

REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
Elkhart Housing Authority  
August 29, 2024

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority, City of Elkhart met in regular attendance at 4:30 p.m.; on Thursday, August 29, 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 — July 18, 2024, Regular Meeting**

All commissioners present voted to approve the July 18, 2024, meeting minutes.

❖ **Approval of Vouchers**

**Exhibit B — Approval of Vouchers — July 18, 2024**

All commissioners present voted to approve the July 18, 2024, vouchers.

❖ **Executive Director's Report**

**Exhibit C — Executive Director's Report**

- **Human Resources:** Angelia reported three new hires, Tony Smith, Waterfall Custodian, Julie Stebbins, Finance Director, and Carlos Lemus, General Maintenance Technician, one milestone, Teri Ivory, Human Resources Generalist, for 5 years of service and two ended employment, Michael Robinson, and Cynthia Snowden.

- **Comprehensive Improvements:**

- Scattered Sites:** No work during this time.

**Riverside Terrace:** Koorsen completed the installation of brand-new sprinkler heads as part of the 2022 housing hazards grant.

**Washington Gardens:** ServPro completed the installation of the kitchen cabinets, appliances, plumbing and remaining items requested by the City of Elkhart Inspector and a certification of occupancy has been requested. ServPro to address a list of minor items requested by the housing authority.

**Waterfall High-Rise:** Schwartz Electric continued work on the fire panel upgrade specifically with the new electrical conduit in the common areas as well as new electrical conduit in the residences of floors 2 thru 4.

**Rosedale High-Rise:** No work during this time.

**COCC:** No work during this time.

- **Housing Choice Voucher Program:** Angelia reported for the month of July, 49 Annual Certifications were completed, 69 Interim Certifications Completed, 4 Unit transfers, 8 New Admissions and Absorbed Incoming Portabilities, 6 End of Participations, 40 Applications Remaining in Process, 685 Lease Ups on the last day of July and 93% 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, 6 participants are disabled or unable to work, 20 participants are currently earning escrow, \$7,263 earned in escrow funds in July, and \$166,361.22 total current escrow balance.
- **Public Housing:** Angelia reported Rosedale's Occupancy rate for the month of July is 95%, Washington Gardens Occupancy rate for the month of July is 91%, Waterfall Occupancy rate for the month of July is 97%, Scattered-Sites Occupancy rate for the month of July is 94% and Riverside's Occupancy rate for the month of July is 97%. Angelia went on to say Public Housing's overall Occupancy rate for the month of July is 94%. She also stated that public housing received 92 applications, mailed 75 orientation letters, processed 36 applications, approved 8 applications, denied 3 applications, and 3 applications were withdrawn. We received no homeless applications, and 8 application(s) were approved and waiting for an available unit. Angelia reported there were 6 new admissions and 11 move-outs in July.

Angelia reported that the public housing team leased 27 additional units since the July report was generated and the numbers continue to increase. Angelia further stated that the EHA intends to start attracting rent-paying residents and will continue to work to eliminate the stigma of public housing. She said that she has directed public housing staff to work with the police department to plan a Washington Gardens block party-type event for October 12. She further reported that she and the Elkhart Police Department have worked with their respective attorneys to draft an agreement for the use of the off-line Washington Gardens unit that they use in hopes of having their services to better align with HUD's off-line approval requirements. Attorney Snow informed the board that he thinks that it would be appropriate for them to review and authorize Angelia to finalize and execute the agreement. Commissioner Boecher asked if the Elkhart Housing Authority has provided space for a police substation before. Angelia said yes but there had never been a formal agreement in place and various activities were occurring in the unit that did not align with crime prevention efforts that HUD approves of. Attorney Snow added that the agreement also shows that there is no implication that officers are or will be employed by the housing authority while they are performing services and the liabilities are clear.

- **Maintenance:** Angelia reported that 13 move-outs were received and seven were completed, five emergency requests were received and completed, 493 tenant requests were received and 486 were completed; and there were 40 annual inspections received and 30 completed, totaling 528 completed work orders.
- **Financials and Write-Offs:** Angelia reminded the board that May was the month that Jessica was unable to return to work and Julie was just hired last month. She said that the CPA from Fort Wayne Housing Authority came to EHA to provide assistance, but she was unfamiliar with our software which created a barrier. Angelia further reported that Jessica has contracted with the EHA and has been working closely with Julie to help provide information that our fee accountant needs to generate our finance reports. She said that May has been the most difficult month to reconcile, but Jessica will

continue to work with Julie until we are caught up and that Julie will be scheduled for formal housing authority finance training as soon as possible. She said that she plans to forward the past due financials to the board by September 12. Commissioner Brown asked which months they would receive the financials for. Angelia said she would send the financials for May, June, and July and hopes to have August's financials by the September board meeting. Commissioner Boecher asked if the fee accountant produces our financials once we give them our internal files. Angelia responded yes. Commissioner Boecher stated that he'd hoped that the fee accountants would step in after Jessica left. Angelia said that they did assist us with submitting our unaudited financials because our annual unaudited financials were due to HUD by May 31, HUD approved her request for an extended deadline, and the fee accountants submitted our unaudited financials on July 31. She said that they were submitted a day late which may cause us to lose a percentage point.

❖ **Old Business:**

• **Washington Gardens Head Start**

Angelia stated that she notified the board a few months ago about Head Start possibly not being able to continue their services due to staffing shortage and enrollment concerns. She said that she is happy to announce that they are now at full capacity with 20 students enrolled for the new school year.

❖ **New Business:**

• **NSPIRE Scores**

Angelia said that our HUD NSPIRE scores are included in the board packet and reported the following: Rosedale scored 89, Washington Gardens scored 76, Waterfall scored 88, Scattered Sites scored 71, and Riverside scored 80. Commissioner Mayes asked if they inspect the whole building. Todd stated that they select 24-27 units to inspect, and they inspect the entire unit including electric, drywall, windows, and plumbing. Commissioner Boecher asked if they inspected occupied or unoccupied units. Todd said they only inspect occupied units. Angelia said that the inspector met with staff prior to the inspections and already had a list of units to inspect when they arrived. She said that inspections used to be more focused on curb appeal-type things like graffiti and common areas, but now they are more focused on health and safety conditions inside the units like electrical issues, broken outlets, and outlets too close to water sources. She said that she does not think we lost many points on smoke detectors. Todd further said that the placement of smoke detectors in bedrooms is new under this inspection type. Angelia stated that when the inspector saw that there were no smoke detectors in the bedrooms, they had 24 hours to install them. She said that the maintenance department put forth a strong effort and got them all installed and had to take pictures of the smoke detectors showing the exact area that they needed to be installed which she uploaded to HUD. Commissioner Brown requested the full inspection forms. Angelia stated that she would send them to all board members. Commissioner Robinson asked about Washington Garden's preliminary projected score. Angelia said she would find out and report back to the board. Commissioner Billings asked if the number of tenant requested work orders was correct. Angelia stated that once we knew when our NSPIRE inspections would be, we requested tenants to report any deficiencies that they had in their units so, yes, the 958 tenant-requested work orders are correct.

• **SEMAP Scores**

Angelia stated that she is proud to announce that HUD has recognized the Housing Choice Voucher program as being a high-performing program again. She said that they scored the maximum number of all of points possible in every scoring category. She further reported that they also received an additional five bonus points for their efforts to deconcentrate poverty in impoverished neighborhoods.

- **Resolution 24:12 – A Resolution Adopting Changes to the HCV Program Admin Plan (Chapter 5)**  
 Amy stated that there are parts of their admin plan that must be updated by September 3 to align with HOTMA. She said that the following resolutions are for changes that were made to the admin plan. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:12.
- **Resolution 24:13 – A Resolution Adopting Changes to the HCV Program Admin Plan (Chapter 6)**  
 Amy stated that this chapter speaks to payment standard decreases and also any increase in the voucher payment standard can now be applied before a client's annual. She said that in the interim, they can also apply the new voucher payment standard which helps the client pay less rent. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:13.
- **Resolution 24:14 – A Resolution Adopting Changes to the HCV Program Admin Plan (Chapter 8)**  
 Amy stated that they changed inspection requirements for deficiencies that need to be fixed within 24 hours. She said that they added that they can also verify through pictures and videos that things have been corrected. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:14.
- **Resolution 24:15 – A Resolution Adopting Changes to the HCV Program Admin Plan (Chapter 9)**  
 Amy stated that any HAP contract executed after the 60 days is void, and the PHA may not pay any housing assistance payments to the owner unless there are extenuating circumstances that prevent or prevented the PHA from meeting the 60-day deadline, then the PHA must submit to the HUD field office a request for an extension. The request must be submitted no later than two weeks after the 60-day deadline and must include an explanation, and any supporting documentation. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:15.
- **Resolution 24:16 – A Resolution Adopting Changes to the HCV Program Admin Plan (Chapter 15)**  
 Amy stated that any homeownership counseling provided to families must be conducted by a HUD-certified housing counselor working for an agency approved to participate in HUD's Housing Counseling Program. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:16.
- **Resolution 24:17 – A Resolution Adopting Changes to the HCV Program Admin Plan (Chapter 16)**  
 Amy stated that HUD has eliminated some payment standards, and they have made some updates on who has to do SEMAP and who doesn't, we will have to continue to do SEMAP. Amy further stated that HUD created utility allowances that we can choose to utilize for energy-efficient housing. All commissioners present voted to approve resolution 24:17.
- **Riverside Kitchen Cabinets and Countertops Project Concern**  
 Commissioner Billings stated that she is very happy about the installation of the new kitchen sinks and countertops at Riverside, but she said that an occupant in a unit on the first floor is in a wheelchair and she will not have water for two weeks. Erik stated that originally there was miscommunication about the water being down. He said that they are not turning the water off in the entire unit. He said that the kitchen sinks must be removed, and residents would be without water for a couple of hours. He said that they knew there would be some challenges with the first four or five units, and he spoke with each of those residents personally. He said that he explained that there might be a gap in which they will not have a sink or a countertop for two weeks. He said once the project started, he realized that the timing was off on some tasks. He further stated that at this point they have paused working on any units outside of those

first five units until they can get the timeline down to a week. Commissioner Billings explained to Erik that the resident she spoke to was out of water completely in her kitchen and only had running water in her bathroom. Erik said after they have completed the first five and he is looking into ways to decrease the amount of time without water in the kitchen. He also said he wanted to get it to where each resident's kitchen would be completed within a week from start to finish. He said it may be 2-3 days before residents get their sink, but it will not be 2-3 weeks. He said that they are working on the order in which items will be removed and installed. Angelia said she and Erik would both go check on this resident after tonight's meeting. Angelia stated that Erik will continue to narrow down the timeline, but she thinks that all residents will be happy with the new cabinets although it is causing some initial inconvenience.

- **Riverside Parking Lot Lights**

Commissioner Billings stated that the parking lot is very dark. Angelia said that the poles belonged to AEP, so they put a ticket in. She asked Todd if he had heard back from them. He said no and when he put the ticket in, they did not give him an exact date. He said that two of those poles belonged to AEP, but some of our poles were out too and he has requested a repair quote from electrician which he should have tomorrow. Angelia stated that she would call AEP personally tomorrow because she knows that lack lighting encourages criminal activity. Angelia reminded Commissioner Billings that she can contact her anytime so that critical issues like this do not linger until board meetings. Commissioner Billings stated that she did reach out to the manager, Tasha, but had not received a response. She said that the lights that are out are right outside her window and there are three poles there and two have no lights. She said that a couple of people had guns drawn on them out there. Angelia asked if this was reported to the police and Commissioner Billings said yes. Angelia said that Cordell, our security liaison, is out of the office but we should have reports on those incidents. Commissioner Billings stated that the traffic has increased since the contractor's supplies are outside. Commissioner Boecher stated that trying to get AEP to move quickly is not a strategy for success, he said they may need to add light packs to the buildings to project into the parking lot. He said it would be nice if we controlled our own stuff by having our own poles and replacing the lights as needed. Commissioner Robinson asked if there was a way to update tenants so that they know that their concerns have been heard. Angelia stated that when tenants have concerns, they expect a response and said that she will see to it that the EHA does better with follow-up communication. She informed Commissioner Billings that she would provide her with an update as soon as she talks to someone tomorrow.

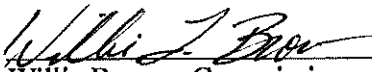
- **Pittsburgh Redevelopment Tour**

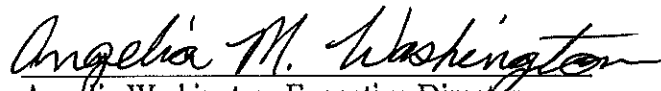
Commissioner Boecher asked Angelia to report on their Pittsburgh trip. Angelia stated that on August 13-15, she, Commissioners Boecher, Mayes, and Smole accompanied Elkhart Chamber President Levon Johnson and Faith Mission CEO, Mike Perez and one of their board members to Pittsburgh to explore their redevelopment project. She said that they did an amazing job with the redevelopment of their public housing and that they had goals similar to Elkhart for reconnecting their public housing back to the surrounding community. She said that they put streets in where there were not any streets, and they created a mixed-income community. She said that their community was once considered an invisible community due to it being obscured along main streets but now it is a more prominent community situated along public streets. She further reported that the new community has a large shopping center with a Target. She also said that they have lots of green space and a park that they incorporated a water management system into. She said she especially liked the redeveloped school in which people now reside. She went on to say that it took Pittsburgh years to get where they are today because they had to put together funding sources like pieces of a puzzle from a variety of places. She said that she was impressed and believes if Pittsburgh can do it, we can, too.

Commissioner Boecher added that Pittsburgh has lost about half its population since 1960, and you would never be able to tell the difference between what is managed by their housing authority and what is privately managed. He said that their low-income housing was on par with the apartments that are downtown with identical landscaping. He said that it was a vision-casting experience for him for what we could do and offer to our residents, true mixed-income without the hyper concentration of poverty that we have now. He further stated that it took Pittsburgh decades to redevelop, but it is worth it because they have transformed their residents' lives. Commissioner Boecher said that he cannot wait to get started and realize what we aspire to. Angelia said that we could preserve some of the existing units instead of tearing them all down. Commissioner Boecher stated that we can do selective demolition after we have built new units for people to move into. Commissioner Brown stated that he spoke to Levon about the trip last week and he told him how beautiful the architecture was and what they have done with the landscaping. Commissioner Robinson asked everyone what they thought the next steps would be. Commissioner Boecher stated that Pittsburgh received \$20 Million in grant funding but the application is huge and costs several hundreds of thousands of dollars just to put the grant together. He said we are at the very beginning of the process and there are consultants that can help us start the process. Angelia said that it could cost over a million dollars just for a consultant and that David Weber from Pittsburgh and who works for PHADA shared HUD's PRO Housing Grant funding notice with her which she forwarded to the board. Commissioner Boecher stated that he attended the Regional Development Authority meeting yesterday and they reported that the Benham West Project is one of two projects for our entire region that they are proposing for the Lily grant which is around \$5-10 Million which could jump-start things. Angelia stated that the importance of putting a plan together has been discussed so that when HUD releases its next Choice Neighborhoods funding opportunity, they should be prepared to apply for that grant as well. She requested to have a meeting in September to discuss ECHC and how to utilize that instrumentality and leverage our initiative toward redevelopment in Washington Gardens. She asked the commissioners if they could have a short meeting following the September board meeting. The commissioners agreed. Commissioner Robinson asked if we were in the education phase, action phase, or both phases simultaneously. Commissioner Brown said a little of both is his understanding. Angelia said that the Chamber of Commerce has taken the lead. Commissioner Boecher said that we have started the process already and the plan that the Chamber is working on will help us. Commissioner Robinson asked if we could make it a monthly agenda item as an update to keep them informed. Everyone agreed to keep it on the agenda.

❖ **Adjournment**

Commissioner Willie Brown without any objections declared the August 29, 2024, Board of Commissioners' meeting adjourned at 5:31 P.M.

  
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Willie Brown, Commissioner  
September 19, 2024

  
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Angelia Washington, Executive Director  
September 19, 2024