

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Elkhart Housing Authority
February 20, 2025

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority, City of Elkhart, met in regular attendance at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025.

Board Members present: Willie Brown, Kristen Smole, Loria Mayes, Dan Boecher, Helenium Robinson, and Cynthia Billings

Board Members present via dial-in: None.

Staff members present: Angelia Washington, Erik Mathavan, Todd Fielder, Julie Stebbins, Alicia Kimble, Nekisha Roberson, Tiphany Travet, Olesia Melnyk, and Morgan Gibson-Day.

Harris Law Firm Attorney present: Nick Snow

Audience members present: Rosemarie Bradley, Jaqueline Green, James L. Gary, and Roi Voyce.

- ❖ **Audience Concerns:** Waterfall resident Jaqueline Green stated that she had concerns about the safety of the residents. She said that residents know when the Elkhart Housing Authority's (EHA) security shifts will end. She said that one member of security was beaten up at Riverside. She asked why EHA can't hire off-duty police officers. Further Ms. Green stated that the intake specialist was threatened and cornered in her office by guys who did not reside in the building. She said that she does not feel safe when she goes outside to smoke and suggested that the EHA hire round-the-clock security. She said that her car was vandalized, and it led to a very expensive repair.

Waterfall resident Rosemarie Bradley stated that people who do not live in the building are doing their laundry there. Ms. Bradley stated that she has a service animal that she keeps groomed and cleans up after but when she takes the dog outside to use the bathroom, there are dog feces everywhere. She further stated that when Tasha was here, most of this was under control. Ms. Bradley reported that drugs are being used and sold at Waterfall High Rise. Angelia asked Ms. Green and Ms. Bradley if either one of them attended the resident meeting that Public Housing Director Alicia Kimble recently held. They both said no. Ms. Green further stated that it seemed like a waste of time because they had not had any meetings in three years. Angelia responded that there had been meetings and further said that Alicia has just been employed for a year and is doing a great job. Angelia elaborated that Alicia has been successfully addressing criminal concerns and has had mandatory meetings to address pet and service animal concerns. She said that our increased occupancy numbers and evictions prove that Alicia is making a difference. Angelia asked the residents to give Alicia a chance and to please report their concerns to Alicia. She said that we do not have a manager for Riverside/Waterfall at this time, but we are working on getting a qualified individual for the position. Angelia informed residents that she and public housing management just met last week to discuss ways to correct concerns with animals relieving themselves in public locations. Ms. Green said that residents keep bothering managers with issues that they should be going to the police with. Angelia asked Ms. Green if she called the police when she had security concerns. Ms. Green said yes. She said that there have been former residents who have been banned for trespassing by the EHA and the Elkhart Police Department, and they are being arrested out of the building continuously. Commissioner Brown asked if Waterfall had a resident council. Angelia said no but the management team has been trying to encourage one. Angelia asked Ms. Green if she would be interested in forming a resident council. Ms. Green said no. She said that she has been living at Waterfall for five years, and she has seen so much but she never says anything because no one listens. Commissioner Brown asked Ms. Green if she reported this. She said that the recertification specialist was the one who told her about it. She said that she asked her to let her know if it happened again so that she could take care of it, and she did not mind paying the

\$100 to get out of jail. Commissioner Brown said that he would take Ms. Green's contact information to follow up and pass the information on to Angelia.

Ms. Green further stated that a lot of Waterfall units do not have working range hoods. She said that when you cook, grease soaks your furniture and ruins everything and it collects on the walls and ceiling. She said that Erik told her that these units do not have range hoods, but she has been to several apartments that do, and they have lights. She said that she thinks all Waterfall units should have range hoods. Commissioner Brown stated again that he would get Ms. Green's contact info for follow up.

❖ **Approval of Minutes**

Exhibit A — Approval of Meeting Minutes — January 16, 2025, Regular Meeting

All commissioners present voted to approve the January 16, 2025, meeting minutes.

❖ **Approval of Vouchers**

Exhibit B — Approval of Vouchers — January 16, 2025

All commissioners present voted to approve the January 16, 2025, vouchers.

❖ **Executive Director's Report**

Exhibit C — Executive Director's Report

- **Human Resources:** Angelia reported two new hires, Deon Binion, General Maintenance Technician, Gabriela Vazquez, Waterfall High Rise Custodian, and one ended employment, Stephanie McMorris.

- **Comprehensive Improvements:**

Scattered Sites: No work during this time.

Riverside Terrace: No new work during this time. Minor capital was invested into the existing air handler to keep the unit providing heat for the hallways. Commissioner Boecher asked how cold it got in the hallways at Riverside. Erik said 58 was the coldest temperature reading.

Washington Gardens: No work at this time.

Waterfall High-Rise: Schwartz Electric continued testing the new fire panel upgrade and accompanying devices.

Rosedale High-Rise: No work at this time.

COCC: No work during this time.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Angelia reported for the month of January 61 Annual Certifications were completed, 44 Interim Certifications Completed, 3 Unit transfers, 2 New Admissions and Absorbed Incoming Portabilities, 5 End of Participations, 3 Applications Remaining in Process, 680 Lease Ups on the last day of January and 92% Lease-Up Percentage.
- **Family Self Sufficiency Programs:** Angelia reported the Family Self Sufficiency program is currently serving 53 participants of which 33 participants are currently employed, 4 participants are attending college, 5 participants are disabled or unable to work, 14 participants are currently earning escrow, \$5,648 earned in escrow funds in January, and \$176,918.46 total current escrow balance.
- **Public Housing:** Angelia reported Rosedale's Occupancy rate for the month of January is 97%, Washington Gardens Occupancy rate for the month of January is 99%, Waterfall Occupancy rate for

the month of January is 99%, Scattered-Sites Occupancy rate for the month of January is 100% and Riverside's Occupancy rate for the month of January is 99%. Angelia went on to say Public Housing's overall Occupancy rate for the month of January is 99%. She also stated that public housing received 170 applications, mailed 70 orientation letters, processed 25 applications, approved 21 applications, denied four applications, and no applications were withdrawn. We received no homeless applications, and three application(s) were approved and waiting for an available unit. Angelia reported there were 12 new admissions and 8 move-outs in January.

- **Maintenance:** Angelia reported that 8 move-outs were received and 6 were completed, 12 emergency requests were received and completed, 709 tenant requests were received, and 698 were completed; and there were 42 annual inspections received and 42 completed, totaling 758 completed work orders.
- **Financials and Write-Offs:** Rick reported that the summary shows a profit and loss with operations in the amount of -\$7229.00 Year-to-Date for January 31. He said that a portion of that was related to operating subsidies for February that were drawn down in advance, he said there was a concern about the ability to draw down those funds after January 31. He also said that it looks better than it might have otherwise and is a positive change for the month. He also said that we have been seeing a continual decrease in the Year-to-Date loss. Rick said that all signs point to a decrease in costs, and we just need to be able to maintain this trend. He further stated that the operating reserves for January Year-to-Date is reflected as being in a good financial position for the housing authority. Angelia asked Rick to clarify for the board if there was any indication of fraud or misuse of housing authority funds that he could see. Rick said since he has been doing the bookkeeping and receiving the financial records, nothing has come to his attention as an area of concern. Commissioner Boecher asked Angelia what the status of the EHA's audit was. Angelia stated that she would submit it to HUD today. Commissioner Boecher stated that he wanted to attend when the auditor gave his report. Angelia assured Commissioner Boecher that all commissioners will be invited. She said that there was no misuse or abuse of our funding but that the budget was unrealistic to begin with. She advised commissioners that the revised budget is in the board packet for discussion.

❖ **Old Business:**

- **Head Start**

Angelia reminded the board that she reported on the Washington Gardens Head Start closing in January and the board asked what happened to the students. She said that at the time of the closure, there were 5 children enrolled, and they reportedly either moved to Hawthorne or Woodland schools. She said that before the closure, two students reportedly moved to Jimtown school per their parents' requests. Angelia further said that the director of Washington Gardens Head Start informed her that regulations prohibit them from displacing any child enrolled in the program.

- **Police Interlocal Agreement**

Angelia stated that the EHA has finally resolved the interlocal agreement with the Elkhart Police Department's attorney and our attorney, Nick Snow. She said that Attorney Snow ensured that the agreement was properly drafted. She said that she wanted to be sure that they had a formal agreement and not just an agency occupying a unit that could be used to house a family. Attorney Snow said that the board can approve the agreement anytime and it does not necessarily need a resolution. All commissioners present voted to approve the interlocal agreement between the Elkhart Housing Authority and the Elkhart Police Department.

- **Attendance Policy**

Angelia stated that she included the attendance policy in this month's board packet drafted by attorney Nick Snow for board review. She asked the commissioners if any additional

revisions needed to be made in addition to striking the FMLA leave statement and whether we should move on with this policy or if the board would like more revisions. Commissioner Brown stated that they would table it until the next meeting to allow the commissioners to review it again. Angelia informed the commissioners that she would add it to next month's agenda.

❖ **New Business:**

• **501 (c) 3**

Angelia informed the board that she would like to apply for 501(c) 3 status for the EHA. She said that there are many additional benefits to being a 501(c) 3 agency. She asked the board for their thoughts. Commissioner Billings stated that she thinks it is a great idea. Attorney Snow said that he has never been asked to cover 501(c) 3 by another agency. Angelia said that she spoke to Attorney Harris about it last week and he said that he would recommend it for the EHA due to the benefits such as better access to grant funding. Angelia said that she attended a City of Elkhart Planning and Development meeting last week and one of the requirements for being a subrecipient of the CDBG grant discussed was for an agency to have 501(c) 3 status. Commissioner Brown asked to discuss this at an executive session immediately following the board meeting. Angelia asked Attorney Snow if we could have an executive session without 48-hour notice. Attorney Snow said that the board could not hold an executive session without public notice. Angelia and the board agreed to have an executive session next month. Attorney Snow said that this would give him time to research the benefits of being a 501 (c) 3. He further stated that he thinks the housing authority runs like a 501 (c) 3 under its nonprofit instrumentality. Attorney Snow said that he would be able to give a better report on the legalities next month. Commissioner Boecher stated that he would like to know the benefits of it. Angelia stated that Attorney Harris informed her that having this status would allow the EHA to be exempt from federal income tax, we would be eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions, free public service announcements, tax-deductible donations, and better access to grants among other benefits. Commissioner Boecher stated that we benefit from most of those things already such as not paying property taxes or federal income taxes. He said that he would still like to hear the attorney's summary. Commissioner Smole said that she would like to table it until next month so that they have had a chance to look into it further.

• **Resolution 25:01 – A Resolution to Award the Contract for Replacement of Kitchen Cabinets, Countertops, Plumbing, and Range Vents at Riverside Phase II**

- Erik said that this will be a continuation of phase I at Riverside where they replace the cabinets, countertops, sink plumbing, and range vents. He said that this is phase II, and they will be completing floors 3-5. He said that he received 4 bids, and the lowest bid came in at \$488,400 from Kitchen Cabinet Specialists, which comes out to \$7,400 per unit. He said for phase I; the cost was \$7,853 per unit so the bidding worked out well and we got a lower cost. He said that once they are done with floors 3-5, they will work on 6-7. Commissioner Brown asked Erik when this project would start. He said that they anticipate late April-early May. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 25:01.

• **Resolution 25:02 – A Resolution Approving the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year Ending March 2026**

Rick said for the COCC, the voucher program, and each of the asset management projects he did include the project name with the AMP number. He said that they completed the actual financials through January. He said that the revision is looking at where things were through the ten months of the fiscal year through January 31, and it reflects an annualized estimate through the end of March so it could change and go up or down and the actual expenses could vary. He said that this is how it would look through March 31. He said that

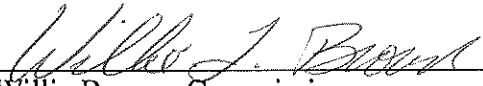
the last line shows residual receipts or deficit and that shows a negative number of -\$78,180 in the total budget column. He said that since we have a healthy amount in the reserve, this is not concerning. He said that it is not uncommon to use funds from your operating reserve in a budget fiscal year so although the number is negative, that is not necessarily a bad thing. He said that the reserve is there to help with expenses throughout the year. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 25:02.

Commissioner Billings informed the audience members that she was a resident commissioner. She thanked them for sharing their concerns and she thanked the management team for the great job they were doing. She informed the tenants that the board hears their concerns, and she will do everything in her power to address the concerns that they have. She also informed them that she would be attending some of their resident meetings. She encouraged the residents to form a resident council and turn in their walk-in forms.


❖ **Handouts:** None

❖ **Adjournment**

Commissioner Willie Brown, without any objections, declared the February 20, 2025, Board of Commissioners' meeting adjourned at 5:27 P.M.



Willie Brown, Commissioner
March 27, 2025



Angelia Washington, Executive Director
March 27, 2025