

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Elkhart Housing Authority
April 18, 2024

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority, City of Elkhart met in regular attendance at 4:30 p.m.; on Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Board Members present: Willie Brown, Loria Mayes, Dan Boecher, Kristen Smole, and Cynthia Billings
Board Members present via dial-in: None.

Staff members present: Angelia Washington, Todd Fielder, Erik Mathavan, Amy Gonzalez, Tiphany Travet, Jessica Brittain, Tasha Andrews, 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 — March 28, 2024, Regular Meeting

All commissioners present voted to approve the March 28, 2024, meeting minutes.

❖ **Approval of Vouchers**

Exhibit B — Approval of Vouchers — March 28, 2024

All commissioners present voted to approve the March 28, 2024, vouchers.

❖ **Executive Director's Report**

Exhibit C — Executive Director's Report

- **Human Resources:** Angelia reported 3 new hires, Ariana Chism, Recertification Specialist, Phillip Schrock, General Maintenance Technician, and Danielle Gilbert, PH Intake Specialist, and no ends of employment.

- **Comprehensive Improvements:**

Scattered Sites: No work during this time.

Riverside Terrace: Edward J. White commenced work to remove and replace one of the two HVAC 1st-floor rooftop units.

Washington Gardens: ServPro continued the rehabilitation work of the 334-A-Chapman Ave burn unit. Specifically, they completed the painting of the interior unit walls.

Waterfall High-Rise: Vermillion Systems installed 5 additional outdoor cameras as part of the FY2022 Waterfall Security Grant project.

Rosedale High-Rise: No work during this time.

COCC: No work during this time.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Angelia reported for the month of March, 58 Annual Certifications were completed, 50 Interim Certifications Completed, 7 Unit transfers, 3 New

Admissions and Absorbed Incoming Portabilities, 10 End of Participations, 57 Applications Remaining in Process, 693 Lease Ups on the last day of March and 94% 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, 5 participants are attending college, 1 participant is enrolled in a job training program, 4 participants are disabled or unable to work. 19 participants are currently earning escrow, \$8,739 earned in escrow funds in March, and \$157,099.28 total current escrow balance.
- **Public Housing:** Angelia reported Rosedale's Occupancy rate for the month of March is 92.08%, Washington Gardens Occupancy rate for the month of February is 94.82%, Waterfall Occupancy rate for the month of March is 93.65%, Scattered-Sites Occupancy rate for the month of March is 96.4% and Riverside's Occupancy rate for the month of March is 99.32%. Angelia went on to say Public Housing's overall Occupancy rate for the month of February is 99.32%. She also stated that public housing received 68 applications, mailed - orientation letters, processed 1 application, approved - applications, denied - application, and no applications were withdrawn. We received -homeless applications, and 0 application(s) were approved and waiting for an available unit. Angelia reported there were 6 new admissions and 17 move-outs in March.

Angelia informed commissioners that the EHA has not been able to meet their occupancy goals recently due to staffing. She said the new public housing director was just hired in February and the new public housing intake specialist was just hired on March 20. She said that they both are coming along great. She stated that she spoke with staff about the need to meet our occupancy goals yesterday and one of the concerns was applicants refusing unit offers. She stated this may have been fueled by a recent negative social media post by a city council member. She informed the commissioners that we are working hard to reduce the stigma of public housing and she believes staff is doing a great job. She further stated that she anticipates seeing occupancy numbers increase this month. Angelia stated that some information is missing from the public housing report due to Alicia still learning how to compile that report. Commissioner Smole asked Angelia how many of the maintenance holds she anticipates that we will have a harder time flipping. Todd stated that there are currently a lot of extermination issues, and units cannot be released until the problem has been addressed. He further stated that they have encountered more damages when flipping units which is concerning because they are understaffed. Commissioner Brown asked Todd how many men they were down. Todd said that they are short four maintenance techs. Todd said that he has a couple of interviews scheduled for this week. Angelia added that we have had some pest control issues, but we just made an offer to an in-house exterminator and she is hoping that will help to turn pest concerns around.

- **Maintenance:** Angelia reported that 17 move-outs were received and 10 were completed, 6 emergency requests received and completed, 363 tenant requests received and 358 were completed; and there were 36 annual inspections received and 36 completed, totaling 410 completed work orders.
- **Financials and Write-Offs:** Jessica Brittain reported for the month of March, Rosedale high-rise earned \$25,734.00 in Revenue and \$21,599.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Rosedale high-rise had \$74,801.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Rosedale high-rise had a loss for the month of March in the amount of \$(27,468.00). The previous past due rent was \$1,301.00, and the current past due rent is \$5,625.00. The increase in past due rent is \$(4,324.00).

Jessica reported for the month of March, Washington Gardens earned \$5,696.00 in Revenue and \$119,236.24 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Washington Gardens had \$138,010.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Washington Gardens had a loss for the month of March in the amount of \$13,077.76. The previous past due rent was \$21,197.00 and the current past due rent is 17,129.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$4,068.00.

Jessica reported for the month of March, Waterfall high-rise earned \$33,013.00 in Revenue and \$62,545.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Waterfall high-rise had \$95,599.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Waterfall high-rise had a loss for the month of March in the amount of \$(41.00). The previous past due rent was \$11,560.00 and the current past due rent is \$11,841.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$(281.00).

Jessica reported for the month of March, Scattered Sites earned \$2,260.00 in Revenue and \$37,277.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Scattered Sites had \$33,912.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Scattered Sites had a profit for the month of March in the amount of \$5,625.00. The previous past due rent was \$8,207.00 and the current past due rent is \$4,534.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$3,673.00. Commissioner Boecher asked Jessica about Scattered Sites having a dwelling rental of -121 for the month which seems unbelievably low. Jessica said that it was probably because of the utility reimbursement checks that went out. She said that those checks are calculated into our rent.

Jessica reported for the month of March, Riverside high-rise earned \$28,583.00 in Revenue and \$30,450.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Riverside high-rise had \$80,873.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Riverside high-rise had a loss for the month of March in the amount of \$(21,840.00). The previous past due rent was \$1,701.00, and the current past due rent is \$5,608.00. The increase in past due rent is \$(3,907.00).

Jessica reported for the month of March, COCC earned \$183,636.00 in Revenue. Jessica went on to say the COCC had \$158,634.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported the COCC had a profit for the month of March in the amount of \$41,854.00.

Jessica reported HCV had a profit for the month of March, in the amount of \$16,839.00. The net position YTD is \$199,171.00.

❖ **Old Business:** None

❖ **New Business:**

• **Annual Board Elections**

Commissioner Boecher nominated Willie Brown for board chair and Commissioner Smole seconded. There were no other nominations for board chair. A vote was taken, and all commissioners present voted to elect Willie Brown as board chair. Commissioner Boecher nominated Kristen Smole for vice chair and Commissioner Brown seconded. All commissioners present voted to elect Kristen Smole as vice chair.

• **NSPIRE Standards**

Angelia reported that HUD has mandated major program changes for all housing authorities and thanked the board for their support and encouragement to attend training. She said that the first change is the National Standards for the Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) which created new standards by which public housing properties and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rentals will be scored. She said that the inspections, formerly known as REAC, are conducted by HUD approved inspectors to make sure that we still qualify for federal funding and that we meet fair housing requirements. She said that HUD changed the inspection process to now focus more on health and safety conditions inside of units as opposed to exterior conditions. She said that these inspections will be more thorough, to ensure that units are up to safety code and that there are no life-threatening hazards. She stated that the manual that she provided to commissioners would give them some examples of what inspectors will be looking for. Todd added that REAC used to focus 60% on the exterior and the rest inside. He said with NSPIRE,

65% is inside the unit and the rest is on the exterior. He said they use a point system, and one unit could cost you ten points. He stated that with REAC, the most you could get on a unit was 3.2 points regardless of interior damage. He said with NSPIRE you could get 20+ points inside a unit. He said that they will also be focusing on housekeeping a little more. Todd further stated that we could get pointed due to the tenant's clutter because it's a fire hazard. He said that the inspectors will conduct a sampling of units. If there are 100 units, they may randomly inspect 23-25 units. But a tenant can refuse to let them in. Todd said that inspectors will now ask the resident council for unit inspection recommendations. He further stated that if inspectors entered a unit whose gas and electricity were shut off that morning, we would receive points for that unit. Commissioner Mayes asked what could happen if we received too many points. Angelia said that we could be classified as a troubled housing authority which could cause HUD to come in and take over the agency with their staff. Commissioner Boecher asked if they could do that without giving us a chance to make corrections. Angelia said no, we would have an opportunity to make corrections. Todd said with this new system they will be inspecting more frequently regardless of the score. Commissioner Smole stated that she wonders if there is any tenant education we can provide since the inspections aren't until July. Angelia said that next week, public housing and maintenance will be away at NSPIRE training and HUD has provided us with the standards that she sent to everyone. She said that she ordered condensed handbooks that she gave to all staff so that they know anytime that they are on the properties, they should be conducting inspections, and looking to see if there is a deficiency. Angelia further stated that the Indianapolis HUD Field office staff will visit our sites before our inspections to conduct pre-inspections of the properties to see if they can help us get up to code if needed. Angelia informed commissioners that management will advise residents at their regular resident meetings to report maintenance concerns immediately. Commissioner Mayes asked about residents not doing their part and how that would affect us. Angelia stated that managers are required to conduct regular inspections and housekeeping requirements are spelled out in our tenant lease and that if tenants do not comply with their lease, they will be issued a lease violation that could lead to eviction.

- **HOTMA Fact Sheet**

Angelia explained that the second major HUD change is the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) which makes numerous amendments to various sections of the United States Housing Act of 1937(1937 Act), including significant changes to income calculation, net family assets, and income reviews. She further reported that this Act was signed into law by Congress in 2016 but has just recently been mandated to be implemented. She said that staff continue to have ongoing trainings. She said that she included the fact sheet to highlight some of the changes. Commissioner Smole asked if the income for dependents under 18. She gave the example of a 16-year-old who started working, she asked if that income would be counted as household income. Angelia stated that she does not believe that would count as income because it is earned income. Angelia also said that income would not include foster care payments, or live-in aids' income either. She reported that the final implementation date for HOTMA is January 1, 2025. She informed the board that she would be forwarding them new HOTMA policies for approval as we move along. Angelia reminded the board that they have PHADA and NAHRO memberships and that PHADA and NAHRO are public housing industry leaders who produce publications about these changes regularly.

- **Resolution 24:07 – A Resolution Approving the Revision of the Procurement Policy**


Angelia informed the commissioners that we have updated our procurement policy and we have taken out the names of staff members so that if there are changes in staffing, it won't have to continuously be updated. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:07.

❖ **Handouts:** None

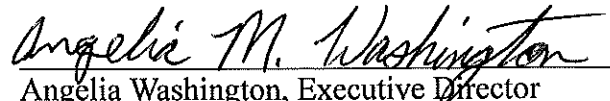
❖ **Adjournment**

Commissioner Willie Brown without any objections declared the April 18, 2024, Board of Commissioners' meeting adjourned at 5:06 P.M.

• **Special Meeting**



Kristen Smole, Commissioner
May 16, 2024



Angelia Washington, Executive Director
May 16, 2024