. She said a lot of the work orders from last month were from the NSPIRE inspections. She said that we have to complete emergency work orders within 24 hours, non-urgent work orders have to be completed within 60-90 days and then we had tenant-requested work orders that had nothing to do with NSPIRE.

Commissioner Billings asked if we could use some tenants to fulfill our Section 3 requirements as well as resolve the issue of having only one custodian. Angelia said that the position offered would be full-time for Section 3 and she is constantly looking for residents. Commissioner Billings stated that she and Angelia previously discussed hiring tenants who were on social security or disability for part-time work. Angelia stated that we have a couple of part-time positions, and we have a couple of temps, but our custodian positions have always been full-time. She said that the FSS coordinator keeps a databank of all our residents, and she tracks their skills and qualifications, she works with Teri Ivory, and she contacts them if they meet the requirements of the job.

- **Financials and Write-Offs:** Angelia contacted Rick from Loucks and Schwartz via speakerphone. She asked Rick to give an update on the EHA's financials to the board. Commissioner Boecher asked Rick if there was anything that was not tracking or seemed unusual. Rick said that he looked at the June submission which included three months and on the board summary report for the AMPs, there are losses reported for each. He said in total there is a net loss of \$599,000 for those three months and a cash decrease in the amount of \$487,000. Commissioner Boecher asked Angelia if this was concerning since we are waiting on a CFP grant or additional operating subsidies. He said that once they complete July and August, we will know more. Commissioner Brown stated that the figure is huge, He asked if the grants will even that number out. Angelia reminded the board that we normally have losses throughout the year and at the end of the year, we receive grants that offset the losses. She said that HUD requires us to have a profit value of at least a dollar at the end of the year, but she will not know anything until after the fee accountant has gone over everything. She said that there were things that were not recorded before Jessica's departure and now the fee accountant is trying to reconcile those numbers. Rick stated that equity-wise, the EHA is in a strong financial position and there might be some timing differences with some of the revenues that have not been shown yet from grants. Commissioner Mayes asked Rick which months he pulled this information from. Rick said that this information was taken from April, May, and June, just the cumulative numbers. Angelia said that Patricia was still working on the August report. Rick said that those reports should be coming within the next couple of weeks. He asked Rick from his perspective if there was anything he had seen that would cause concern outside of the typical ebbs and flows of our cash. Rick said that he had not seen anything that would cause concern. Angelia added that she asked Rick the same question and she also asked if she needed to bring in a forensic accountant. She said that she was told no, there are no warnings or red flags. Rick informed the board that this is what his company specializes in, and they have over 300 housing authority clientele in 15 states so if things do pop up that are out of the norm that would come to their attention. Commissioner Boecher said that his spreadsheet says the year-to-date is \$557,000. Rick was unable to pull up the spreadsheet that Commissioner Boecher was referring to. Commissioner Boecher said that he just wanted to know if there was a discrepancy. Angelia said that she would have to compare the Loucks and Schwartz report with what she sent the commissioners from Julie. She said that they could have special meetings until things are reconciled.

❖ **Old Business:**

- **NSPIRE Inspection Report**

Angelia stated that at the last board meeting Commissioner Robinson asked about the differences in the scoring classifications on the NSPIRE report. She said that she contacted her NSPIRE contact at the Indianapolis HUD field office, and they need to research and get back to her on that. She said as soon as she hears back from them, she will forward the information to the board. Angelia stated that the \$124,500 grant that we received yesterday will go towards helping some of the deficiencies from the NSPIRE inspections. She said that we plan to buy tamper-proof CO2 smoke detectors and that will help us to avoid getting the same type of deficiencies on our next NSPIRE inspection. Commissioner Boecher asked if these smoke detectors were moved by the tenants or if they had issues with batteries. Angelia said no, this is a new requirement. She said that we are required to have smoke detectors in all bedrooms now. Commissioner Boecher asked if there was any overall concern about failing future NSPIRE inspections. Angelia said no, not according to the preliminary inspection score but she will know for sure when the HUD NSPIRE contact gets back with her. She said that she hopes to hear from them no later than tomorrow.

- **Riverside Terrace Parking Lot Lights**

Angelia stated that all the parking lot lights at Riverside have been restored. She said when she contacted AEP, the day after the last board meeting, they informed her that they made their repairs the day of the board meeting. She said that she is relying on the residents to report any issues since the lights do not come on until after hours.

- **Interlocal Agreement Between Elkhart Housing Authority and the City of Elkhart for Policing Services and Use of Facilities**

Commissioner Robinson asked if it was our choice or the police department's choice to change the agreement from one year to five years. Angelia stated that is how long HUD allows a unit to be offline. She said that this agreement was drawn up by our attorney and then it was forwarded to the Elkhart Police Department for their attorneys to review and she included the current draft in the board packet. She informed the board that they could make changes since nothing has been finalized yet. Commissioner Robinson stated that if the relationship was unhappy, five years was a long time to be locked in. She further stated that she thinks that there should be an annual review because if the services are subpar, now we are locked in with no choice. Attorney Snow stated that the next provision says that it can be terminated for any reason upon notice. He said that he does not always favor longer terms of agreement but in this case, there is no financial commitment, the EHA and the Elkhart Police Department would share resources and services, and it is very easy to get out of. He further stated that this is a formalized agreement between two governmental agencies to share services and the only provision is if we cancel it, we have to provide them adequate time to get their things and vacate the space. Commissioner Robinson said that she is good with the added provision (number 11). Angelia said that once the board has reviewed it, they can decide if they want her to agree, but she has not heard back from the Elkhart Police Department's attorney yet. Attorney Snow stated that the police department sent them a redlined version and it should be a relatively quick review. Commissioner Billings asked for more time to review the agreement. Attorney Snow stated that the board would need to authorize Angelia to sign and execute the agreement whenever they were ready. The board agreed to approve the agreement once they received the final version.

- **Redevelopment**

Angelia stated that she did not know if everyone got a chance to look at the Cairo, Egypt information that she sent to everyone. She said that she received it late notice, but the trip will be on November 3-8. She said that she plans to attend even if she has to pay out of pocket. She said that she would like to explore Cairo's redevelopment efforts

along with other housing authorities. She said that if anyone else wants to attend, it would be nice to fly together. Commissioner Mayes asked Angelia if she knew the total cost of the trip. Angelia stated that the trip is through the World Urban Foundation, and they have sent information on approved hotels and flights. She said that the lowest flight she was able to find round trip was \$700 and there were about 20 different hotels that they approved for a discount. She said that she will forward that information to everyone. Angelia stated that the executive director of the Anderson Housing Authority is going, and she calculated her total cost to be around \$3000. She said that she will have all of the information sent to the commissioners after tonight's meeting.

- **HUD Visit**

Angelia informed the board that she received a surprise visit from HUD's Indiana Director of Public Housing, Bruce Nzerem. She said that he emailed her last night informing her that he would be stopping in for a visit today. She said that she did not know what the visit would consist of. She said that once he arrived, he stated that he just wanted to see how things were going. She said that they talked about several things and the main thing was our redevelopment efforts and what progress we have made. Angelia stated that Bruce suggested speaking with the Fort Wayne Housing Authority to see what consultant they used for their choice neighborhoods initiative. She said that Fort Wayne was already awarded the planning grant, and the implementation grant, and he thought that their consultant did a good job. Angelia said that Bruce did ask about board membership, she said that the commissioner bylaws state that any time there is a vacancy, the board will make a recommendation to the mayor. She said that Bruce did ask her to reach out to the mayor because we were not in compliance due to the number of board members we have. She said that the next member will need to be a Republican. Angelia further stated that she and Bruce talked about the EHA's capital funds and that we have over 5 million dollars that we need to decide how to use because HUD is coming in and recapturing funds from housing authorities who did not use the money, and giving it to housing authorities that they deem as troubled. She informed the commissioners that we would have more upcoming projects.

Commissioner Billings asked Angelia if she thought that Riverside would ever get central air conditioning. Angelia said that she would have to explore that option because she does not know what it would entail. She said that when we have our resident advisory meetings where we discuss the five-year plan, she asked Commissioner Billings to attend, and it could be discussed then. Commissioner Robinson asked if we could use the money to help with the trash chute issues. Angelia stated that we have looked into replacing the trash chute system. Todd said that there is not an issue with the system, but it is more of an issue with residents putting things in the trash chute that they should not be like box fans, umbrellas, and broomsticks. Angelia stated that we also determined that we would have to reconfigure the building to make it wider but at what point do the size of the items that are being thrown down there stop increasing. Angelia informed the commissioners that we found a trash chute cleaning company. Todd said that he spoke with them, and he is waiting on a proposal. Commissioner Robinson asked Angelia what residents have been instructed to do to get rid of large items. Angelia stated that residents have been instructed to take their large items downstairs to the dumpster, but they do not always do that. Angelia further stated that it is hard to determine who put the large item(s) in the trash chute unless they see the person doing it and it is time-consuming to look through the surveillance videos. Commissioner Boecher stated that we have a lot of needs, and he would put that on the list. Angelia said that we can do an independent cost estimate so that we will have that cost available to us when we start planning. She said that we will need to move the

December board meeting up due to the five-year plan and the annual plan being due for submission. She asked Erik to do an independent cost estimate for air conditioning installation at Riverside.

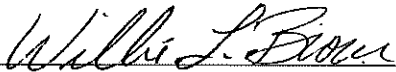
❖ **New Business:**

• **Resolution 24:18 – A Resolution to Award the Contract for Sanitary Line Replacement at Banneker Heights**

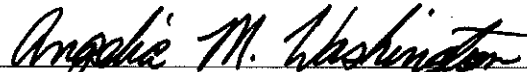
Erik stated that the scope of work entails replacing the sanitary line from the kitchen to the main sanitary line that traverses 24 units at Banneker Heights and removal and replacement of the concrete sidewalk as needed for the installation of the new line. He said that they are also replacing the kitchen sinks, drain piping, and shut-off valves for each of the 24 units. Erik said that the line has been decomposing and Todd's team has been making repairs on a one-on-one basis and it has been costing up to \$13,000 per unit once the contractor comes out. He said that this project was bid out, but he only got one bidder and that was Griffin. He said that the base bid was \$263,925 and each unit is around \$11,000 which is about a 12% savings. Todd said that they have been dealing with grease and various things being poured down the sinks into the main line, and it backs up everything. He said that they started hooking the kitchen sink up to the main line separately. He said that it is going from the house to the main line, so you do not have the backup into the main unit.

❖ **Adjournment**

Commissioner Willie Brown without any objections declared the September 19, 2024, Board of Commissioners' meeting adjourned at 5:34 P.M.



Willie Brown, Commissioner
October 17, 2024



Angela Washington, Executive Director
October 17, 2024