

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

January 28, 2019
5:30 p.m.

Clinton Place
Meal Site

1. Call of Roll

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

Maria Duran
Walter Meyer, Jr.
Ellen Paulsen
Joshua Powers

Commissioner Davison was absent by prior arrangement. Also present were members of the public James Dunn and Dava Spohn, and LDCHA staff members Beverly Hyatt, Ruth Lichtwardt, Gallal Obeid, and Shannon Oury.

2. Approve Minutes of the December 17, 2018 Board of Commissioners Meeting

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

3. Receive Comments from Tenants and Public

Mr. Dunn commented on his previously reported issue with VASH tenants who leave damages when they move and due to the nature of the VASH program, are immediately rehoused without being required to pay for past damages. He said that LDCHA staff are attentive to that problem and he appreciates their efforts. Chair Powers asked if he thought the problem is getting better, and Mr. Dunn said that he just wanted to bring up that it is still an ongoing issue.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Receive LDCHA Quarterly Demographics Report

B. Resolution 2019-01: Approve 2019 Building Independence Inc. (BIND) Budget

C. Resolution 2019-02: Approve LDCHA Social Media Use Policy

Mr. Dunn requested more detail on each of the items. Executive Director Oury gave a synopsis of the Quarterly Demographics Report, highlighting some of the statistics of the participants. There was discussion with the Board about the waiting list and the number of units it would theoretically take to meet the actual demand. Ms. Oury said that she thinks the number of affordable units throughout the county is slowly increasing through public/private partnerships but is nowhere near meeting the need.

Commissioner Meyer suggested a study session to go over housing opportunities, and Ms. Oury said she would like one which would give her direction from the Board on what strategic focus the agency should take as future development opportunities and partnerships come up. She is being approached frequently by various development entities, and there will be more opportunities to create housing with the City's affordable housing trust fund. Chair Powers spoke in favor of a study session.

Mr. Dunn suggested that transportation issues be taken into account when creating affordable housing, especially outside Lawrence. Mr. Powers said that local public transportation entities should be consulted when new housing is being planned.

Ms. Oury gave a very brief explanation of the Building Independence Inc. budget, and provided background on the social media policy. If the Board approves it, an agency Facebook page will be created right away.

Commissioner Paulsen moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Meyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Oury reported that late Friday, the day after the Board packet went out, the federal government reopened and HUD staff are now back in their offices. There were several HUD deadlines which occurred during the shutdown, and the agency submitted the required items by the deadlines. HUD did make provision before the shutdown for continuing funding to public housing agencies until March. Another shutdown could occur in three weeks and the LDCHA operating budgets for the year are supposed to be brought to the Board for approval at the February meeting. The tools which HUD uses to calculate funding has not even been sent out yet, so staff assumes this will be another year when final funding information is released extremely late, and will again create the LDCHA budgets to be very conservative. There was discussion of the options that the agency would have had available, such as using its reserves or loaning itself funds from other accounts, if the shutdown had continued into March. Because the Section 8 reserves are now required to be held by HUD rather than at the public housing agency level, the majority of the LDCHA's reserve funds cannot be accessed to continue operations when HUD is closed due to government shutdown.

There is a REAC inspection scheduled for Edgewood Homes and scattered sites on February 11. Maintenance is very busy preparing and with work order items. Unfortunately all the snow is making the process more difficult because the same maintenance crew has the additional work of salting and clearing the pavement at all LDCHA properties. Yesterday several tree branches broke off because of the snow and that also had to be dealt with. Overall staff feels the property is in good shape.

Commissioner Paulsen asked if any response had been received from the manufacturer of the Clinton Place windows which had caused points to be lost during the REAC inspection in December. Ms. Oury said staff is trying to locate the correct person to talk to at the manufacturer.

Ms. Oury gave detailed background on the FSS and ROSS grants which RSO receives, and the positions that are paid by these grants. For an unknown reason, the ROSS grant was not renewed for 2019. It is not the first time this has occurred. It is possible that the grant is being changed or discontinued, or even defunded since in the President's budget there is zero allocated for this grant. Due to the government shutdown, there has been no response yet to LDCHA's request for a debrief or the appeal. Also due to the shutdown, the agency has not heard anything about the FSS grant renewal, and RSO staff salaries are being funded through the Section 8 budget and the current ROSS grant. She will keep the Board informed of the issue.

In better news, the Full Circle Youth Program is the August 2019 recipient of the Merc Cop's "Round Up for Change" program, where customers are encouraged to round up their purchase amounts and donate to various community groups. For Full Circle, the money will be used to buy healthy snacks because HUD grants have restrictions for purchasing food. Full Circle has also been given a \$500 grant from the Lawrence Board of Realtors. The grant from the Merc could be especially large and would fund the snacks for a very long time.

Ms. Oury reported that she and Mr. Obeid were at the City's HOME grant meeting on Thursday night. The City is in the same situation as everyone else, with the HOME funds being delayed due to the government shutdown, and so no one knows at this point what the amount of the grant is likely to be.

B. Resolution 2019-03: Approve Energy Performance Contract Loan Payment
Executive Director Oury gave background on the Energy Performance Contract and the energy efficiency work performed, the guaranteed savings, and the loan for the contract, which the agency lent to itself. She detailed the amount of savings over the current year.

Vice Chair Duran moved to approve Resolution 2019-03 in the amount of \$10,423.26. Commissioner Paulsen seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Resolution 2019-04: Approve Employee Performance Incentive Policy
Executive Director Oury outlined the process which staff had undertaken to update the EPIP policy since it was last discussed at the December, 2018 meeting. She went over the accompanying documents and highlighted the update to the Employee Manual which now incorporates the proposed policy in a new appendix. Chair Powers commented that he was pleased with the speed the policy was developed and Commissioner Meyer commented that the staff was to be commended for its accurate and prompt response to the Board's direction on the EPIP. Ms. Oury informed the Board that two departments were finished with the process of developing all their goals and the others were close. Mr. Meyer said that the next time the Board meets at the Edgewood location, he would like the Commissioners to walk around the office and see the whiteboards which have been installed to track individual and departmental progress. There was extensive discussion about the types of goals to be met for the EPIP, which must be measurable and are separate from the individual annual performance review goals.

Commissioner Paulsen moved to accept Resolution 2019-04 as presented. Vice Chair Duran seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discuss Wage Study

Executive Director Oury provided background on the issue of employees who are at the top of their wage scale. She turned the floor over to Mr. Obeid, who described the process and the sources he checked to compare LDCHA position salaries with other entities that have comparable positions. He found that several of the lower level positions pay more and some pay less than the current market rate with the comparators. He provided background on how he calculated the various ranges.

Meyer asked several questions which were answered by Ms. Oury and Mr. Obeid regarding the various levels and ranges within positions. It appears that there are only a couple of higher level positions which are not currently paying salaries on a par with local entities. There was considerable discussion about methods to raise uncompetitive salaries in a manner which is fair to all current employees and reflects job performance, and private vs. public sector models.

Chair Powers requested a five-year forecast of the impact of possible raises on the budget. Mr. Meyer said that since there is not apparent employee turnover due to pay, the more important issue is to address the topped-out long-term employees who are not seeing a real increase in salary. There was discussion of the entities which were used to compare salaries, and Mr. Meyer suggested looking east and additionally comparing with Johnson County.

Ms. Oury said the biggest competitor for maintenance positions especially is the City of Lawrence, and while the LDCHA is competitive on wages with the City, it cannot compete on benefits, especially health insurance, because of the vastly different size of the employee pools. Buying in to either the City or the County insurance would be prohibitively expensive. Mr. Powers commented that this is a good time to be looking at these issues since the region is close to full employment, and thanked everyone for the good discussion.

E. Update on the Cottages at Green's Lake

Executive Director Oury reported that the special use permit has been granted which allows better placement of the cottages on the site. A meeting with Pinkney Neighborhood was canceled due to the snow but will be rescheduled. The agency wants to keep open communication with the neighbors, and to make sure they are comfortable with the project. Some adjustments need to be made to the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation documents because they were drawn up as though the LDCHA will own the property, and the attorney is working on correcting those. The County has a draft of an RFP for a construction manager, which she has reviewed and which should be issued shortly. An environmental review is also being conducted by the City.

The Board reviewed drawings of the proposed buildings, and there was discussion on the large amount of paved parking lot, which Ms. Oury explained meets the City's parking requirements and includes fire truck access. The idea of a permeable parking surface was brought up by Commissioner Paulsen.

Ms. Oury reported that when she was recently in Colorado she visited the Fort Collins Housing Authority, which has a bed bug treatment room in one of their developments, and which she thinks is a great idea. The room heats up to kill bed bugs, which is the only reliable way to get rid of them. Anyone moving into the development is required to have all their clothes and items that might harbor bed bugs treated in the room prior to moving their possessions into their living unit. There was discussion on the large amount of money the LDCHA has paid to eradicate bed bugs, which takes multiple treatments when chemicals are used. Ms. Oury said she would bring the actual numbers to the Board.

F. Consider Changing Date of April Meetings

Executive Director Oury explained that due to the timing of the April board meetings as scheduled and the MTW Conference in Washington, DC, she would have to miss part of the conference. April is the month where all the annual meetings are conducted as well as the regular Board meeting. In addition, the meeting date as scheduled is unusually early since April 1 falls on a Monday, and it is unlikely the financial reports would be ready in time. For those reasons she would appreciate it if the Board would move the date of the meeting to the following Monday.

Commissioner Paulsen moved to change the date of the April meetings from April 22 to April 29 under Resolution 2019-05. Vice Chair Duran seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Calendar and Announcements

Executive Director Oury informed the Board that she will be out of the office on February 1 and 4. She and Dan Partridge will also be appearing in the morning on the Hank Booth radio show on KLWN to discuss the safe and affordable housing component of the Affordable Housing Plan.

7. Adjournment

There being no further items of business, Vice Chair Duran moved to adjourn. Commissioner Paulsen seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Chair

Secretary

Attest