

MINUTES – December 19, 2024

The Housing Authority of the City of Meadville met in Special Meeting in the Community Room at Holland Towers at 2:00 p.m., the 19th day of December 2024.

Members Present:

Sonya D. Logan, Chair
Richard H. Zinn, Vice Chair
Marcia J. Yohe, Treasurer
Cena M. Kneubehl, Secretary
Joe Tompkins

Also Present:

Vanessa L. Rockovich, Executive Director
Jon M. Ketcham, Deputy Executive Director
Charlotte M. Mitchell, Management Aide
Christopher D. Ferry, Solicitor
Jacqueline Commins, Holland Towers Resident
Kathleen Dunlap, Holland Towers Resident
Sherry Brown, Holland Towers Resident
Carl Oswald, Holland Towers Resident
Tammy Corey, Holland Towers Resident
Diann Bolharsky, Housing Supervisor, Center for Family Services
Monica Confer, Housing Department, Center for Family Services
Dennis Berry
Mike Crowley, Meadville Tribune

RESOLUTIONS

A motion to approve Resolution No. 11 of 2025 to establish the Board Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2025 was made by Mr. Zinn and seconded by Ms. Yohe. The board members discussed the motion on the floor. Mr. Tompkins then moved to amend the motion by adding a meeting in August 2025. This was seconded by Ms. Kneubehl. The board members discussed the proposed amendment. The motion to amend failed with 2 ayes and 3 nays. The motion to approve Resolution No. 11 was discussed again and was approved with 3 ayes and 2 nays.”

After a brief discussion, a motion to adopt Resolution No. 12 of 2025 to approve the PHA Operating Budget for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, was made by Mr. Zinn, and seconded by Ms. Yohe, and was approved with 3 ayes and 2 nays.

After a brief discussion, a motion to adopt Resolution No. 13 of 2025 to approve Operating Budget for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, was made by Mr. Zinn, seconded by Ms. Yohe, and was approved with 3 ayes and 2 nays.

After a brief discussion, a motion to adopt the corrected Resolution No. 14 of 2025 to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for the Meadville Housing Resident Council was made by Mr. Zinn, seconded by Ms. Yohe, and was unanimously approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S YEAR END REPORT

Ms. Rockovich gave a report on the housing authority activities for 2024. Her report is attached to the minutes for reference.

A discussion was held regarding the hiring of staff to replace the recent retirement of two administrative employees. Ms. Rockovich and Mr. Ketcham explained that the Civil Service has changed greatly in the last several years. In most cases, people hired through this process do not usually possess the knowledge and skills necessary to step into a position with minimal training. Ms. Rockovich stated that she is hopeful to have someone hired by the end of next year.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ferry reported on the options regarding Mr. Tompkin's conflict of interest as a board member. HUD has recognized that it falls in the category of a conflict of interest yet has requested a written resolution.

Mr. Zinn made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Kneubehl seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Submitted,

Cena M. Kneubehl, Secretary

Holland Towers

- A new elevator company was hired in March 2024. Since that time, regular maintenance is done. The need for call-ins has diminished.
- The housing authority hired another maintenance employee who possesses a pest license. Once an apartment is identified as having bedbugs they are provided a prep sheet. In most cases, the tenants do not have anyone or an agency who is willing to go into the units to prepare them for a proper extermination. In these cases, the maintenance employee goes in and prepares the apartment for the scheduled extermination. The biggest issue in eradicating bedbugs is due to poor housekeeping/hoarding issues. Local agencies do not offer any assistance even after the housing authority has proceeded to eviction. These tenants do not receive enough services to live independently in a safe and sanitary environment.
- Michael Horvath toured Holland Towers in April 2024. Also, two HUD Engineers visited the site to monitor the on-going renovations and attended the progress meeting. They offered positive comments and a few recommendations that were incorporated.
- Rebid – Approved Contracts – March 13, 2024
- Asbestos Testing – March 27, 2024 (Asbestos was discovered in the floor tile, the mastic throughout the entire apartment, and ceilings on the fifth floor)
- Second Asbestos Testing on pipe insulation – First Floor including offices – October 30, 2024
- Approved Asbestos Abatement Contract – June 12, 2024
- General Contractor started demolition at Holland Towers – July 8, 2024, to prepare for asbestos abatement which included the removal of closets and walls.
- Asbestos abatement for 30 apartments – July 15 – July 26, 2024
- During demolition, several unforeseen situations were discovered and needed to be corrected.
- Progress Meetings are every other week.
- In preparation for the project, the housing authority staff relocated the tenant's computer lab to the third floor. This required the staff to install CAT5 cable to run from the IT room to the third floor. The exercise equipment was relocated to the sixth floor. The Executive Director and eight maintenance employees accomplished this during the week of July 15, 2024.
- Contracted to have a drain repaired that was creating a flooding/hazardous situation.
- In October 2024, the Property Manager retired. An existing administrative employee is being trained to manage Holland Towers. Those training and being trained are continuing to maintain their current responsibilities.

Elm, Morgan, Scattered Sites

- Two teams consisting of the Executive Director, the Assistant Maintenance Inspector, and four maintenance employees inspected 115 units during July 15 and August 30, 2024, installed combination co/smoke alarms in living rooms, hallways, and all bedrooms, replace furnace filters, made repairs either during the inspection or scheduled later. These were done in preparation for the REAC inspection that was scheduled September 3, 2024. All noted deficiencies were completed in the required timeframe yet repairs that were noted by the staff are continuing to be completed.
- An apartment was tested for hazardous chemicals on December 17, 2024. Once the housing authority receives the results a dumpster will be ordered specifically for this apartment as the tenant left a lot of personal belongings plus extensive damages.
- The City of Meadville conducted inspections December 10, 2024, with more than half of units passing. The deficiencies cited during the inspection were completed which were lowering a couple of smoke alarms (If they are on the wall, they must be 4” to 12” from the ceiling.); a light in the laundry room that had a bad ballast; a missing discharge line on a hot water tank. In speaking with the inspector regarding the criteria for these inspections, it was discovered that the HUD requirements were stricter in some of situations. The Executive Director and the inspector coordinated their schedules for additional inspections in January 2025.
- Approving MOU – December 19, 2024
- The housing authority purchased the VFW located on Morgan Village Road several years ago. In the fall of 2023, the staff started renovations including removal of old wallpaper; patched and painted walls; in the process of updating the kitchen; removal of the smokers; updated lighting; replaced ceiling tiles. It is a slow process as this work is being completed in house. The housing authority is looking into upgrading the heating and cooling systems. Currently, an agency rents the building to offer a kids’ club on Tuesdays and Thursdays. After the building is fully renovated, it is hopeful to bring in more agencies to offer programs for the families.

William Gill Commons

- The week of August 19, 2024, an emergency generator was installed at the Learning Center.
- Approved MOU – November 13, 2024
- In September/October 2024, a pest inspection was conducted of all 100 units as tenants were not reporting infestation. The housing authority scheduled exterminations and follow-ups based on this inspection.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

- This program administers housing assistance to approximately 190 families throughout Crawford County. In the last year, the housing authority has exceeded the maximum budget authority for this program, which caused a shortfall. HUD funded the shortfall, yet the housing authority is advised to make sure the expenses follow the budget authority (funding). Most recently we encountered a major software issue that delayed landlord Housing Assistance Payments. Landlords receive their payments monthly by ACH which has been occurring for approximately three years. The software program offers a landlord portal so they can see the breakdown of their payments as well as view their 1099s for taxes.
- The employee who administered this program retired at the end of October 2024. The Executive Director is managing the program along with her other duties.
- A specific Section 8 email is being set up to streamline communication between the housing authority, the tenants, and the landlords. It will be posted on the website, and letters will be mailed to the tenants and landlords outlining procedures during the transition of hiring and training a new employee. Section8HCV@meadvillehousing.org

General

- Adopted Grievance Procedure Policy – June 12, 2024
- REAC Inspection - Elm, Morgan, Scattered Sites and William Gill Commons – September 3 and 4, 2024 Approximately 50 units were inspected. All noted deficiencies were completed in the required timeframe. The majority of the deficiencies were missing or non-operable smoke alarms (tenants remove and/or remove batteries) (The housing authority is installing sealed tamper resistant alarms in all apartments. The housing authority is installing combination co/smoke alarms in apartments that have forced-air furnaces in the living rooms, hallways, basements, and every bedroom.); discharge lines on hot water tanks must be within 2” to 6” from the floor. (The old standard was 6” to 12”.) The inspection scores for these properties were 89 and 79 which is far greater than they were in 2019. Holland Towers had an inspection score of 54 in 2019. The staff inspected and made numerous repairs prior to the 2022 inspection. This effort raised the score approximately ten points. The inspection was postponed due to the renovations. Once the renovations are complete, the score for Holland Towers should be above 90. HUD adopted different criteria for the inspection protocols.
- An Electrical Contractor was approved on June 12, 2024, to upgrade the electrical service in 200 units to replace gas ranges with electric. A \$3,000,000 grant was awarded to replace all gas ranges housing authority wide. The housing authority ordered 360 electric ranges. The Assistant Maintenance Inspector is coordinating the receipt of each of the shipments as the designed ranges are being placed at the properties that they will be installed.
- The Executive Director runs weekly payroll; enters invoices; balances end of the month and prepares the computer systems to apply rents and charges for the next month for the public housing program; balances end of the month and prepares the computer systems to payments to landlords; process grant payments based on contractor billing documents and draws down funds to support the paperwork; prepares and monitors five different budgets and reviews all other financial aspects.

- The Executive Director closed the Administrative Offices for 2 weeks after Labor Day due to a COVID outbreak. The Executive Director, the Maintenance Supervisor, and the Assistant Maintenance Inspector were the only administrative employees working during that time. One of the maintenance employees was also off during that time.
- The housing authority recently had a call with HUD office to discuss tenant concerns and the MOU agreements. Based on the information provided, it was determined that no regulations have been violated. It was an incredibly positive conversation, and they encouraged the staff to continue doing an excellent job.