Upper Explorerland Regional Housing Authority

Board Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Warren Fisk, Shannon Gebel, Ray Peterson, Mike Tucker, Bonnie Basemann, Jason Passmore, Randee Koenig, Amy Bouska, Gayle Decker, Mary Engstrom, Bernard Peterson, Michele Elsbernd, Denise Schneider, Jane Tibbals, Joyce Bakewell, Maryann Humpal

MEMBERS ABSENT: Josh Dreps, Dave Hart, Theresa Sherman, Marty Stanbrough, Joe Pisney, Crystal Reddel, Sheila Bullerman, Steve Roach, Dennis Koenig, Susan Scott, Charles Carroll, Mark Schmitt

STAFF PRESENT: Katie Nolte, Karine Schager, Kayla Miller, Casey Meyer, Heidi Hackman, Rachelle Howe

GUESTS: Ahmed Khalili-Decorah Tech

CALL TO ORDER: The Upper Explorerland RHA meeting was called to order at 1:08 pm by Chair Jason Passmore via Zoom Meeting Platform.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: A motion was made by Peterson/Schneider to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Bouska/Peterson to approve the minutes of the 12/19/2019 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORT UPDATE: Katie Nolte provided the Board with an update on the RHA financials and budget. HUD has released the new 2020 administration fee schedule. The per voucher fee for our region will go from $65.95 to $67.21 per voucher. HUD has provided each Housing Authority with the equivalent of two months of administrative fees as part of the CARES Act. UERHA received $55,000 to be used to cover new costs associated with administering the HCV program during COVID-19 and/or to expand services provided to clients during the pandemic. Katie provided the paperwork outlining CARES Act money allocations and eligible costs. A discussion was had about PPE, office preparation and supportive services. A motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Baseman/Gebel. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ITEMS FOR DISBURSEMENT: Katie Nolte provided the board the disbursements from January-March 2020 with their board packets for review. A motion was made to approve Items for Disbursement by Warren/Bouska. Motion carried unanimously.

PROGRAM UPDATES:

- Currently have 469 rental units leased up including those that merged with UERHA from the Low Rent Housing Agency of Decorah and 14 port bills. HUD's unit allocation for our RHA is 493 units. Katie is currently working on a projection plan to determine how many vouchers can be leased new each month over the course of the next year to maximize use of funds and available units. She will be providing HUD with the leasing plan.
- Five program participant families were displaced in Oelwein from the recent tornado. All families were assisted, and each family has now been relocated.

- The waiting list is currently running around 6 months long. This wait time is consistent with the wait time prior to COVID-19
- RHA staff will begin enforcing state law requiring all housing units to have carbon monoxide installed. Landlords will be provided with information on the regulations and expected to comply by their next scheduled inspection date.
- Katie Nolte summarized HUD Notice which states all Housing Authorities administering the HCV program will be waived of certain requirements for decision making until either July 31st,2020 or December 31st, 2020 depending on the nature of the requirements being waived. It allows new procedures to be put in place in a timely manner in response to COVID-19 without board approval for amendments to the administrative plan. It also grants authorities waivers and extensions on deadlines for Agency Plans and SEMAP requirements.
- Katie Nolte discussed new procedures UERHA has put in place for program operations in response to the pandemic. A new process has been developed for landlords and tenants to self-certify inspections of rental units with follow up inspections to be conducted after the agency returns to normal operations. Program participants are also being allowed to self-certify income decreases to ensure rent can be adjusted accordingly to account for lost wages to take effect immediately.
- Katie Nolte informed the board that the server housing all our client data and program software (HAPPY Software/MRI) had been hit with ransom ware during the last week of April. She discussed the possibility of using a portion of the COVID-19 funds to address IT and software needs by moving our software program from an internal server serviced by an outside IT tech to Software as a Service (SaaS) cloud based hosting provided by MRI software at a fixed cost. At this time Rachelle Howe called Ahmed Khalili (IT tech contractor serving of current IT infrastructure) and asked he provide the board his input. Ahmed addressed current server issues and capacity. The discussion was then tabled and will be further reviewed. UERPC staff will provide the board with a cost benefit analysis and recommendation at a future meeting.

FLOOR ITEMS: Rachelle Howe stated all board members or interested persons can contact her regarding Homes for Iowa. She is able to set up tours and help submit applications.

SCHEDULE NEXT RHA MEETING: The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Aug 18th or 20th, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. It will be decided when the meeting gets closer.

ADJOURMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Peterson/ Fisk at 1:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

_____

Heidi Hackman, **Board Secretary**