

LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

October 23, 2017
5:30 p.m.

Edgewood Homes
Conference Room

1. Call of Roll

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Upon call of roll, the following Commissioners responded present:

Jamie Davison
Maria Duran
Ellen Paulsen
Josh Powers
Bronson Star

Also present were members of the public Pat Benabe and James Dunn, and LDCHA staff members Beverly Hyatt, Ruth Lichtwardt, Gallal Obeid, and Shannon Oury.

2. Approve Minutes of the September 25, 2017 Board of Commissioners Meeting

Commissioner Paulsen moved to approve the minutes as presented. Vice Chair Duran seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Receive Comments from Tenants and Public

Mr. Dunn commented that he believes there is a much greater need for supportive housing. He mentioned the upcoming ballot measure on affordable housing and said that in his opinion there is plenty of affordable housing but that more supportive housing is needed, especially for people who are not good tenants and cause extra expense to the landlord. Executive Director Oury mentioned that Mr. Dunn is the landlord for many of the participants in supportive housing programs including HOPE House, and that he has provided units for other tenants that are very hard to house. Chair Powers spoke about how appreciative the Board is that Mr. Dunn helps to house these special populations and that he is aware how challenging many of them are to deal with.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Receive September 2017 Public Housing Financial Reports
- B. Receive September 2017 Clinton Place Financial Reports
- C. Receive September 2017 Section 8 Program Report
- D. Receive Lawrence Expanded Housing Third Quarter Financial Report
- E. Receive Positive Bright Start Annual Report
- F. Receive Quarterly Demographic Report

Mr. Dunn requested that Items 4C and 4F be separately discussed before the Consent Agenda was approved.

Executive Director Oury explained that for Item 4C, the final Section 8 financial report reflects that funding for 2017 is finally known, and is about \$4.4 million. The report also shows the reserve transition is complete although HUD keeps referring to a different number. There is good news in that HUD has approved most of the agency's shortfall funding, and is only holding back the rest pending projections for the next two months. Based on these numbers, the budget should have about an \$18,000 surplus. There are currently 715 of 732 vouchers being utilized with more to be issued. The utilization is normally about 98% with some fluctuation, and that number should be reached again soon. Ms. Oury introduced Gallal Obeid, the agency's new Data Analyst, who had served as an Ameri-corps volunteer at the agency and who was hired full time as soon as he completed that obligation. He issues the Section 8 vouchers and is steering the process for developing the agency's new website as well as providing the data analysis the agency needs.

Ms. Oury mentioned that Mr. Obeid had also prepared the Demographic Report for item 4F. She highlighted specific areas of the report such as the special vouchers, and spoke about the large proportion of very low or extremely low income households which are served by LDCHA.

Commissioner Star moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Vice Chair Duran seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Receive Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Oury reported that the LDCHA has been awarded the \$20,000 Kansas Health Foundation grant which she had spoken about at last month's Board meeting. Part of the grant will pay for two consultants who will meet with all employees for training, and who will look at the processes and structure of the agency departments. She reviewed the background of the consultants, who are currently with the Seattle Housing Authority. The new website will be rolled out in time for the 50th anniversary, and LDCHA will also be engaged in PR in conjunction with the anniversary, with the goal to better inform the community about what the agency does. Chair Powers said that the LDCHA does a lot of good work which is not generally known, and that the agency needs to tell more of those stories.

LDCHA has received notice that HUD did not appeal the original ruling in the reserve offset litigation and therefore the second lawsuit, which LDCHA has joined, possibly could be settled fairly quickly. Any settlement funds awarded the agency will be given to DCHI for future development or other projects approved by the Board. There were questions from the Board and general discussion about some of the possible directions the lawsuit or a settlement could take.

Ms. Oury discussed the policy on topped-out employees, and the current wage chart which is ten years old and needs to be revised. Several employees including herself are currently topped out. She explained that the policy has been for the Board to approve a one-time lump sum to a topped-out employee, and then approve another the next year if necessary. This means that topped-out employees do not get the benefit of their wage and the merit raise compounding as the other employees do. Ms. Oury had also sent the Board more information on what area housing authorities are paying their Executive Directors and that

information indicates that LDCHA is in line with the other agencies in the area. She said she would refuse a merit increase in the event that her salary approaches the limits set by HUD, one reason being that the agency could use the money for other things, but also because she agrees that there should be limits on what public servants earn. Chair Powers said that he does not believe that Ms. Oury's salary is too high compared to the other area agencies and especially considering the innovative and high-performing status of the LDCHA. There was discussion regarding when to vote to approve Ms. Oury's merit pay, and the Board opted to vote now since the budget is set.

Vice Chair Duran motioned to approve a one-time supplemental lump sum of 2.5% for Ms. Oury's merit pay. Commissioner Davison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Oury called the Board's attention to the new Renter's Education brochure. Resident Services is taking over the program and instituting some changes including offering evening classes with child care for working parents. The child care is being provided by Full Circle youth program participants who have completed Red Cross babysitting courses.

Ms. Oury reported that the Babcock Place boiler replacement project is almost completed. It has been a long and arduous process and the residents have lost water service several times as leaks were discovered and repaired, and for other issues. She expressed her appreciation for the patience of the residents. The initial walk-through is scheduled for Thursday, and while it is very likely that a few more problems will turn up, the good news is that the project should be finished by the time the heat needs to be turned on. The building does have reliable hot water again.

Ms. Oury told the Board that the Babcock Place newsletter had been included in the packet just for their general information. Many activities are taking place including several City Commission candidates coming to speak and answer questions throughout the month. There was comment about the trick or treating taking place with the Boys and Girls Club and neighborhood children on Halloween, which had been arranged by Vice Chair Duran.

B. Update on Agency Health Insurance

Executive Director Oury summarized the recent background on employee health insurance, and said that starting last year, with Board approval, the agency had begun paying 65% of an employee's premium and 35% of their dependent's premium. Previously the agency had paid 50% of all premiums. Finding affordable options has been extremely difficult for years, but employees seem happy with the current provider. Premiums are age-based so the amount varies widely. The LDCHA is still researching the options for next year and waiting on some quotes and the final result will be reported on at the next meeting.

C. Receive Energy Performance Contract Year 5 Savings Report

Executive Director Oury briefly outlined the Energy Performance contract and the loan repayment. She reported that the LDCHA is in the Year 5 of its twenty-year contract for energy performance savings, and that the amount of energy saved has dropped precipitously in the past year. There were still savings over the projections this year but just

barely. The terms of the contract stipulate that if there are no savings, Siemens must make up the difference. It is in their interest that the savings continue to be higher than projected and of course in the LDCHA's interest that the energy be saved. The biggest change was in electrical usage, something unknown has caused usage to go up excessively. Staff and the contractor, Siemens, will be working together to track down the reason.

Pat Benabe commented that she and her neighbor at Edgewood Homes both experience power surges, causing things like her dryer to start beeping when it is not being used. There was discussion of the difference between Edgewood Homes, where the residents pay their own electricity, and Babcock Place, where all the utilities are paid by LDCHA. It appears that the rise in electrical usage is primarily at Babcock Place.

D. Resolution 2017-21: Approve Policy for Disposition of Abandoned Personal Property

Executive Director Oury explained that the agency's disposition policy, which was originally written in 1972 and amended in 1984, had an administrative addendum added in 1980 specifically to outline the procedures to dispose of personal property abandoned by tenants. The proposed policy is greatly expanded and will supersede that addendum. It continues to follow state law and spells out more clearly how disposition is allowed. It also specifies that employees are not allowed to receive any of the abandoned property, which the previous addendum did not.

There were questions from Mr. Dunn regarding where the abandoned items are usually stored, and discussion with Ms. Benabe and Commissioner Davison about being able to donate some of the items to new tenants in need, or to local agencies such as Penn House for give-away. Soft items such as couches and mattresses will not be stored or given away due to the possibility of bedbugs.

Commissioner Paulsen moved to approve Resolution 2017-21. Vice Chair Duran seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Powers clarified that the resolution both approved the new policy and repealed the former administrative addendum.

E. Update on Potential Development of Units near Crisis Center

Executive Director Oury passed out copies of a document, "Consent to Representation after Consultation and Waiver of Conflict of Interest," which she had received late Friday. She gave a history of the background of the proposed Crisis Center and the associated still unnamed living units. There have been some changes in the development of plans for the Crisis Center in the past year, including the fact that the hospital has joined the discussion. The County has authorized that the units start to be built, after which, contingent on HUD and City Commission approval, the LDCHA would purchase the units and manage them. They would be designated as supportive housing for use by the special population served by Bert Nash. It appears that the living units will be built before anything happens with the Crisis Center. LDCHA is not concerned about filling the units because demand is so great.

However, all the parties involved are represented by the same law firm. The waiver which Ms. Oury gave the Board is in regards to the parties using the same law firm. The advantage is that the legal fees will be lower for the various entities, but if anything happens that might change the agreement, Ms. Oury will bring it back to the Board first. Any contracts will be brought to the Board for approval.

Commissioner Paulsen asked about the plans for the living space. Ms. Oury outlined what had been discussed so far, including whether there would be on-site supervision, which has not been decided yet. Ms. Oury said that she would like to have as many built-ins like tables and platform beds in each unit as possible, since the agency knows from its experience that the residents can arrive with very few possessions and no furniture.

Commissioner Paulsen moved to authorize the Executive Director to engage in development contract negotiations with Douglas County and Bert Nash to design and construct up to ten new living units on land adjacent to the proposed Bert Nash Crisis Center with the knowledge that the contract will be brought back to the Board for final approval, and also to allow the Executive Director to sign the Conflict of Interest Waiver. Commissioner Star seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Authorize Staff to Submit Fair Housing Assessment to HUD

Executive Director Oury briefly summarized the 312-page assessment and called the Board's attention to the goals which the LDCHA agreed to as its part of the document. She outlined the steps the agency will take, or already has, to meet the goals. There was discussion about reinstituting landlord outreach as part of the process.

Vice Chair Duran moved to authorize submission of the Fair Housing Assessment to HUD. Commissioner Paulsen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Calendar and Announcements

Executive Director Oury announced that the annual Team Celebration lunch is taking place on November 9 from noon – 2pm at the Union Pacific Depot. Invitations will be sent to the Board. LDCHA offices will be closed the next day November 10 for Veteran's Day Holiday.

7. Adjournment

There being no further items of business, Commissioner Star moved to adjourn. Commissioner Davison seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Chair

Secretary

Attest