

MINUTES – July 12, 2023

The Housing Authority of the City of Meadville met in the Regular Meeting in the Community Room at Holland Towers at 2:00 p.m., the 12th day of July 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
Ronald E. Smith, Maintenance Superintendent
Daniel R. Harris, Housing Inspector
Charlotte M. Mitchell, Management Aide
Christopher D. Ferry, Solicitor
Pat Stevens, Intern – Watts and Peppicelli
Kathleen A. Dunlap, Holland Towers Resident
Maryland Hicks, Jr., Holland Towers Resident
Jacqueline A. Commins, Holland Towers Resident
Peter Grella, City Planner
Mike Crowley, Meadville Tribune

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2023, meeting was made by Mr. Youngblood, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ferry reported that two cases are being scheduled for arbitration beginning in August 2023. He stated that some of the other cases may be able to be resolved prior to arbitration.

HOLLAND TOWERS RENOVATION

Ms. Rockovich reported that the initial advertisement for bids is scheduled for July 13, 2023, with the bids due on August 10, 2023. She stated that ten tenants had been relocated with six remaining to completely empty the four stacks scheduled for the initial phase. Ms. Rockovich stated that the housing authority staff had to move the tenants due to a miscommunication with the moving company and that it was successful. She was able to schedule two tenants a day to move the furniture. The tenants were very helpful in moving their small items ahead of the furniture. Ms. Rockovich reported that the 16, 18, 20 and 22 stacks are the initial 24 units.

Ms. Rockovich reported that there have not been any updates on the \$3M Housing-Related Hazards & Lead-based Paint Capital Fund Program application. This grant is awarded based on points. She stated that there have not been any updates on the \$250,000 Emergency Security Capital Fund Application which is selected by the lottery of qualified submissions.

ELM, MORGAN, SCATTERED SITES

Ms. Rockovich reported that there were 11 vacancies, with three new leases signed in June 2023. There were five annual and six interim recertifications conducted. Six eviction notices were served and no notices to vacate were received. No housekeeping inspections were conducted. Tenants Accounts Receivable totaled \$56,947.02.

GILL VILLAGE

Ms. Rockovich reported that there were 16 vacancies with 4 new leases signed in June 2023. There were two annual and six interim recertifications conducted. There were three eviction notices served and no notices to vacate were received. No housekeeping inspections were conducted. Tenants' Accounts Receivable totaled \$24,310.56.

FAMILY SITE WAITING LIST

The waiting list for William Gill Commons, Elmwood, Morgan Village, and Scattered Sites is One-Bedroom - 3; Two-Bedroom - 5; Three-Bedroom - 6; Four-Bedroom - 1; and Five-Bedroom - 5.

HOLLAND TOWERS

Ms. Rockovich reported that there were 30 vacancies and 53 people on the waiting list in June 2023. There were five annual recertifications and no interim recertifications conducted. She stated there were not any eviction notices served and received one notice to vacate. Ms. Rockovich reported that there were 102 housekeeping inspections conducted. Tenant accounts receivable totaled \$3,100.54.

Ms. Rockovich reported that the elevator was repaired this week. She spoke with the new technician regarding requesting recommendations to maintain the elevators. He stated that he feels that both chutes should be thoroughly cleaned, upgrade the cars' leveling mechanisms, and make repairs to the doors. Ms. Rockovich contacted our architect for an assessment and to make recommendations. Another elevator company sent quotes to make the needed repairs at the time and for a monthly service agreement. She did not feel that that was the intention to hire another company, but rather, to have a thorough investigation of any needed upgrades.

Ms. Rockovich reported the progress of setting up a library on the 5th floor. She stated quotes were secured to construct a partition wall with a glass door that will have a FOB reader. Cameras will also be installed in the room. Ms. Rockovich stated that several oak bookshelves and 20 totes of books were moved from William Gill Commons. She had purchased a book drop box so they can be treated before they are returned to the shelves. Procedures are being set up to assure that bugs are not transported through the books.

Ms. Yohe commended Ms. Rockovich in her leadership skills in overseeing the renovation project and bringing the Housing Authority into a contemporary environment.

SNODGRASS REPORT

Mr. Ferry reported that he was able to secure signatures for the insurance checks that will be deposited into the checking account that the housing authority uses to maintain the property. Ms. Rockovich reported that there were two vacancies, and no new leases were signed in June 2023. She stated that there were not any annual or interim recertifications conducted. She stated there were not any eviction notices served and received one notice to vacate. Ms. Rockovich stated that there were not any housekeeping inspections conducted. Tenant accounts receivable total \$3,100.54.

Mr. Ferry has not found any information regarding the requirement for the lift. PHFA needs to provide direction as to whether it can permanently be removed, as the cost for replacement is expensive.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Mr. Smith reported 384 work orders were generated during June 2023 with 33 still outstanding, including six tenant work orders, seven management generated, and 20 for vacancy fixups. He stated five vacant apartments were completed. There were seven move-in inspections, six move-out inspections and 104 annual inspections were conducted. Ms. Yohe commended the maintenance team for handling the higher percentage of work orders this month.

EXTERMINATION REPORT

Ms. Rockovich reported that exterminations have more than doubled at Holland Towers. She feels the cause for the substantial rise in infestation is lack of preparations to treat units, tenants visiting other tenants' apartments, congregating in common areas, and tenants' not reporting infestations. One tenant was loaned six totes to pack up possessions to enable the apartment to be treated. Upon a subsequent inspection it was observed that the totes had not been opened. On June 1, 2023, all units were inspected with the exterminator in preparation of the upcoming renovations. Numerous unreported infestations were discovered. During the month of June 2023, Holland Towers currently has 25 units being treated for infestations with none on a 45-day clear. The sixth and seventh floors had quarterly treatments. Ms. Rockovich reported that William Gill Commons currently has six units being treated and none are on 45-day clear. The quarterly treatments included Lots 4, 6 and 7.

Ms. Rockovich stated that the tenant preparation handouts were revised for clarity to include that after laundering clothing, clean and dry clothes are to be placed in a clean bag and not put back into a contaminated bag. She stated that the housing authority is looking into ways of working with the tenants of treating their belongings in cooperation with the exterminator. CHAPS has found someone to assist one tenant in preparing their unit for exterminating, however the helpers are charging the tenant a fee of \$400 and until confirmation of payment is secured, the company will not assist the tenant.

Ms. Rockovich stated the housing authority continues to encourage tenants not to gather in common areas or visit other tenants' apartments. She explained as an extended effort, that she is looking for a vendor who supplies treated pads that can be placed into bagged furniture and/or bagged personal belongings that are then sealed for a period of time to eliminate the bugs. Mr. Youngblood stated that any other landlord would document and evict tenants for ongoing infestation issues. Ms. Yohe stated that there appears to be a lack of compliance and inquired about the additional fees which the Housing Authority is incurring from the exterminator regarding repeated visits to those tenants who are non-compliant. Ms. Rockovich states that the housing authority is trying to investigate the multiple visits and additional charges before passing them on to the tenants.

SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER REPORT

Ms. King reported 162 units under contract of which there were 3 port-ins and 20 VASH for June 2023 with 12 outstanding vouchers. She stated that three leases were scheduled for July 1, 2023. Ms. King reported that the most recent briefing went well with 16 letters sent out and 13 in attendance. There are 288 families on the waiting list. The Housing Assistance Payment expenses for June 2023 were \$58,644.92.

SECTION 8 HOUSING INSPECTION REPORT

Mr. Harris reported there were 18 inspections including three inspections for new units and three inspections failing.

APPLICATIONS

Ms. Mitchell reported 10 applications were received, five of which were withdrawn due to the one-bedroom waiting lists being closed.

RESIDENT INITIATIVE PROJECTS REPORTS

Ms. Rockovich reported that Karen Simmons from Victory Church had to cancel the use of the baseball field at William Gill Commons for the month of July for a special activity. However, the church still plans to bus children from William Gill Commons to receive back-to-school clothes, backpacks, and school supplies.

Ms. Rockovich stated that on Tuesday, June 27, 2023, 16 children ages 5 through 12 and 4 adult chaperones went to the Plaza Bowling Lanes from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Four Lanes were reserved, and they received free pizza and pop.

Ms. Rockovich reported that children ages 5-13 are still attending swimming lessons at the MARC every Monday and Wednesday. The last class will be held on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, at which time a party will be held for them.

Ms. Rockovich stated that Ms. Houserman was contacted by Second Harvest Food Bank and asked if the Housing Authority could be a host for Produce Express. The Produce Express would come to Holland Towers monthly and be open to William Gill Commons, Elm, Morgan, and Scattered Sites residents as well as Holland Towers. They will e-mail information about the program with a tentative start in September.

Mr. Rozakis stated his concern that with this new program, along with the current Holland Towers food box distributions, it could become a burden on the staff with the current workloads. He also stated that Holland Towers property may be used for a hub, yet volunteers need to be established for distribution.

RESOLUTIONS

A motion to adopt Resolution No. 5 of 2024 to approve Hillmann Consulting, LLC at a cost not to exceed \$32,435.00 to prepare specifications and oversee the abatement of the flooring and the mastic in the kitchens and bathrooms of all apartments at Holland Towers was made by Ms. Yohe, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved. Ms. Rockovich stated that the base cabinets will need to be removed as the tiles run underneath. The cabinets will be covered and will remain in each apartment until reinstallation.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Ketcham presented the list of bills for June 2023. Mr. Youngblood inquired as to a check register entry for a company named Energo. Mr. Ketcham explained that Energo is a natural gas vendor. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for audit was made by Mr. Youngblood, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

There were not any committee reports to be presented.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was not any unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Rockovich discussed the notices provided to all housing authority tenants regarding the Holland Towers renovations in respect to the offices being temporarily moved to William Gill Commons. She advised the board that nothing will change in how the tenants request work orders and report emergencies. New carpeting is being installed in the temporary offices and in the hallway. Minimal desks and filing cabinets will be moved, only current tenant files. Ms. Rockovich reported that the telephone lines and system will move on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, with all extensions staying the same. On Wednesday, July 19, 2023, the movers are scheduled to move the needed furniture and file cabinets and on Thursday, July 20, 2023, the server and network will be relocated. Ms. Rockovich highlighted the designated schedule for package pickup at Holland Towers residents will be daily between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to be presented.

The meeting recessed into Executive Session at 2:52 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. The meeting reconvened at 3:17 p.m. with the following actions being taken.

A motion to authorize Mr. Ferry to submit a letter to Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS) to pursue further information regarding the Cash Balance Pension Plan was made by Mr. Youngblood, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

A motion to send a check in the amount of \$200 from the Non-Federal account on behalf of Ms. Brown for the loss of her husband was made by Ms. Yohe, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Youngblood, seconded by Mr. Rozakis, and was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Submitted,

James D. Rozakis, Secretary