

MINUTES – January 11, 2023

The Housing Authority of the City of Meadville met in Annual Meeting in the Community Room at Holland Towers at 2:04 p.m., the 11th day of January 2023.

Members Present: Richard H. Zinn, Chair
Thomas G. Youngblood, Vice Chair
Marcia J. Yohe, Treasurer
James D. Rozakis, Secretary

Members Absent: Sonya D. Logan, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Also Present: Vanessa L. Rockovich, Executive Director
Jon M. Ketcham, Director of Housing Management
Tammy L. Brown, Property Manager/Administrative Assistant
Tommi Jo Davenport, Property Manager
Charlotte M. Mitchell, Management Aide
Ronald E. Smith, Maintenance Superintendent
Kyle M. Lynch, Assistant Maintenance Inspector
Daniel R. Harris, Housing Inspector
Barbara L. Houserman, Resident Initiatives Coordinator
Christopher D. Ferry, Solicitor
Jaime Kinder, Mayor City of Meadville
Gwen Smith, Active Aging
Mike Crowley, Meadville Tribune
Maryland Hicks, Holland Towers Resident
Christine A. Pelc, Holland Towers Resident
Denise A. DeBaise, Holland Towers Resident
Jacqueline A. Cummins, Holland Towers Resident
Kathleen A. Dunlap, Holland Towers Resident

A motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on December 14, 2022, was made by Mr. Rozakis, seconded by Mr. Youngblood, and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Jaime Kinder hand-carried a letter requesting an update on some of the lingering items expressed by Councilwoman Autumn Vogel at the City of Meadville Council Meeting held on Wednesday, January 4, 2023.

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Mr. Ketcham presented his prepared response to the concerns. He reported that when the housing authority contracted with Tri-County Pest in September 2021, Holland Towers had 32 bed bug and 22 roach infestations. As of December 2022, the bed bugs decreased to 7 and the roaches decreased to 3. In September 2021, Gill Commons had 12 bed bug and 29 roach problems. As of December 2022, there were not any bed bugs and the roaches decreased to 7. The housing authority spent \$41,767.25 between September 2021 and December 2022 to combat the problem. Mr. Ketcham stated that the biggest hurdle currently faced by the housing authority is tenant non-compliance with directives from the extermination company. We can evict for non-compliance but have not done so thus far. Most of our tenants have nowhere else to go. If Meadville City Council would prefer that we do start evicting tenants over this issue, we can look at it again.

Mr. Ketcham responded to Councilwoman Vogel's concerns regarding the ongoing maintenance issues with the elevator system at Holland Towers stating that on August 17, 2022, a new leveling system was installed on the freight elevator, at a cost of \$6,874.49. Other than a minor maintenance issue in November, no other issues have been reported.

Another of Councilwoman Vogel's concerns was regarding the resolution of the issues surrounding the recognition of the Holland Towers Resident Council, as well as the next steps to resolve conflicts with the Council. Mr. Ketcham outlined the progress reiterating the minutes of the housing authority's Regular Meeting held on November 9, 2022, where the solicitor reported that the tenants of Holland Towers had their election in October 2022. Mr. Ferry affirmed that Attorney Diane Adsit oversaw the election and certified the results. Mr. Ketcham pointed out that at the Regular Meeting held on December 12, 2022, Mr. Ferry clarified for the Holland Towers Resident Council some issues concerning their By-Laws. As far as Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Mr. Ferry and the housing authority are currently working together to create a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will then be used to create a bona fide partnership between all resident councils, the housing authority, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. Ketcham discussed a situation that occurred during the spring of 2021, when the housing authority encountered an instance of a Holland Towers tenant living in an uninhabitable condition, creating a health and safety issue for the rest of our tenants. The Fire Chief was brought in to evaluate, and ultimately condemn the unit, enabling us to evict the tenant. This was one of our worst bed bug infestations, in addition to the myriad of other unsanitary conditions in the unit. The Fire Chief instructed us to bring him in sooner if we encountered similar situations. As a landlord, the housing authority believed the Fire Chief was the route to go for health and safety inspections. Additionally, the housing authority thought that these services were covered by the annual PILOT payment to the city. The most recent payment being \$74,395.00. If the City of Meadville disagrees with this process, the housing authority is open to suggestions to assure that all housing authority tenants are able to reside in a healthy and safe environment.

Councilwoman Vogel requested updates on trash accumulation issues on the Holland Tower property. Mr. Ketcham reported that the trash compactor was found to be a contributing factor to the roaches and was removed at the end of August 2022. The housing authority is in the process of scheduling the trash chute at Holland Towers be professionally cleaned. Following the cleaning, Tri-County Pest Control will be scheduled to spray the trash chute.

Mr. Ketcham stated that washers and dryers at Holland Towers are provided and serviced by an outside vendor. When a machine is out of order, the tenants have a phone number to reach the vendor directly. There have not been any issues with the vendor servicing the equipment. Additionally, a tenant incorrectly reported last summer that the housing authority did not have any handicapped accessible machines. All the dryers are front load and 4 of the 6 washers are front load as well which constitutes handicap accessible equipment.

Although not outlined in the letter presented by Mayor Kinder, Mr. Ketcham also wanted to address a recent written complaint, received by the office anonymously, comparing the housing authority to Nazi Gestapo for enforcing the smoking ban in tenant's apartments and making them go outside in the cold weather. He reiterated that Federal law prohibits smoking on all HUD properties. This is not negotiable. The housing authority is just enforcing HUD mandates.

In support of the Holland Towers' Property Manager, Mr. Ketcham stated that any errors concerning dates (year) that appeared on the tenant recertification paperwork, that was recently distributed, as we transition into a new year are not intentional. He affirmed that the Holland Towers' Property Manager is available to meet with tenants, in their units or in her office, to assist them with filling out their paperwork and/or answer any questions or concerns. They can fill it out on their own if they prefer or call to schedule an appointment with her if they need assistance or wish to discuss private matters.

Since Councilwoman Vogel's questions regarding the maintenance records reflective of mold complaints at housing authority properties was included in the letter, but not discussed at the Council Meeting, Ms. Yohe requested further information. Ms. Rockovich responded stating that once the matter was brought to her attention, work order requests were researched showing none were made regarding this particular issue. The Property Manager scheduled an inspection to examine the concern, only to find that the sole problem was in the caulking of the bathtub, between the tub and shower surround. A work order was generated to remove the old caulking and replace with new. Ms. Rockovich stated that she was made aware, during the inspection, that several smoke alarms were missing and/or inoperable, as well as some housekeeping issues. A reinspection was scheduled at which Ms. Rockovich accompanied the Property Manager and the Assistant Maintenance Inspector. It was confirmed that the conditions had improved, and all smoke alarms were in their designated locations and operable. The tenant showed Ms. Rockovich the location of the concern. Ms. Rockovich documented the repair by photographing the newly installed caulking.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ferry reported the status of securing a BINGO permit for the Holland Towers residents. He is working Ms. Commins, Resident Council President and Christine Krzysiak, the County Treasurer. Mr. Ferry will accompany Ms. Commins to the courthouse to successfully complete the form needed for the permit.

Mr. Ferry explained that state and federal laws that must be followed. He affirmed that the housing authority is following the required provisions regarding notices of Public Meetings and is fully compliant within the law. The concern expressed by Ms. Commins was that most people do not receive the newspaper and was not aware of the Public Meeting. Mr. Ferry stated that Ms. Rockovich provided a copy of the Public Meeting Notice with the tenants' billing statements, which was above the requirement.

Mr. Ferry stated he talked about the renovation project at last month's meeting. He reiterated that there is a process before construction begins. It is not a requirement that the board officially approve the plans, yet he encouraged the members to review the plans, so no items are missed.

CAPITAL FUND GRANT PROGRAM

Ms. Rockovich reported that she and Mr. Ketcham participated in a phone conversation with the architects for final plans which should be ready around the first part of February, with bids opening around the first of March. She may schedule a meeting at the end of March, or the first of April to approve bids. Relocating of tenants may begin around June 1.

Mr. Youngblood asked if any tenants would have to move out permanently due to the decrease of units during the creation of the handicap accessible units. Ms. Rockovich responded stating that there are currently 18 vacant units, and the creation of the handicap accessible units will decrease the total available apartments by 12 leaving 6 apartments to be filled by families off of the waiting list. Mr. Youngblood asked whose idea was it to combine units to create handicap accessible units. Ms. Rockovich stated that during her inspection of the apartments in preparation for the REAC inspection, she felt that the existing handicap accessible units did not successfully meet the required size of space for wheelchair throughout the apartment. She stated that it was a work in progress with the architect in an effort to try and make larger units by combining efficiency apartments which ultimately evolved into the final stage of making handicap accessible units.

Ms. Rockovich also supplied information that we did not receive the At-Risk Receivership/Substandard Troubled Grant. We did meet all criteria, just did not score high enough.

HOLLAND TOWERS

Ms. Brown reported that there are 18 vacancies and 61 people on the waiting list. She completed 9 annual and 1 interim recertifications during December 2022. There were not any eviction notices, new leases, or housekeeping inspections. Ms. Brown received 1 notice to vacate. She reported the tenants' accounts receivable totaled \$8,991.92.

GILL VILLAGE REPORTS

Ms. Davenport reported that there were 20 vacancies. She signed a new lease in December 2022. Ms. Davenport completed 3 annual and 2 interims recertifications. There were not any eviction notices, notices to vacate, or housekeeping inspections. The tenants' accounts receivable totaled \$43,670.17.

Ms. Rockovich advised the board that there was a waterline break in a unit the day after Christmas. The maintenance staff worked to remove the drywall on the walls and ceilings in the kitchen and living room areas as well as the insulation above the ceiling. She stated that the tenant was relocated to a vacant unit until the restoration is completed.

ELM, MORGAN, SCATTERED SITES

Ms. Davenport reported that there were 8 vacancies. She completed 9 annual and zero interim recertifications. There were not any new leases, eviction notices, or notices to vacate. Ms. Davenport conducted one housekeeping inspection. Tenants' accounts receivable totaled \$63,441.46.

FAMILY SITE WAITING LIST

The waiting list for William Gill Commons, Elmwood, Morgan Village, and Scattered Sites is One-Bedroom - 39; Two-Bedroom - 20; Three-Bedroom - 4; Four-Bedroom - 2; and Five-Bedroom - 3.

SNODGRASS REPORTS

Ms. Brown reported there were 3 vacancies with 12 people waiting list. There were not any new leases. She did not complete any annual or interim recertifications. There was one eviction notice and one notice to vacate, and no housing keeping inspections were none. Tenant accounts receivable totaled \$393.00.

Ms. Rockovich reported that there were 12 water line breaks. There is extensive damage to the property as the maintenance staff removed drywall from several walls and ceilings throughout the building. ServiceMaster was contracted to mitigate some of areas as well as disposal and providing equipment to dry the areas.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Mr. Smith reported 257 work orders generated for December 2022 with 40 outstanding. There were 29 vacancy fix-up work orders with one unit completed. Mr. Smith stated that there were 6 move-in inspections.

EXTERMINATION REPORT

Mr. Lynch reported on the exterminations. There were currently 14 units being treated at Holland Towers with 1 being on a 45-day clear. Quarterly treatments at Holland Towers were completed on the 6th and 7th floors. Gill Commons has 7 units being treated. Quarterly treatments were conducted in the 4th, 6th & 7th lots. Expenses for treatments totaled \$24,796.10 for the calendar year 2022.

SECTION 8 CHOICE VOUCHER REPORTS

Ms. Rockovich reported 166 units under contract with 3 port outs during the month of December 2022. She stated there were 9 families on the waiting list and 9 outstanding vouchers. The HAP expenses for December 2022 was \$58,660.98.

SECTION 8 INSPECTIONS

Mr. Harris reported 23 Section 8 inspections during the month of December 2022 with 5 of them being new units. He stated that one unit failed.

APPLICATIONS

Ms. Mitchell reported that she received 11 applications, of which 9 are in process and 2 we are waiting for information.

RESIDENT INITIATIVE REPORTS

Ms. Houserman reported that the Christmas Grab N' Go events held at William Gill, and Morgan Village, and the Chula Center went exceedingly well. These events are made possible through the hard work of both the William Gill and Meadville Housing Resident Councils.

Ms. Houserman reported that the children are scheduled to go ice skating at the MARC on Friday, January 20, 2023, from 1:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. She has 20 children have enrolled for the event. The MARC is providing teachers for children that do not know how to skate.

Ms. Houserman stated that she is presently working with Alice Wofford of Bethany Christian Services. They are a new organization that provide services for women struggling from addiction who are either pregnant and/or mothers with newborns. She stated that the agency is known as Bethany's ReNew Program, and they provide specialized case management through child welfare, criminal justice and alcohol and drug treatment.

Ms. Houserman reported that Arts classes will begin the week of January 16, 2023, at William Gill. Arts classes will begin the week of January 23, 2023, at the VFW at Morgan Village.

RESOLUTIONS

A motion to adopt Resolution No. 15 of 2023 to extend the landscaping contract to December 31, 2023, was made by Ms. Yohe, seconded by Mr. Youngblood, and unanimously approved.

A motion to adopt Resolution 16 of 2023 to approve the Mileage Rate for 2023 was made by Mr. Youngblood, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Ketcham presented the November 2022 Financial Statements and December 2022 List of Bills. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for audit was made by Mr. Rozakis, seconded by Mr. Youngblood, and unanimously approved.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

There are not any committees set up at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Rockovich stated that the Annual Public Meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. She plans to discuss changes to current policies, the creation of new policies, the Capital Fund Grant Program 5-year Budget, as well as revisions to flat rents, utility allowances, and minimum rent. As stated in the notice, written public comment is due by March 10, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Rockovich stated the Housing Authority received proposals to clean the trash chute, dryer vents, and exhaust fans at Holland Towers. The cost to clean the trash chute is \$875.00, the dryer vents is \$700.00, and the exhaust fan is \$9,475.00. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the three quotes for a total of \$11, 050 was made by Ms. Yohe, seconded by Mr. Youngblood, and unanimously approved.

Ms. Rockovich discussed the quote to add ten security cameras to cover dead zones around the exterior of the building, within the lobby area, and in the community room for a total cost of \$9,337.00. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the installation of ten additional security cameras for Holland Towers was made by Mr. Youngblood, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were not any communications to be presented.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Yohe, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Submitted,

James D. Rozakis, Secretary