

HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF CLAY COUNTY
Regular Meeting of October 19, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Dillard, Cecil Johnson, Mike Martin, and Kim Schlotfeldt in person, Tia Braseth via Zoom.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Les Bakke

STAFF PRESENT:

Dara Lee and Sheila Laney.

9:30 A.M. REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Note: As the meeting was called to order, Commissioner Dillard was not present but had called and arrived at 9:50 a.m. Some items were tabled until Commissioner Dillard arrived.

AGENDA:

A motion was made by Commissioner Martin to approve the agenda. Commissioner Dillard seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 21, 2021 REGULAR MEETING:

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve the September 21, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

None

TREASURER'S REPORT:

August financials were reviewed by Treasurer Martin. As discussed previously, most projects are performing well.

Commissioner Dillard made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Director Lee provided project updates.

Houge Estates

Houge Estates is a 60-unit apartment building located in Dilworth. All units are one-bedrooms (about 650 sq. ft.), and residents must have a disabling condition or be age 62 or older to reside there. Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The remainder of the rent is subsidized by HUD through a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with HUD.

It was built in 1981 and is owned by the Elderly Housing Corporation of Clay County (EHC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit. The non-profit was created by the HRA to develop this project. The HRA has managed the EHC and Houge Estates since their inceptions.

The HRA offices were located at Houge Estates from 1981 until the early 1990s. From 2002 until 2015 assisted living services were available in the building through a 3rd party provider. The provider continuously lost money providing services in the building and had to withdraw. We could not find any other providers willing to replace them.

The building received a minor renovation in 2013 (primarily windows and kitchens) which was funded with a deferred loan from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency through the Rental Rehabilitation Deferred Loan program.

Over the years, the composition of the building has shifted from primarily elderly to primarily younger disabled individuals. The building was inspected by HUD REAC in September and received a passing score of 83.

As of October 1, there were five vacant units. There are 2 additional move-out notices for the end of October. Six applications are being processed. There are 76 households on the waiting list. The waiting list is currently open.

The Housing Success Specialist who did a portion of the Service Coordinator role became the full-time Service Coordinator on October 1. She and a Homeless Programs Assistant are housed at this location.

Agassiz Apartments

Agassiz Apartments is a 12-unit apartment building located in Ulen. Eleven of the units are one-bedrooms (about 650 sq. ft.) and one is a 2-bedroom, and residents must have a disabling condition or be age 62 or older to reside there. Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The remainder of the rent is subsidized by HUD through a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with HUD.

It was built in 1978 with a loan subsidized through USDA Rural Development. It is owned and operated by the HRA. The building received a minor renovation in 2013 (primarily windows and kitchens) which was funded with a deferred loan from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency through the Rental Rehabilitation Deferred Loan program.

Over the years, the composition of the building has shifted from primarily elderly to about half elderly and half disabled. The building is scheduled to be inspected by HUD REAC within the month.

As of October 1, there are no vacant units. There are 40 applicants on the waiting list.

Clay County Affordable Housing, LLC

The Clay County Affordable Housing units are in Dilworth, Ulen, and Hawley. They are composed of 12 duplexes located in neighborhood settings. The Dilworth and Ulen units were constructed in 1979 as Public Housing. The Hawley units were constructed in 1981 as Public Housing. Twenty-one units are 3-bedrooms and 3 are four-bedrooms.

They were operated by the HRA as Public Housing units until January 1, 2019, when the HRA “disposed” of its Public Housing units by “selling” them to the CCAH LLC, which is a non-profit LLC with the HRA as its sole member. The HRA opted to reposition its public housing and receive replacement Housing Choice Vouchers for the units. Maintaining the units as public housing was not financially viable. The HRA then transferred its public housing PROGRAM to the Moorhead Public Housing Agency on July 1, 2020. This was essentially the transfer of future funding streams from HUD since there was no property remaining. The HRA is in the process of closing out its public housing program with HUD now that all activities have been audited.

There is no outstanding debt on these buildings.

As of October 1, there are three vacant units in Hawley. One unit is re-rented for October. There is no specific subsidy tied to these units. The additional openings are being advertised. Residents of these units receive a preference for a Housing Choice Voucher if they are eligible for a 3 or 4-bedroom voucher.

Boyer Apartments

The HRA purchased Boyer Apartments in 2006. The HRA received over \$100,000 in funding from the local adult mental health initiative to assist with the initial purchase and operations. Boyer Apartments are in south Moorhead and are two adjacent 4-plexes which were built in 1975 and 1976. One building consists of all 2-bedrooms and the other has 3 2-bedrooms and one 1-bedroom unit. The buildings were rehabilitated in 2008 with HOME funding. There is no outstanding debt on these buildings (except internally).

As of October 1, there are no vacant units. There are 19 households on the waiting list. There is no specific subsidy tied to these units. Residents of Boyer Apartments receive a preference for a Housing Choice Voucher if their family size fits the available unit.

Fieldcrest Townhomes

In January 2017, the HRA purchased Fieldcrest Townhomes when it exercised a Right of First Refusal when the prior owner decided to sell the development. It was in very poor condition. The HRA paid \$2 million for the 40-unit townhome development in south Moorhead. There are 20 2-bedroom and 20 3-bedroom units. There are 20 detached garages as well.

Residents pay 30% of their income towards their rent and utilities. The remainder of the rent is subsidized by HUD through a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract with HUD. This contract dated back to 1980 when the building was initially constructed. The rents were suppressed, and there was significant deferred maintenance on the property. The contract expired in December 2020 and rents were raised to market levels.

Fieldcrest has been approved for \$1M in funding through the FHLB of Des Moines and over \$7M from Minnesota Housing. We anticipate a December closing. At the time of closing, the HRA will “sell” the development to the Fieldcrest Townhomes LLC. The LLC is a non-profit LLC with the HRA as its sole member. The sales price will pay off the existing mortgage and specials. The HRA also will receive 50% of its developer fee at that time.

The bid opening occurred on July 29 and three competitive bids were received. Kue Contracting has been selected as the low bidder. There is sufficient available funding to proceed without adding garages or replacing all water heaters. If contingency funds remain at the end of construction, we may be able to add back some of the garages.

The City of Moorhead previously recommended \$110,000 in funding for sidewalk repairs and Wi-Fi installation at the development using CDBG funding. The sidewalk repairs were included in the bids received. We will request to shift the funds to Wi-Fi installation and other eligible needs. We hope that closing and the construction start will be in January 2022.

As of October 1, there are 8 vacant units (four 2-bedrooms and four 3-bedrooms) which will be kept vacant during construction. There are 97 households on the waiting list which is now closed.

Gateway Gardens

Gateway Gardens is a 24-unit permanent supportive housing apartment building in Moorhead. The HRA constructed the building in 2010 using Minnesota Housing financing. The funding is in the form of deferred loans that will be forgiven in part after 20 years and completely after 30 years of operations. The front desk is staffed 24/7.

Rent and services are subsidized primarily through the Housing Supports program. There also are 5 project-based Housing Choice Vouchers attached to units. We are a subgrantee of CAPLP for a DHS HSASMI (Housing Supports for Adults with Serious Mental Illness) grant that helps fund the front desk costs.

Two HRA staff are officed at Gateway Gardens. CCRI and GSSC, a private security company, each provide 12 hours of staffing per day. CCRI case management staff is transitioning to Housing Stabilization Services through Medical Assistance.

As of October 1, there is one vacant unit and two pending terminations. Eviction actions may need to be filed. A fourth tenant passed away at the beginning of October. The vacancies will be filled through the coordinated entry system. Three potential tenants have been identified.

Housing Choice Vouchers

The HRA has administered a form of the current Housing Choice Voucher program since 1976. It is also known as Section 8. Tenants rent in the private market and pay at least 30% of their income towards rent and utilities. The HRA determines Payment Standards (rent limits) and utility allowances each year. HUD provides a fixed amount of funding based upon the federal budget approved by Congress each year. The HRA may lease up to its baseline number of units but not more than that number each year. The HRA has received insufficient funding to lease all its vouchers since 2012.

This program has more than doubled in size since 2017. In June 2017, the HRA had 360 vouchers and on July 1, 2021, it has 742 vouchers. The reason for the increase is as follows: 1) In July 2017, the Moorhead Public Housing Agency transferred its 95-unit program to the HRA; 2) from 2018-2021 the HRA was awarded 177 Mainstream vouchers; 3) in 2019 the HRA received 24 vouchers due to the repositioning of its Public Housing; 4) in 2018 the HRA received 15 VASH vouchers and in 2021 25 VASH vouchers; 5) in 2020 the HRA received 3 (all have now been rescinded) and in 2021 1 Foster Youth to Independence vouchers; and 6) on July 1, the HRA received 15 Emergency Housing Vouchers and 30 vouchers due to Moorhead PHAs repositioning of 30 of its Public Housing units.

The EHV program was funded through the American Rescue Plan Act. The EHV's come with higher administrative fees and service funding. They are targeted at those fleeing domestic violence, homeless, at risk of homeless, and recently homeless households.

As of October 1, 2021, there are a total of 675 households of a possible 742 leased from the HRA Housing Choice Voucher program. We are working with 6 additional households from other housing authorities. We have 551 vouchers under our main HCV HUD contract; 177 under our Mainstream HCV contract; and 15 under our HCV Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) contract.

Of the current 550 vouchers under our main contract, 500 vouchers are currently leased: 433 of 455 regular vouchers; 45 out of 50 Tenant Protection Vouchers; 0 of 1 FYI vouchers; and 22 of 40 VASH vouchers. We have issued 5 regular vouchers; 2 tenant protection vouchers; and 12 VASH vouchers. Five of the 12 VASH are referrals from the Bemidji area. We have 3 additional VASH referrals from Bemidji and are working with 5 additional households to issue a regular voucher. We are working with one more person to issue an FYI voucher.

162 out of 177 Mainstream vouchers are under lease. We have issued 16 Mainstream vouchers and are working with 3 additional households.

13 of 15 EHV vouchers are under lease and 2 additional vouchers have been issued.

We have 37 individuals enrolled in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We have had 46 FSS participants in the past 12 months. Staff is working with additional households to enroll them in the program. We can serve up to 50 households on the FSS program under our current Action Plan.

There are 37 households remaining on our waiting list that have not been contacted to issue a voucher. The waiting list remains closed to the general public except those age 75 or older. Seventeen of these households will be contacted to let them know a voucher is available for them. We will contact the remaining 20 before the end of the year then need to open our waiting list again in early 2022.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes

Prairie Horizons Townhomes had one unit substantially damaged by a tenant-caused fire at the end of July. HRA staff are working with the new property insurance provider HAI, Housing Authority Insurance, to see that repairs are made as quickly as possible. The unit will be gutted to the studs. The total cost is approximately \$200,000. This will be the largest claim in the 46-year history of the HRA. The construction contract has been signed and the insurance agency has given permission to proceed.

Prairie Horizons Townhomes are 8 townhome permanent supportive housing units for families located in south Moorhead, across from Fieldcrest Townhomes. The HRA constructed the development in 2012 using Minnesota Housing financing. The funding is in the form of deferred loans that will be forgiven in part after 20 years. There is a small portion (\$337,076) that is deferred for 30 years at 0% interest that must be repaid. The HRA owns and manages these 8 units (5 2-bedrooms, 2 3-bedrooms, and 1 4-bedroom). The rents in these units are subsidized with project-based Housing Choice Vouchers. Services are provided through the HRA Cares grant. They are sometimes referred to as East Prairie Horizons Townhomes or EPHT.

These units are adjacent to another 8-unit town home permanent supportive housing development, which are confusingly also called Prairie Horizons Townhomes or Easten Townhomes – south units. There are 4 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom units. The HRA owns 0.01% as a Special Limited Partner in the Easten Townhomes LLC. The HRA provided a \$330,000 deferred loan when the project was constructed in 2006. It bears 5% interest and is due in 2036.

There are an additional 30 units in this development located in north Moorhead. The HRA has project-based 8 Housing Choice Vouchers in the 8 south units and an additional 8 in the 30 north units. Support services are funded through the HRA Cares program.

An HRA staff person is officed at the site. She and a full time CCRI employee provide supports to both Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and other HRA Cares scattered-site participants. Both support services providers also have been providing DHS Housing Stabilization Services to the participants.

As of October 1, there are no vacant units other than the fire damaged unit. There is one vacant 3-bedroom in the Easten units which is in the process of being filled.

HRA Cares

HRA Cares is a HUD-funded Continuum of Care program. It is for individuals and families who are literally homeless and have a family member with a disabling condition. There are no time limits on the rental assistance or supportive services. We provide supports at the two Prairie Horizons Townhomes developments and in 48 scattered-site units. HRA Cares also provides rental assistance in the 48 scattered-site units. We are authorized to serve 64 households with these funds. The HRA administers the rental assistance and administers the program. We contract with CCRI for one additional full-time case manager. HRA staff also supervise and provide support services.

We are currently serving 55 households. Of the 55, 14 are at Prairie Horizons Townhomes; 1 is at Bright Sky Apartments; and 40 are in scattered-site units in Clay, Otter Tail, and Douglas Counties, MN, and in Fargo, ND. There are 32 singles and 23 families being served. Eleven households are searching for units.

We only are accepting applications through the Coordinated Access, Referral, Entry and Stabilization System (CARES). Those with the highest priority who meet the eligibility criteria will be accepted.

Homeless to Housed Rental Assistance

Homeless to Housed is a Minnesota-funded rental assistance program for high priority homeless families, youth, and singles across the counties of Clay, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin. It is a time-limited program for households experiencing homelessness who are unable to immediately receive a Housing Choice Voucher. It operates similarly to the HCV program.

The grant was initially funded in 2008 to serve 45 households. It has been renewed every 2 years since that time. Our current grant is to serve 62 households through September 30, 2023.

We are serving 60 of our authorized 62 households. Six more households are searching for a unit. There are 19 singles and 41 families currently being served. The grant targets families and youth-headed households. Leased households are from Clay, Traverse, Grant, and Douglas Counties. One family no longer needed a subsidy in October and one transferred to a Housing Choice Voucher.

The coordinated entry system shifted its priority during the Covid-19 emergency to households residing outside or in shelters.

Homework Starts with Home

Homework Starts with Home is a relatively new program offered by Minnesota Housing. In 2014, the HRA was one of 3 initial pilot locations for a rental assistance program that focused on families with school age children. We participated in the pilot until it ended in 2018. At the end of the pilot, Minnesota developed Homework Starts with Home. The HSWH program was based primarily upon the pilot operated by the HRA.

The HRA has been funded in each of the two rounds of competitive funding. It is the only agency that has been funded in each round. Throughout this time, the HRA has been the lead agency in a partnership all working towards ending child homelessness. The initial pilot partners were Churches United for the Homeless, Moorhead Public Schools, and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP). We now have 45 partner agencies including 14 school districts across 7 counties.

Due to the significant progress the HRA and its partner agencies have made in ending family and youth homelessness in the region, the partnership decided not to apply for Round 3 funding.

Unfortunately, we are hearing of a steep increase in the number of youth and families identified as homeless now that school is back in session and some of the eviction moratorium has been lifted. We are very concerned about what the end of the year may bring.

The current grant term runs from 8/1/2020-9/30/2023. We are anticipated to serve a total of 72 households during that time. We have served a total of 57 households thus far. Seventeen of these also were served under the first grant.

As of October 1, 39 households are leased; and 10 households are searching for units. Four new referrals have been received. These are primarily from Clay County. In the past month, 2 households transferred to the Housing Choice Voucher program and one voluntarily left the program. Current households are from Clay, Douglas, Wadena, and Otter Tail Counties.

Housing Supports (formerly GRH) in Scattered-Site Units

Housing Supports is a Minnesota-funded program operated through the Department of Human Services. It provides room and board payments (which we refer to as Rate 1) and supplemental services payments (which we refer to as Rate 2). Rate 1 pays for rent, utilities, telephones, transportation, and all basic needs items. Rate 2 pays for supportive services. We have a contract with Clay County Social Services to provide this program. We began providing it when we opened Gateway Gardens in 2010. 19 of the 24 units in the building use this funding source.

In 2016, we added a community option and started subcontracting for service provision with several area non-profit partners. The HRA does all program administration, administers all Rate 1, and provides some of the Rate 2 services. It is an extremely complex program to administer.

As of October 1, a total of 136 households are being served by the Housing Supports program in Clay County. There are 121 households leased in the scattered-site Housing Supports program – 9 with the HRA; 24 with CAPLP; 7 with the Presentation Partners in Housing; 10 with LMHC; 13 with Churches United; 9 with Metro Behavioral Health; 7 with the Lotus Center; and 38 with Summit Guidance. In addition, CCRI serves 15 Housing Supports clients at Gateway Gardens and 4 in scattered-site locations. 11 additional households are searching for units.

Minnesota DHS Community Infrastructure Grant

The Community Living Infrastructure Grant was a new grant program that began in 2018. Clay County is the grant recipient and the HRA is the project manager and provides the Housing Resource Specialist. The funds were allocated to help communities build up the necessary infrastructure so that individuals with disabilities can live fully integrated into the communities of their choice. The grant funds outreach workers, housing resource specialists, and administration. The original grant covered all 10 counties in West Central Minnesota and the three Community Action Programs serving the counties who each performed outreach. Mahube-Otwa has chosen to remain a partner but not be a sub-recipient for the grant that began 7/1/2021.

The HRA now has a 1.0 FTE Housing Resource Specialist (increase of 0.5 FTE) and a 0.05 project manager (increase of 0.02). There are 2 FTE outreach workers funded and employed by the CAP agencies. CAPLP (1.15 FTE) and WCMCA (.85 FTE) have hired dedicated outreach workers.

The new grant also includes a full-time eligibility worker for Clay County Social Services who started on September 1. This funding should assist the county in reducing its caseloads.

Staff has been working diligently on landlord engagement strategies.

Minnesota DHS Housing Stabilization Services

Housing Stabilization Services are a new Medicaid benefit available in Minnesota. It became available July 1, 2020. The HRA was the second agency in West Central Minnesota to become an approved provider. The HRA was approved to provide Housing Stabilization Services – both Housing Consultation and Transition & Sustaining Services effective July 2020. Four staff are currently trained on one or more Housing Stabilization Services roles.

Staff began Housing Consultations in 2020. Staff completed 5 consults in September. We have 2 staff members providing consultations. We have begun billing for transition and sustaining services. We have 16 current approved clients for these services.

Due to staff transitions and an inability to recoup our costs, we will only be doing on-going consultations and will not accept any additional HSS Transition & Sustaining Services participants. The participant eligibility/billing approval has been an extremely slow process state-wide. Challenges continue to be worked on with the state. The HRA has invested over \$85,000 in non-reimbursable costs in establishing this program but needs to pause until the financial issues are resolved.

Through the GROWTH program, staff is leading region-wide group aimed at getting this program to work for those who need it throughout our region.

Owner-Occupied Rehab Program

The HRA has operated and operates several distinct programs under the Owner-Occupied Rehab umbrella. The largest program is the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Small Cities Development Program (SCDP). Funds used for this program are federal HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that are allocated to the state for Greater Minnesota. DEED then holds annual competitive application rounds to award these funds to non-entitlement communities.

The HRA first started administering CDBG funds in 1974 or 1975. The agency stopped the program in the early 1990's due to local political challenges. The HRA once again started administering the program through DEED SCDP in 2008. Only cities and counties may apply for the funding. The HRA serves as the administrator. Clay County was the applicant for the 2008, 2010, and 2012 funding rounds. The City of Barnesville was the applicant in 2014 and the City of Sabin in 2016. The HRA has utilized HRA Tax Levy funds in 2010, 2014, 2019, and 2020 to leverage these rehabilitation resources.

All these loans have been deferred. Some have been forgiven after 10-15 years while others remain repayable. Each application has different terms.

Sabin

DEED awarded the City of Sabin SCDP funds to rehabilitate 10 homes. Eight projects are complete; and two are just waiting for windows to arrive. We were on-track to complete the work and close out the grant by the end of September but needed an extension due to delays in window delivery. DEED has performed a project monitoring of the grant. There was one finding due to the funds being repayable to the HRA instead of the City of Sabin. If we would have changed the language to the payment to the HRA "on behalf of the City of Sabin," we would not have had the issue. We do not need to correct these loan documents but will change the language for future grants.

Dilworth

The HRA staff applied for funding on behalf of the City of Dilworth for 2021 CDBG funding to DEED through the Small Cities Development Program. We received letters of interest from 67 homeowners and 9 commercial properties. We applied for \$922,000 on behalf of Dilworth to rehabilitate 21 owner-occupied homes and 7 businesses and were awarded the full amount requested in August. Our Rehabilitation Manager has started the environmental review process for the funding to be released in November. Applications will be sent to those who expressed interest when the funds are released.

RLP (Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program)

The Minnesota Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program is funded by the state. Funds are appropriated during each budget cycle. Local administrators work with homeowners to receive funding to rehabilitate their homes. Homeowners must be extremely or very low income to qualify for these funds. These funds can be used in conjunction with DEED SCDP and USDA HPG funds. In June, the legislature increased the loan limit from \$27,000 to \$37,500 per project.

The funding is in the form of deferred loans that are forgiven after 15 years if the household continues to reside in the home.

The HRA administered the RLP program in the 1980's and early 1990's. It applied to be an administrator and started administering the funds again in 2012.

Two projects were completed in May; one loan closed in August; and five applications are being processed.

HPG (USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grant)

The HRA received a Rural Development Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) in 2018. All funds are spent and the program was closed out at the end of September. This is the third USDA HPG application that was funded. The grants are less than \$100,000 and have been used as match for rural DEED SCPD projects. Dilworth is not in the USDA eligibility area, so we do not have a current grant pending.

2022 BUDGET:

The attached budget has very few changes from the information that was distributed in September. The individual budget detail is included as well. Each project budget shows 5 years of actuals as well as the 2021 and 2022 budget numbers. It includes spending some Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Fees and the use of ARPA funding awarded in 2021. The following assumptions are included in the budget proposal:

1. 1.35% health insurance increase with switch to Medica insurance provider.
2. 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2022 for all positions. (This includes ED).
3. All eligible staff receive step increases.
4. Includes 23 full-time (increase of 3) and 4 part-time employees (decrease of 2). Net increase of 2.55 FTEs. This includes increasing the Accounting Assistant to full-time if/when our current part-time person retires; adding three full-time HCV Rental Assistance Specialists/Inspectors; and adding one full-time Property Management Rental Assistance Specialist- currently part-time. As compared to the 2021 budget, it deletes one Assistant Housing Manager; a 0.25 Housing Supports person; 1.75 Housing Success Specialist (performing Housing Stabilization Services); and a 0.73 FTE Administrative Assistant. Funding remains in the budget to fill an open supportive services position if needed.

5. Includes maintaining the current health insurance plans offered. Cafeteria Plan amount stays at \$858.50 for those who were grandfathered in last year and wish to continue to receive cafeteria benefits (3 FT employees). For employees who were not grandfathered in, the HRA continues to pay the premiums for long-term disability for pre-2021 hires, single dental, basic life insurance and a percentage of the premiums for health insurance (100% for employee only or 75% for family coverage on a \$2800/\$5600 deductible policy) plus a minimum \$2800/year contribution to a VEBA or HSA account.
6. No 2022 tax levy.
7. Anticipates an average of 50 HSWH, 62 H2H, and 140 HS households in 2022.
8. Anticipates that all HCV vouchers are fully utilized in 2022.
9. Includes minimal Housing Stabilization Services operations.
10. Does not include any additional Covid-19 related funding, new vouchers, anticipated increases in federal funding, or receipt of Fieldcrest developer fees.

Commissioner Martin made a motion to approve the 2022 Budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.

SPACE AND STAFFING:

Space

The HRA entered into a 2-year contract with Clay County to rent 3002 square feet of space at the Family Service Center from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2023, at a rate of \$12.75 per square foot including all utilities and cleaning services. Clay County also agreed to fully furnish the space as requested by the HRA. There are 7 offices, 2 cubicles, and two front desk workstations. There are conference and break rooms as well. Staff proposes to hold the November board meeting at the site, if remote technology is in place. The 8-person Rental Assistance team is the process of moving into the space with a goal of being fully operational by November 1.

After the Rental Assistance team moves, two staff currently officed at Gateway Gardens will return to the main office. Three staff who are officed in the hallway and conference room will be able to move into offices. There will be ten people at the main office, eight people at the Family Service Center, one staff person at the Prairie Horizons Townhomes office, and two staff at Houge Estates. There also are five maintenance staff without a fixed office.

Director Lee suggested having our November or December Board meeting at the new office space so that commissioners can see it. We would need to publish the address prior to meeting.

Staffing

A Housing Success Specialist resigned at the end of July; the Administrative Assistant resigned on September 8; and the Service Coordinator resigned September 30. This is a decrease of 2.73 FTEs. The remaining Housing Success Specialist who was providing on-going Housing Stabilization Services has accepted the full-time Service Coordinator position. We now have no Housing Success Specialist or Administrative Assistant.

Staff believes that the landlord engagement aspect of the Housing Success Specialist duties can best be performed by an experienced HCV Rental Assistance Specialist, Sr. The proposed budget includes this position performing those duties on a half-time basis. The Administrative Assistant worked primarily for the Rental Assistance team. Due to the shift and responsibilities and the increased number of rental assistance vouchers, the Executive Director was authorized to hire two new Rental Assistance Specialists/Inspectors. Paul Green was hired to begin on October 18, and Mohammed Shaheen Azizi was hired to begin on November 1.

We may still need to hire another Housing Success Specialist, Homeless Programs Specialist, or Homeless Programs Assistant. Funding is included in the budget if this need arises. Staff is still accessing current needs.

PROPOSED 2022 UTILITY ALLOWANCES:

At least once every 12 months, the Clay County HRA is required to review the utility allowances in place for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. The allowances are based on average consumption and cost information. Changes are required to be made to the utility allowances if a change of more than 10% in a utility rate has occurred.

Since 2018 the HRA has contracted with Housing Authority Services of Akron, OH, to completely update our utility allowances. The analysis includes rural Cass and Clay County costs as well as Moorhead and Fargo costs.

It is anticipated that the new allowances will slightly increase HAP costs in 2022. The combined impact of the increase in payment standards and change in utility allowances is approximately \$24,000-\$25,000.

The proposed utility allowances for the Housing Choice Voucher Program were available for review and would be implemented on 1/1/2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dillard to approve the proposed 2022 utility allowances. Commissioner Schlotfeldt seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

OTHER:

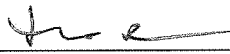
Travel

There is a NCRC NAHRO Board of Directors retreat in Chicago the first week in January that is currently scheduled to be in person. Director Lee would like to attend.

Commissioner Dillard made a motion to approve the travel request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlotfeldt and carried unanimously.

10:35 A.M. MEETING ADJOURNED:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m. by Commissioner Martin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillard and carried unanimously.



Tia Braseth, Secretary

11.17.21

Date