

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Elkhart Housing Authority
June 17, 2021

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority, City of Elkhart met in regular attendance at 4:30 p.m.; on Thursday, June 17, 2021, in person and via Conference call.

Board Members present: Dan Boecher, Kristen Smole, Helenia Robinson, Lefate Owens, and Kristyn Hammond

Staff members present: Angelia Washington, Amy Gonzalez, Clarence Jones, Mitch Craven, Jessica Brittain, Charlotte Pettis, Teri Ivory, and Morgan Gibson

Audience members present: None

❖ **Audience Concerns:** None

❖ **Approval of Minutes**

Exhibit A — Approval of Meeting Minutes — May 20, 2021, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Lefate Owens motioned to approve the minutes from the May 20, 2021, regular meeting. Commissioner Kristyn Hammond seconded the motion. All Commissioners present unanimously voted to approve the May 20, 2021, regular meeting minutes.

❖ **Approval of Vouchers**

Exhibit B — Approval of Vouchers — May 20, 2021

Commissioner Hammond motioned to approve the vouchers for May 20, 2021, Commissioner Lefate Owens seconded the motion. All Commissioners present unanimously voted to approve the May 20, 2021, vouchers.

❖ **Executive Director's Report**

Exhibit C — Executive Director's Report

- **Human Resources:** Angelia reported 3 new hires, Ashanti James, (Receptionist), Zachery Clark, (Groundskeeper), and Thalia Garcia, (Intake Specialist), 1 retirement Christine Tack, and 4 ends of employment, Derrick Nelms, Emma Breckinridge, Dexter Casson, and Melissa Osler.

Commissioner Boecher asked Angelia how many positions the EHA has open right now. She stated we have about 8. Teri Ivory stated we have between 8-10 open positions. Angelia stated that she has asked Teri to create youth employment opportunities for our public housing youths and any youth that would be interested. She stated she hopes to hire some as seasonal groundskeepers.

- **Comprehensive Improvements:**

Scattered Sites: The bidding opportunity for the sixth, and final phase of bathroom renovations has been published and will be in next month's Board packet for consideration. This will fully renovate bathrooms in the 15 remaining homes.

Riverside Terrace: No work, at this time.

Washington Gardens: Plans for the new playgrounds are nearly complete and we expect to have a bidding opportunity published shortly.

Commissioner Boecher asked if Forum Architects was commissioned to do the playground at Washington Gardens. Mitch responded yes.

Waterfall High-Rise: The elevator modernization project is nearing completion; only ancillary adjustments remain. Both new elevators are in service.

Rosedale High-Rise: No work at this time

COCC: All Housing Authority, City of Elkhart insurance policies have been renewed and are in force, with continued savings on Worker's Compensation.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Angelia reported for the month of May, 60 Annual Certifications were completed, 51 Interim Certifications Completed, 6 Unit transfers, 4 New Admissions and Absorbed Incoming Portabilities, 8 End of Participations, 40 Applications Remaining in Process, 672 Lease Ups on the last day of May and 92% Lease-Up Percentage.
- **Family Self Sufficiency Programs:** Angelia reported the Family Self Sufficiency program is currently serving 66 participants in which 33 participants are currently employed, 4 participants are enrolled in GED/HSE education programs, 13 participants are attending college, 3 participants are enrolled in job training programs, 16 participants are disabled or unable to work. 16 participants are currently earning escrow, \$3,328 earned in escrow funds in May, and \$100,637 total current escrow balance.
- **Public Housing:** Angelia reported Rosedale's Occupancy rate for the month of May is 98.04%, Washington Gardens Occupancy rate for the month of May is 93.43%, Waterfall Occupancy rate for the month of May is 95.28%, Scattered-Sites Occupancy rate for the month of May is 100% and Riverside's Occupancy rate for the month of May is 95.24%. Angelia went on to say Public Housing's overall Occupancy rate for the month of May is 95.83%. She also stated that public housing received 115 applications, mailed 100 orientation letters, were processing 36 applications, approved 16 applications, denied three applications, withdrew 75 applications. We received 16 homeless applications and 1 application was approved and waiting for an available unit. Angelia reported there were 11 new admissions and 15 move-outs in May.
- **Maintenance:** Angelia reported that 15 move-outs were received and 12 were completed, 15 emergency requests received and completed, 287 tenant requests received and 279 completed; and there were 34 annual inspections received and 27 completed, totaling 333 completed work orders.

Angelia stated we are short-staffed in our maintenance department which makes it more difficult to get units turned over quickly. She further stated that 5 applicants turned down Washington Gardens citing safety concerns. She stated we are trying to resolve issues by partnering with the Elkhart Police Department and give them direct access to our surveillance cameras. Commissioner Boecher asked for clarification on the application process. He stated when applicants apply, do they apply for one particular AMP. Angelia responded no. She stated once our units become vacant, we must offer the oldest vacant unit because we lose funding if units are vacant for 60 days or more.

- **Financials and Write-Offs:** Jessica Brittain announced for the month of May, Rosedale high-rise earned \$28,213.70 in Revenue and \$16,562.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Rosedale high-rise had \$37,178.67 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Rosedale high-rise had a profit for the month of May in the amount of \$7,597.03. The overall view for the year,

Rosedale earned \$40,994.00 in Revenue and the expenses were \$36,396.00. The net position YTD is \$4,598.00.

Jessica announced for the month of May, Washington Gardens earned \$15,564.67 in Revenue and \$72,097.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Washington Gardens had \$70,906.18 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Washington Gardens had a profit for the month of May in the amount of \$16,755.49. The overall view for the year, Washington Gardens earned \$88,968.00 in Revenue and the expenses were \$75,759.00. The net position YTD is \$13,209.00.

Jessica announced for the month of May, Waterfall high-rise earned \$30,909.00 in Revenue and \$21,983.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Waterfall high-rise had \$38,121.28 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Waterfall high-rise had a profit for the month of May in the amount of \$14,770.72. The overall view for the year, Waterfall earned \$45,672.00 in Revenue and the expenses were \$37,639.00. The net position YTD is \$8,033.00.

Jessica announced for the month of May, Scattered Sites earned \$18,786.81 in Revenue and \$36,621.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Scattered Sites had \$66,856.04 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Scattered Sites had a loss for the month of May in the amount of \$11,448.23. The net position year to date is \$26,275.00.

Jessica announced for the month of May, Riverside high-rise earned \$35,450.75 in Revenue and \$22,425.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Riverside high-rise had \$42,446.28 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Riverside high-rise had a profit for the month of May in the amount of \$15,429.47. The overall view for the year, Riverside earned \$48,875.00 in Revenue and the expenses were \$40,146.00. The net position YTD is \$8,729.00.

Jessica announced for the month of May, COCC earned \$95,103.57 in Revenue. Jessica went on to say the COCC had \$109,528.68 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported the COCC had a loss for the month of May in the amount of (\$14,425.11). The overall view for the year, COCC earned \$92,073.00 and the expenses were \$135,202.00. The net position YTD is (\$43,129.00).

Jessica announced HCV had a loss for the month of May, in the amount of (\$61,813.08). The net position YTD is \$20,989.00.

Commissioner Boecher asked Jessica why Rosedale was doing better with past-due rent collections than the other AMP's. Jessica stated we had staff going door to door and there were a lot of residents that paid their rent ahead. Commissioner Hammond stated she believed a lot of rent delinquencies would be paid once child tax credit checks were dispersed on July 15. Commissioner Boecher asked Jessica if she had any concerns about her financial comments. Jessica stated we did some concealments with PPP loans. She stated she reviewed it to see if anyone had an increase in income. This could have added to back charges now that people are paying, she stated. She further stated there was a \$19,000 charge to amp 264 that was not in the budget. We received a shortfall funding for HCV that we are just now using, Jessica stated. Angelia stated the rent moratorium is not scheduled to end until July 31st. She stated the courts will not do anything about nonpayment of rent while the moratorium is in place. She stated unfortunately, there will be some people facing eviction because they have not paid their rent if the moratorium is not extended further. Commissioner Smole asked Angelia if communications have gone out to our residents regarding the moratorium end date. Angelia stated yes, we sent out flyers and made phone calls informing residents. Jessica stated we have a list of people we sent help to, and a lot has come in and made payment arrangements. Commissioner Boecher asked if we were treating these situations as if a resident shows a good faith effort with

maintaining their rent, will we try to work with them. Angelia stated yes and tenants are aware of their recourse with the moratorium on rent payments. Commissioner Boecher asked Jessica how the delinquent rents compare to rent delinquencies pre-COVID-19. Jessica stated to Commissioner Boecher that she could get that information for him. He stated he would like to see if the rent moratorium affected the current delinquencies. Commissioner Hammond stated that she knows people who are taking advantage of benefits from COVID-19 such as the rent moratorium. She stated people are not paying their rent because they do not have to. Commissioner Boecher and Jessica agreed it was good to see the numbers going down for the last few months.

❖ **Old Business:**

• **Redevelopment Options**

Angelia stated that she, Commissioner Boecher, Commissioner Smole, and Jessica had a meeting with HUD field office staff to see what our options are for redevelopment. She stated they were advised to do a Physical Needs Assessment. She discovered that one has not been done since 2008. Angelia stated this is a good idea, it would give a clear picture of where the EHA is, what the remaining useful life of the properties is, and where we need to extend our capital funds. She stated she and Jessica are going to get started as soon as possible. She stated they must do that before they can move on to the next step. She stated a lot of it is new to her and she would have to become familiar with it. Commissioner Boecher stated this is where we hire an architectural engineering firm to do a physical assessment, they would make recommendations for improvements. Angelia stated she was hoping to also do a Green Needs Assessment. She stated it was recommended they use someone familiar with HUD standards. Additional conversation took place regarding the different options the field office staff recommended for redevelopment. Commissioner Smole asked Angelia to include her in the next meeting with HUD if she can.

❖ **New Business:**

• **Executive Compensation Study**

Angelia stated Congress has ruled that executive employees of public housing authorities cannot exceed a cap of \$164,000. She stated we must show HUD that we are adhering to this law by conducting an Executive Salary Study included in the Board packet. She stated she assumed the same salary as former Executive Director, Terry Walker when she was appointed as the new Executive Director. She further stated that the second-highest-paid employee is Todd Fielder who is within the approved salary range, and she announced that Jessica Brittain has been promoted to Deputy Director. The report shows that Jessica's salary is below standards so her pay will have to be increased. Angelia informed Commissioner Boecher that he must review and sign the study before it is submitted to HUD by the end of the fiscal year as required. Angelia stated that Jessica will serve as both Finance Director and Deputy Director. Commissioner Boecher stated he would sign the study after he thoroughly reviews it.

• **Fair Housing Claims**

Angelia stated that when she assumed the role of Interim Executive Director, several Fair Housing claims were sitting on Terry Walker's desk. She stated she was unsure of how those claims were being handled when Terry fell ill but the conciliation offers from Fair Housing appeared to be reasonable and she negotiated and settled them. She stated there is currently one claim in which the claimant and her neighbor engaged in a fistfight that was video taped and the video was sent to management who filed for eviction of both parties after due process.

Angelia stated a Fair Housing claim was filed by one of the residents from the fight who moved out and claims she was structurally evicted due to colorism. Angelia further explained that both parties are African American, and both were processed for eviction following the same standard guidelines. The claimant moved under threat of eviction for another matter and the other party decided to have her day in court regarding the fight. Angelia stated that the Human Relations Commission contends that no evictions should have taken place during the Federal Rent Eviction Moratorium. Angelia stated that the residents were filed for eviction because of their criminal activities which are permissible irrespective of the Rent Eviction Moratorium. She further said she is going to push back on these types of claims to send a message that violence will not be tolerated in our community. She also stated that she hopes to rebrand Washington Gardens as a safe place to live. Angelia stated that she has sought legal counsel to represent the EHA in this claim and is awaiting a call from the attorney. Commissioner Boecher asked Angelia what our typical standard operating procedure is when litigation is threatened. Angelia stated that it depends on the level of litigation. Staff handle routine eviction procedures and legal counsel is sought for extraordinary circumstances. Angelia stated she was unaware that the Human Rights Commission's attorney would be present at the interview she was invited to, to discuss the colorism claim but she will retain legal counsel moving forward if she believes a conciliation request is unfair to the Elkhart Housing Authority. Commissioner Smole asked if the HRC was representing this client. Angelia responded yes; they are.

- **Payroll Protection Loans**

Angelia stated several of our Public Housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher clients applied for the Federal Payroll Protection (PPP) loans. She stated that she has directed staff to meet with them to determine whether they have unreported income from a legitimate business or what additional steps to take such as reporting them to the OIG for investigation. She stated if they do not provide 2 years of tax returns for their business, a statement of profit and losses, or a police report claiming identity theft, we will move to evict. Commissioner Hammond asked how much time residents had to provide this information. Angelia stated we are giving them until June 30th. Commissioner Boecher asked how many residents we are talking about. Clarence Jones stated he had about 25 residents listed in public housing. Amy Gonzalez stated she had about 25-30 clients listed in HCV. Commissioner Boecher stated he was surprised by the high number. Angelia stated she wanted to make the Board aware in case they started to see an increase in move-outs. She also stated she believes once residents are aware that we are aware of the loans and the rent moratorium ends, they will pay their past due charges. She stated many public housing loan recipients have already moved out.

- **Resolution 21:09- A Resolution to Extend the Contract for our Annual Audit to Velma Butler & Company LTD.**

Commissioner Boecher motioned to approve a resolution to extend the contract for our annual audit to Velma Butler & Company LTD and Commissioner Smole seconded. All commissioners present unanimously voted to approve resolution 21:08.

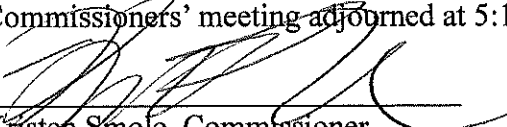
Commissioner Boecher stated he received a call from Clarence Thomas yesterday asking about the EHA's parking lot again. He stated he told him he would have to make a formal request starting with staff and present at the Board meeting with details such as time and date of activity. Angelia asked if anyone knew when the renovations were set to begin. Commissioner Boecher stated about a year. Angelia stated she had been contacted about sitting on the Board, however, she has not had her interview yet.

❖ **Handouts**

- NAHRO Monitor – May 30, 2021
- PHADA Advocate – May 26, 2021, & June 9, 2021

❖ **Adjournment**

Commissioner Dan Boecher, without any objections, declared the June 17, 2021, Board of Commissioners' meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.



Kristen Smole, Commissioner
July 15, 2021



Angelia Washington, Executive Director