

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Elkhart Housing Authority
March 28, 2024

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority, City of Elkhart met in regular attendance at 4:30 p.m.; on Thursday, March 28, 2024.

Board Members present: Willie Brwon, Helenia Robinson, 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: Annette Thompson, Eunice DeMorrow, Brenda Gauthier, Victoria Hayes, Sharon LeCount, Lisa Scott, Linda Quick, Betty Jackson, and Deanna Brown

- ❖ **Audience Concerns:** Riverside resident Linda Quick stated that there is no lock on the cafeteria door. She said that the handle was replaced with a handle that does not have a lock. She said that she is concerned about anyone being able to walk in. She further stated that the door track was very dirty. Ms. Quick stated that other residents have had problems getting their key fobs replaced. She also stated that she has a concern with the handicapped parking. She read a statement from Fair Housing explaining reasonable accommodations such as assigned parking. She said as a disabled individual, she should have a parking spot assigned to her. Ms. Quick stated that she had another concern with drug deals happening in her parking lot at Riverside. Ms. Quick's next concern was that they had not been issued keys to the different rooms after having asked repeatedly. Ms. Quick's next concern was about computer usage. She said that they do not have the password to the computer and the previous resident council said that they forgot the password. She said that they cannot install a printer due to not having any WI-FI. Ms. Quick's final concern was that they were not being reimbursed for stipends. She said they have been paying out of their own pockets for dinners, paper plates, napkins, etc. She said that they were not reimbursed last year either.

Riverside resident Victoria Hayes stated that the hallways are very cold and there is no heat in the building.

Angelia stated that she was unaware that there was no lock on the patio door. She said that they will get that taken care of right away. She stated that all residents have a right to contact the housing authority and speak to their manager, the department director, or the executive director before board meetings. She said that she noted that the door tracks were dirty, and that the elevator tracks need cleaning too because too much debris can cause the elevators to not function properly. She said that the EHA keeps a supply of fobs, so she is unsure why anyone who needs a fob hasn't received one. She said that Alicia Kimble is the new Director of Asset Management for Public Housing, and she supervises public housing staff. She informed residents that if they ever feel like their needs are not being met in a timely matter, to report their concerns to Alicia and escalate them up to her if they have further concerns. She said that she does not hesitate to address resident concerns right away. Angelia stated that for handicapped parking, some rules were updated a few years ago that she has to review. She asked Ms. Quick to give her a week and she would get back to her on this. Angelia asked if the parking lot drug deals were reported to the police. She further stated that we are landlords, not law enforcement. Ms. Quick stated that she saw these deals happening herself and she reported it to security. An Elkhart police officer who attended the meeting provided residents with the non-emergency police number so that residents could report things of this nature. He said if they are really busy, they may not be able to respond right away but they will send an officer to the building.

Angelia informed the resident council that she had been trying to contact their president, Barbara Smock, for about two weeks. A resident informed Angelia that Barbara Smock was in the hospital. Angelia stated that she was trying to contact Barb to finalize the MOU which needs to be signed before any housing authority keys are issued. Resident council members said they don't have access to the Riverside Council computer. Angelia informed the residents that she would have our I.T. specialist look at the computer and reset it if needed. She also informed residents that the buildings are now equipped with WI-FI. She said that it is password protected so she will figure out a way to get this information to the residents. Riverside resident, Dennis Runner, suggested that residents who are on the lease be given the password one at a time.

Angelia explained to the resident council that stipends are no longer reimbursed. Jessica stated that resident councils are issued a yearly payment from which stipends are paid. She said that the only thing that finance needs now is a check request. Angelia informed the resident council that she would need to meet with them about the MOU and to discuss permissible resident council expenses.

Riverside resident Sharon LeCount was concerned with excessive cigarette butts being thrown outside the doors and residents allowing their animals to defecate right outside the entrance. Angelia informed Ms. LeCount that the housing authority is developing a plan to designate a service animal relief area.

Angelia explained to the residents that while she and Alicia were recently inspecting the building, the heat was suffocating and some residents complained that the building was too hot. She said that it was about 70 degrees that day, so she instructed maintenance to turn the heat off. She said that it is very difficult to predict the weather this time of year, but the heat has been turned back on.

❖ **Approval of Minutes**

Exhibit A — Approval of Meeting Minutes — February 15, 2024, Regular Meeting

All commissioners present voted to approve the February 15, 2024, meeting minutes.

❖ **Approval of Vouchers**

Exhibit B — Approval of Vouchers — February 15, 2024

All commissioners present voted to approve the February 15, 2024, vouchers.

❖ **Executive Director's Report**

Exhibit C — Executive Director's Report

- **Human Resources:** Angelia reported 2 new hires, Alicia Kimble, Director of Asset Management, and 1 end of employment, Sh'Rhea Romain.

- **Comprehensive Improvements:**

Scattered Sites: No work during this time.

Riverside Terrace: No work during this time.

Washington Gardens: ServPro continued the rehabilitation work of 334-A-Chapman Ave burn unit. Specifically, they installed the HVAC unit and commenced painting the interior of the unit.

Waterfall High-Rise: Edward J. White, INC. completed the replacement of the non-working boiler.

Rosedale High-Rise: No work during this time.

COCC: No work during this time.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Angelia reported for the month of February, 38 Annual Certifications were completed, 62 Interim Certifications Completed, 2 Unit transfers, 4 New Admissions and Absorbed Incoming Portabilities, 11 End of Participations, 30 Applications Remaining in Process, 697 Lease Ups on the last day of February and 95% Lease-Up Percentage.
- **Family Self Sufficiency Programs:** Angelia reported the Family Self Sufficiency program is currently serving 56 participants of which 36 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. 20 participants are currently earning escrow, \$8,135 earned in escrow funds in February, and \$163,108.50 total current escrow balance.
- **Public Housing:** Angelia reported Rosedale's Occupancy rate for the month of February is 94.06%, Washington Gardens Occupancy rate for the month of February is 92.9%, Waterfall Occupancy rate for the month of February is 94.44%, Scattered-Sites Occupancy rate for the month of February is 100% and Riverside's Occupancy rate for the month of February is 99.32%. Angelia went on to say Public Housing's overall Occupancy rate for the month of February is 95.95%. She also stated that public housing received 88 applications, mailed 49 orientation letters, processed 1 application, approved 2 applications, denied 1 application, and no applications were withdrawn. We received 11 homeless applications, and 0 application(s) were approved and waiting for an available unit. Angelia reported there were 6 new admissions and 15 move-outs in February.
- **Maintenance:** Angelia reported that 15 move-outs were received and 7 were completed, 2 emergency requests received and completed, 383 tenant requests received and 375 were completed; and there were 45 annual inspections received and 42 completed, totaling 426 completed work orders.
- **Financials and Write-Offs:** Jessica Brittain reported for the month of February, Rosedale high-rise earned \$26,972.00 in Revenue and \$26,026.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Rosedale high-rise had \$62,297.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Rosedale high-rise had a loss for the month of February in the amount of \$(9,299.00). The previous past due rent was \$4,870.00, and the current past due rent is \$1,301.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$3,569.00.

Jessica reported for the month of February, Washington Gardens earned \$6,054.00 in Revenue and \$171,765.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Washington Gardens had \$157,607.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Washington Gardens had a profit for the month of February in the amount of \$20,212.00. The previous past due rent was \$30,262.00 and the current past due rent is 21,197.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$9,065.00.

Jessica reported for the month of February, Waterfall high-rise earned \$34,122.00 in Revenue and \$34,179.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Waterfall high-rise had \$82,029.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Waterfall high-rise had a loss for the month of February in the amount of \$(13,728.00). The previous past due rent was \$17,538.00 and the current past due rent is \$11,560.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$5,978.00.

Jessica reported for the month of February, Scattered Sites earned \$6,222.00 in Revenue and \$44,916.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Scattered Sites had \$61,862.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Scattered Sites had a loss for the month of February in the amount of \$(10,724.00). The previous past due rent was \$7,185.00 and the current past due rent is \$8,207.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$1,022.00.

Jessica reported for the month of February, Riverside high-rise earned \$35,787.00 in Revenue and \$36,690.00 in Operating Subsidy Revenue. Jessica went on to say Riverside high-rise had \$77,781.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported Riverside high-rise had a loss for the month of January in the amount of \$(5,304.00). The previous past due rent was \$2,401.00, and the current past due rent is \$1,701.00. The decrease in past due rent is \$700.00.

Jessica reported for the month of February, COCC earned \$180,553.00 in Revenue. Jessica went on to say the COCC had \$156,606.00 in Expense without depreciation. Jessica reported the COCC had a profit for the month of February in the amount of \$40,798.00.

Jessica reported HCV had a profit for the month of February, in the amount of \$58,781.00. The net position YTD is \$293,706.00.

❖ **Old Business:**

• **Security**

Angelia updated the board on last month's security concerns. She said that we have been able to increase our security presence by hiring two new security guards. She said that we have a guard at each high rise, and they no longer need to rotate. Commissioner Smole asked Angelia when security was on the premises. She said that they work after hours after staff leave for the day. Erik stated that they are onsite from 6-10. Angelia informed the board that we are also beginning to crack down on trespassers.

❖ **New Business:**

• **High Rise WI-FI**

Angelia stated that we have successfully installed WI-FI in all of the high rises, which is something we wanted to make available for all of our residents. Erik stated that the WI-FI is limited to the first floor and common areas. Angelia said that she would like the residents to utilize Wi-Fi to participate in educational webinars and community events.

• **Head Start Vacancy**

Angelia informed the board that Washington Gardens' Head Start program has ceased due to their staffing issues. Commissioner Smole informed the board that they have a Head Start program at Hawthorne Elementary School. She asked if there was a way we could fund our Washington Gardens students to attend there instead. Angelia stated that the program is free. Commissioner Smole asked if they could help with transportation. Angelia stated that she was told by the director of the program that most children have already transferred to Hawthorne. Commissioner Smole asked to follow up on this again at a later date to discuss how the agency could help if there is an issue with Washington Gardens' children getting to Hawthorn in the fall.

• **Revised By-Laws**

Angelia stated that the by-laws were revised under Section 2.10 to reflect the increase from \$25 to \$100 for board meeting attendance. All commissioners present voted to approve the revision to the by-laws.

• **Resolution 24:03 – A Resolution to Award the Contract for Replacement of the Rooftop Makeup Air Unit at Riverside**

Angelia stated that we have had issues with the heating at Riverside that stem from the air handler on the rooftop. Erik stated that it would be installed around September-October. He said that there were two bidders, Griffen and Edward J. White, he said that it did come in under budget and Edward J. White is a responsible and capable contractor. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:03. Angelia stated that there were some concerns about dust

blowing from the hallways onto the coverings of the vent and we have been working to get that cleaned up. She asked Todd for the status of the cleaning. Todd said that they were finished. He explained to a resident that the air handler is for heating and circulating the outside air in the summer. He said that this keeps the air from becoming stagnant.

- **Resolution 24:04 – A Resolution Amending the HCV Utility Allowance**

Angelia stated that HUD requires us to update our utility allowance yearly to ensure our residents are receiving the correct amount. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:04.

- **Resolution 24:05 – A Resolution Adopting Operating Budget for Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2025**

Jessica informed the commissioners that she sent them an email with all of the notable changes and how much reserves we have. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:05.

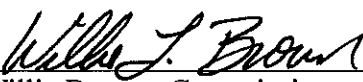
- **Resolution 24:06 – A Resolution Amending the Personnel Policy**

Attorney Snow stated that he received a request to clarify a section in the existing employee handbook that sets up the mechanism for dealing with harassment complaints if the alleged perpetrator is an executive director or a human resources employee. He said that the new policy has a provision in which an executive director of a neighboring agency will be appointed to investigate the concern. He said Harris Law Firm currently works with Gary and East Chicago housing authorities as well as Michigan City. He further stated that this resolution authorizes the Elkhart Housing Authority to enter into an agreement with these other agencies to investigate harassment claims. Angelia asked Attorney Snow to define harassment. Attorney Snow stated that he believes the policy was created primarily to address sexual harassment which can include inappropriate sexual comments, behaviors, displays of images, conversations, or messages in the workplace, or if you're asked to exchange sexual acts for promotion. He said that the policy also addresses nonsexual harassment like employees ganging up on other employees, singling people out, leaving people out of conversations, and or minimizing what they do. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:06.

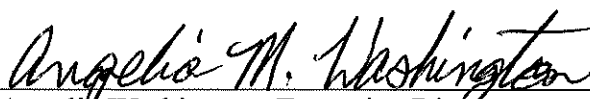
- ❖ **Handouts: None**

- ❖ **Adjournment**

Commissioner Willie Brown without any objections declared the March 28, 2024, Board of Commissioners' meeting adjourned at 5:21 P.M.



Willie Brown, Commissioner
April 18, 2024



Angelia Washington, Executive Director
April 18, 2024