

## **MINUTES – April 12, 2023**

The Housing Authority of the City of Meadville met in Regular Meeting in the Community Room at Holland Towers at 2:03 p.m., the 12th day of April 2023.

Members Present: Richard H. Zinn, Chair  
Marcia J. Yohe, Treasurer  
James D. Rozakis, Secretary  
Sonya D. Logan, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Members Absent: Thomas G. Youngblood, Vice Chair

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  
Ronald E. Smith, Maintenance Superintendent  
Daniel R. Harris, Housing Inspector  
Barbara L. Houserman, Resident Initiatives Coordinator  
Charlotte M. Mitchell, Management Aide  
Christopher D. Ferry, Solicitor  
Jacqueline A. Commins, Holland Towers Resident  
Kathleen A. Dunlap, Holland Towers Resident  
Sandra M. Hollabaugh, Holland Towers Resident  
Carl R. Oswald, Holland Towers Resident  
Gwen Smith, Active Aging

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023, meeting was made by Mr. Rozakis, seconded by Ms. Logan, and unanimously approved.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Oswald discussed the Holland Towers Resident Council Letter and the housing authority's response that was provided to all tenants. He clarified some of the concerns stated in the Resident Council letter, noting that he remembers when the previous Executive Director had all of the asbestos removed from Holland Towers.

### **SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Ferry clarified the purpose of the executive session held during the March 8, 2023, regular meeting was for personnel reasons. He stated that once the paperwork for the BINGO permit is finalized, he will deliver it to Ms. Commins. Mr. Ferry informed the board that monies were released to the housing authority from the Court of Common Pleas. He also stated that the courts are working to resolve these outstanding cases in the near future.

## **CAPITAL FUND GRANT PROGRAM**

Ms. Rockovich provided the proposed bid dates for the apartment renovations at Holland Towers. She stated that Mr. Smith was scheduled to meet with a moving company to transfer tenants to temporary apartments and to return them to a completed apartment. Ms. Rockovich stated that the housing authority will be scheduling and start moving tenants to the temporary apartments as the maintenance staff have them prepared.

Ms. Rockovich reported during the past windstorm affecting the entire Crawford County area, the housing authority discovered some areas of concern. After a prior power outage, all the important computer systems were moved to be powered by the emergency generator. It was discovered during the recent storm that those systems lost power. Ms. Rockovich requested the architect to incorporate an independent generator specifically for the office space. Since the offices will be relocated to the Learning Center at William Gill Commons, she requested a generator to power that building. Since this is an additional design cost, she is requesting an increase in their fee of a cost not to exceed \$30,000. A motion to approve additional architectural/engineering fees at a cost not to \$30,000 to add an office generator at Holland Towers and a building generator at the Learning Center at William Gill Commons was made by Ms. Yohe, was seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

Ms. Rockovich reported that the housing authority is applying for the Housing-Related Hazards & Lead-based Paint Capital Fund Program. The purpose of the grant is to eliminate hazards in public housing. Ms. Rockovich stated that the application will be housing-authority wide to upgrade electrical services to replace gas ranges with electric ranges. She stated the maximum amount permitted for each application is \$5,000,000. The application for this grant is due on April 13, 2023.

## **ELM, MORGAN, SCATTERED SITES**

Ms. Davenport reported that there were 7 vacancies, with no new leases signed in March 2023. There were 8 annual and 6 interim recertifications conducted. She served 16 eviction notices and did not receive any notices to vacate. Ms. Davenport did not conduct any housekeeping inspections. Tenants' Accounts Receivable totaled \$43,102.28.

## **GILL VILLAGE REPORTS**

Ms. Davenport reported that there were 20 vacancies with 3 new leases signed in March 2023. There were 9 annual recertifications and 3 interim recertifications conducted. She served 1 eviction notice and received 1 notice to vacate. Ms. Davenport did not conduct any housekeeping inspections. Tenants' Accounts Receivable totaled \$17,013.39.

## **FAMILY SITE WAITING LIST**

The waiting list for William Gill Commons, Elmwood, Morgan Village, and Scattered Sites is One-Bedroom - 32; Two-Bedroom - 5; Three-Bedroom - 3; Four-Bedroom - 3; and Five-Bedroom - 3.

## **HOLLAND TOWERS**

Ms. Brown reported that there were 23 vacancies and 61 people on the waiting list in March 2023. There were 14 annual recertifications and 0 interim recertifications conducted. She did not serve any eviction notices and did not receive any notices to vacate. Ms. Brown did not conduct any housekeeping inspections. Tenant accounts receivable totaled \$1,947.80.

## RESIDENT COUNCIL LETTER

Mr. Ketcham reported on a letter received from the Holland Towers Resident Council that listed questions, comments, and concerns about the upcoming Holland Towers renovation project. He provided a copy of the letter and his response to all Holland Towers residents, so everyone here is on the same page. Mr. Ketcham stated each concern and his provided response as follows:

1. The resident has the choice to move back into their original apartment after their apartment is renovated. Later some of us learned for the first time at the board meeting, when the architect explained the plans to the board, that the 02/04 and 18/20 stacks were going to be combined to make bigger handicapped apartments and the tenants in those stacks would not be able to return to their original apartment. The current handicapped apartments in the 09 stack would move to the renovated apartments, necessitating only one move. Since this information was not given at a tenant meeting, please verify the plan for all tenants.

RESPONSE: Most residents will be given the choice to move back into their original apartment after their apartment is renovated. However, there are some exceptions. Those displaced to allow for the creation of the new handicapped accessible units will not have that option. Furthermore, those with unresolved bed bug infestations and/or severe housekeeping issues will not be eligible to move into newly renovated units until those infestations have been eradicated and/or housekeeping issues resolved.

2. The popcorn ceilings will be removed. Some residents were told that this will not be happening. One resident said he read an article that said those types of ceilings contain asbestos. A resident with a construction background said those ceilings could be covered with drywall and another said ¼ inch sheetrock could be used adding noise absorption.

RESPONSE: The popcorn ceilings are not being removed. The popcorn ceilings that did have asbestos in them were removed and the ceilings were re-popcorned back in 1997.

3. All floors including the kitchen will be replaced with new flooring. We were only given a choice of colors, not durability. If this is used in the bathroom as well, will it be resistant to moisture? We know from what was used in the elevators, that it soon had holes where the thin plastic peeled off, and that it is not easy to keep clean. Maybe more research needs to be done to obtain a more suitable flooring that will last.

RESPONSE: Our architect, who we have worked with for many years, does the research for suitable flooring. We are relying on their expertise to select the best fit for the Holland Towers residents.

4. The bathroom will be remodeled to include a shower, (no bathtub), new sink with a cabinet under it, and a higher toilet. Some tenants were told that a fan cannot be put in the bathrooms to remove moisture when showering, but a heat lamp will be added.

RESPONSE: Fans are not being put in the bathrooms as there is no way to vent them to the outside. However, a heat lamp will be added to all apartments.

5. A wall will be added to divide the studio apartment into two rooms. Duct work will be placed from the wall to the kitchen through open arched doorways. The sample apartment did not show arched doorways or duct work.

RESPONSE: There will not be any duct work incorporated into the wall used to divide the studio apartments into two rooms. The only duct work to be added anywhere is in a portion of the pantry cupboards that is tied into the air handler.

A request was made to explain the following systems to all of us, so we can have a better understanding of what to expect.

- a. Lighting (there currently is a wall light outside the kitchen pantry cabinet, an overhead hallway light and a fluorescent light in the kitchen.) One resident saw the new sample lights in the community room, but when asking about it, others were told it is unknown what the new lights will be.

RESPONSE: There will not be any more wall lights; all lights will be installed on the ceilings in the living room and bedroom areas. The lighting in the kitchens will also be updated. The exact lights to be used are unknown as these will be dependent on what is available to the contractor at the time. Again, this will be overseen by our architectural firm.

- b. Electrical outlets, landline jacks and cable lines (one electrical unit will be removed by the air conditioner to be put in the added wall for the heating/cooling unit; will that one be dedicated to the unit so other items cannot be plugged in it? Will there be sufficient outlets in the apartment to plug in lamps, electric recliners, TVs, DVD players, etc.?)

RESPONSE: There will be approximately the same number of outlets in the newly renovated apartments. The new wall is anticipated to include four (4) outlets.

- c. Ventilation system (we are very happy to have our air quality improved but are unsure how it exchanges the air and purifies it, as some of us were told the cabinet will be completed closed in and covered with drywall.)

RESPONSE: The new air handler duct will be enclosed behind drywall EXCEPT for the vent near the top where fresh air from outside will be brought into the apartment. The existing vent in the bathroom will still be used to draw the old air out of the apartments and ultimately out of the building.

- d. Heating/cooling unit (We are pleased that we will have some control over the temperature in our residence but have concerns since the plans now will use the current heating registers as well. This will not eliminate the problem of shared registers that we cannot control with openings that bugs can travel from one apartment to another. For a number of residents, keeping the boilers at 80 degrees or more creates additional problems for those with breathing issues, temperature sensitive medications, medical conditions that are exacerbated by heat, etc. For those of us that have reasonable accommodations for an air conditioner year round, will the new unit cool just as well as the wall unit did?)

RESPONSE: The existing boiler heating system cannot be removed without re-constructing the entire building. However, the “shared” registers will be better sealed to prevent the spread of anything from one unit to another. As for reasonable accommodations for year-round use of the air conditioning, those have not been required for some time now. The heating/cooling units that will be installed in the newly renovated apartments are similar to what have been in the offices for over a decade, and they work exactly how they are intended to.

- e. Closets. Not all residents were informed that the new closets will not have doors. When asked about shelving in the one remaining kitchen closet to store pantry items, one resident was told yes, it would. Others were told that the shelves would not be to store pantry items but would be used for storage over the clothing rod. Tenants who desire to store pantry items in that closet would need to purchase storage stands. Is there an option for residents who desire closets with doors?

RESPONSE: Closets will no longer have doors. Tenants are welcome to hang curtains/drapes or other coverings for the closets if they so desire.

The Resident Council requested an explanation of the following:

- A plan to assist current residents in improving their housekeeping skills or getting help with mental health issues that prevent them from maintaining a decent, safe, and sanitary apartment. Those who have the need to improve will continue to live as they are now unless it is necessary for them to change to continue to live at Holland Towers. It should be abundantly clear from the very beginning that some living conditions will not be tolerated in the newly renovated apartments and are cause for eviction. Within weeks those residents who are moved to a temporary apartment during the renovation, and again when they are moved back into the newly renovated apartment will have the apartment in the state it currently is in if they are not informed what is expected of them. It would be a shame to waste all the money that was spent moving them and renovating, if their way of living is not changed. HUD did require housekeeping inspections. Is this going to continue? If they are, a tenant should have a copy of the form before the lease is signed and given a copy of the form after the inspection stating if they passed and if not what has to be improved before reinspection along with the date of reinspection.

RESPONSE: As mentioned previously, not all residents will be eligible to move into the newly renovated apartments. Those with uncontrolled infestations will not be eligible. As for developing a plan to assist residents in improving their housekeeping skills, that is an excellent suggestion and one that the Holland Towers Resident Council is uniquely positioned to develop, implement, and oversee. There's MOU money to assist them in bringing their idea to fruition.

- Construction/Relocation plan. Some people think that the construction will start with the 18/20 stacks and once those are finished, the individuals that live in the 09 stack will be moved into those: then the 09 stack will be done and residents will move into those apartments staying there, leaving another stack to be done. Others think they will be doing the stacks in order. While construction is being done, what plan is there to protect our rights provided by the clean air act and cause the least amount of disruption to those who continue to live close by the stacks that are being renovated?

RESPONSE: The architect will decide which stacks get done, and in what order. They will be overseeing the entire project to make sure that no tenant's rights are infringed upon. There will be some disruption to everyone as a project of this magnitude is bound to cause some inconvenience to daily living. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding during this cocooning process.

- Requirements for the new handicapped accessible apartments, the current one-bedroom apartments that have a lot more space, and reasonable accommodations. Housing will have discrimination lawsuits if policies are not in writing and enforced rather than subjectively deciding "case by case" who qualifies. Already residents feel that some are favored "because they kiss up to the office/" and others-feel retaliated against because they are "outspoken and ask questions."

RESPONSE: Per HUD guidelines, eligibility for the new handicapped accessible units will be determined on a case-by-case basis, the same way it has always been determined at this housing authority.

- Garbage chute plan. Some residents are not able to take their garbage outside, especially those in chairs that cannot lift high enough. One resident injured her arm requiring a doctor's visit. Although closing the chute accommodates the office because it eliminates using the chute, it is more than an inconvenience to some residents. There are occasions when HACM uses the dumpsters for trash from their trunk, construction materials, unwanted furniture, boxes, etc. and the dumpsters are overflowing, attracting crows pecking at the bags, stray cats hanging around, wind blowing garbage around the parking lot, flies, bees, etc. as well as being unsightly and emitting unpleasant aromas. Also, residents still leave trash outside the chute closet still attracting bugs and leaving stains on the floor.

RESPONSE: The garbage chute will remain closed for the foreseeable future. If that changes, we will let you know. Should tenants be unable to place trash in the outside receptacle, they are encouraged to submit a reasonable accommodation request.

### **SNODGRASS REPORT**

Ms. Brown reported that there were 5 vacancies. She did not sign any new leases as the apartments were receiving new flooring. She conducted one annual recertification and no interim recertifications. She did not serve any eviction notices and did not receive any notices to vacate. Ms. Brown did not conduct any housekeeping inspections. Tenant accounts receivable total \$3,100.54.

### **MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Mr. Smith reported 242 work orders were generated during March 2023 with 24 still outstanding, with 1 tenant work order, 3 were management generated, and 20 for vacancy fix-up. He stated six vacant apartments were completed. There were four move-in inspections completed.

### **EXTERMINATION REPORT**

Ms. Rockovich reported on the exterminations. Holland Towers currently has 11 units being treated for infestations with none on a 45-day clear. She stated that the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors had quarterly treatments. Ms. Rockovich reported that William Gill Commons currently has 9 units being treated and none are on 45-day clear. The quarterly treatment included Lots 4, 6, and 7.

### **SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER REPORT**

Ms. Rockovich reported 164 units under contract with 3 port outs. There are 20 VASH vouchers under contract that are included in the total during the month of March 2023. She stated there were 3 families on the waiting list and no outstanding vouchers. The Housing Assistance Payment expenses for March 2023 were \$59,618.92.

### **SECTION 8 HOUSING INSPECTION REPORT**

Mr. Harris reported there were 13 inspections, with 1 for new a unit. Two of the inspections failed.

### **APPLICATIONS**

Ms. Mitchell reported 15 applications were received, with 15 waiting on documents and needed processed.

### **RESIDENT INITIATIVE PROJECTS REPORTS**

Ms. Houserman reported she spoke with Kelly Cochran of Pre-K Counts confirming they will occupy the day care center at William Gill Commons in July to begin enrollment. Ms. Cochran informed her that the grant requires a minimum of 20 children ages 3-5 and they will bus the children into the center to meet the quota.

Ms. Houserman reported that the Summer Lunch Food Training will take place at the William Gill Community Center on Friday, June 9, at 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Houserman stated 14 children ages 5-12 are enrolled in classes at Southwick Kickboxing & Grappling. Classes are held on Tuesday's and Thursday's from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. The last class will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2023.

Ms. Houserman discussed art classes at William Gill and Morgan Village which will commence the week of June 12, 2023. Classes will be taught by AnneMarie Neal, President of the William Gill Council and by Melody Bush, President of the Meadville Housing Resident Council. The days and times are yet to be determined.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

Ms. Rockovich requested ratification of Resolution No. 34 of 2023 due to additional vacated tenants needing to be added prior to the end of the fiscal year to be written off. A motion to ratify Resolution No. 34 of 2023 to amend the write-off of vacated tenants' accounts receivable at Holland Towers was made by Mr. Rozakis, seconded by Ms. Yohe, and unanimously approved.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Ketcham presented the Income Statements for February 2023 and the List of Bills for March 2023. After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for audit was made by Mr. Rozakis, seconded by Ms. Logan, and unanimously approved.

## **REPORT OF COMMITTEES**

There were no committee reports to be presented.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Ms. Rockovich reported that the Online Applications for Public Housing and Section 8 went live on April 1, 2023. There were approximately 110 online Section 8 applications completed within the first couple of days. Ms. Rockovich stated that the Section 8 waiting list will remain open due to the demand and need for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.

Ms. Rockovich stated that the Public Housing Online Tenant Portal went live on April 1, 2023. She is working with Horizon in preparing letters to the tenants with detailed instructions on how to set up their accounts. The tenant will be able to make payments through the portal as well as view their account balances.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

There was not any new business to report.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

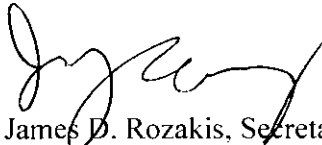
There were no communications to be presented.

The meeting recessed into Executive Session at 3:07 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. The meeting reconvened at 4:04 p.m. with no action being taken.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Yohe, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Submitted,



James D. Rozakis, Secretary



SIGN-IN SHEET  
REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS - APRIL 12, 2023

ATTENDEE	ADDRESS	EMAIL ADDRESS CELL OR TELEPHONE NUMBER
Dandy Hollabaugh	1120 Market St <sup>APT 32d</sup>	814-350-5881
<del>Christina...</del>	<del>...</del>	<del>...</del>
Gwen Smith	Active Aging	
Jackie Commis	apt 307	
Kathleen Dunlop	Apt 317	