

ST. CLOUD HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

A Regular Meeting for the St. Cloud HRA Board of Commissioners was held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, via ZOOM meeting. Chair Nancy Gohman conducted the meeting from the St. Cloud HRA Boardroom, 1225 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Roll call was taken and the pledge of allegiance spoken. Commissioners present: Nancy Gohman, George Hontos, Jeff Goerger (call-in only) and Mike Conway. Absent: Abdi Daisane and Seal Dwyer. [The board has one vacancy.]

2. Approval of Agenda – Commissioner Hontos moved for approval of the consent items and agenda, holding back Items 5 and 6; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Approval of Study Session Minutes, October 28, 2020 – approved as presented.

4. Approval of Regular Minutes, October 28, 2020 – approved as presented.

5. Review of Financials: Public Housing Fund (operating statements by AMP), Germain Towers Fund, Northway Projects A&B Fund, and Eastwood Apartments Fund – Commissioner Hontos commented the significant changes in the housing budgets from projected to actual. Finance Director Karen Rizer explained how the CARES act came into play with determining how funds were used from the Capital Fund for projects and will be balanced with reserves at the end of the year to make up the deficit. There is no action needed for this item; it is only informational.

6. Approval of Contracts for Flooring Installation Services – Commissioner Hontos moved for approval; Commissioner Goerger seconded the motion. Commissioner Hontos asked for further explanation of how the services would work and why more than one contractor is needed. Project Manager Paul Soenneker said in the past, by having only one contractor, the turn-around time for completion was sometimes longer than anticipated. He said this came not only from installation scheduling, but also available materials. Mr. Soenneker stated by having a second and third option for installation/repair it will give the HRA better control of having the work completed sooner allowing faster lease up times. Chair Gohman stated 10 days is a generous turn-around time. Other Commissioners agreed and interested in seeing how it works out. The motion carried.

7. Set Date for Public Hearing for Updates to Agency Plan – date set for Wednesday, January 27, 2021.

Open Forum: Chair Gohman asked Louise Reis, Executive Director, if any member of the public had requested to speak; Ms. Reis responded there were none.

Old Business: none.

New Business:

8. Approval of Resolution 2020 – 11 - CDBG Application for 2021 – Ms. Reis clarified the application amount of \$300,000 to be requested for the Community Development Block Grant for 2021 and asked the Board for approval or comments. She stated the pre-application is due to the City on January 4, 2021.

Commissioner Goerger moved for approval; Commissioner Hontos seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion carried.

9. Approval of Resolution 2020- 12 - Authorizing Participation in the Minnesota City Participation Program (MCP) for 2021 - Louise Reis, Executive Director, said her request at this time is to apply only. She stated her request to participate in the MCP is an application process completed annually on behalf of the City. Ms. Reis explained the process of Minnesota Housing reserving a specific dollar amount to sell mortgage revenue bonds for housing needs. She said each year the reserves from these funds are allocated to participating cities to provide low-and-moderate-income first-time homebuyer affordable interest rate home mortgage loans. Ms. Reis said there is a minimum requirement for all cities that 50% of the allocation must be used to participate the following year. She stated at the end of November forty-six first-time homebuyers had used the program. Commissioner Conway moved for approval; Commissioner Hontos seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor; the motion carried.

10. Approval of Contract with InteleCONNECT – Ms. Reis stated the current contract with Marco will end on March 8, 2021. She said the HRA at that time will be required to update the current phone system as it is obsolete and can no longer be serviced. Ms. Reis stated a request for proposals was issued on September 1, 2020 to which four proposals were received. She said her recommendation is to accept the low-bid from InteleCONNECT for a three-year contract of \$809.60 per month for service and \$896.85 equipment purchase. Commissioner Goerger moved for approval; Commissioner Hontos seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor; the motion carried.

11. Approval of Caretaker Compensation Policy – Finance Director, Karen Rizer, explained the compensation for the HRA’s caretakers and the Maintenance Wage Rate Decision of HUD. She said for the past two years this amount has been set at \$13.50 by HUD but as of January 1, 2021 the rate will drop to \$12.65. Ms. Rizer stated with all the extra responsibility and work associated with COVID over the past weeks, management is requesting the amount for the St. Cloud HRA Caretakers remain at \$13.50 per hour.

Commissioner Goerger moved for approval; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hontos asked if we were required to drop the wage. Ms. Rizer said no.

Commissioner Goerger asked how the wage is figured as he thought the rent was their compensation. Ms. Rizer explained how the value of their unit is divided by the hours put in for caretaking and the hourly wage must equal the Maintenance Wage or they are paid the difference. There was a short discussion on how the wage is determined by survey sent out in the immediate area and what the wage should be. Commissioners requested a future discussion of the financial implications of dropping it, leaving it as is, or raising it since it has been the same wage for so long.

For the motion, to leave the current wage at \$13.50, all Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion carried.

12. Approval of Extension of Waivers Granted by the Department of Housing & Urban Development for Housing Authorities Under COVID 19 – Ms. Reis briefly reminded the Board of the waivers granted by HUD in April 2020. She said there were a couple of the waivers extended in July and now under Notice PIH 2020-33, Rev 2 has extended the majority of waivers until June 30, 2021. Ms. Reis announced all waivers are posted and will be updated on the HRA website and in the lobby. All waivers and changes are part of the official records in the agenda packet.

Commissioner Hontos moved for approval; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion carried.

13. Approval of Extending Expiration Date of Personnel Policies 05.18 and 05.19 – Ms. Rizer expressed concern of Policy 05.18 set under Federal regulations to expire December 31, 2020. She stated with the amount of COVID-19 cases continuing to climb, management feels it important to extend Policy 05.18, Families First Coronavirus Response Act and Policy 05.19, Emergency Sick Leave through December 31, 2021. Commissioner Goerger moved for approval; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion. All Commissioners present voted in favor. The motion carried.

14. Report on Activities – Ms. Reis gave an update on the HUD Compliance Review that took place April 15 to May 27, 2020 and August 19 to October 15, 2020. She discussed with the Board the concerns and findings of the review. Ms. Reis said due to COVID the review was completed off-site.

Concern 1: SCHRA bylaws call for seven board members; there has been a vacancy since September 2018. Ms. Reis said she has talked with the Mayor's office and a new member will be added December 21<sup>st</sup> as well as Commissioner Dwyer and Commissioner Gohman being re-appointed.

Concern 2: HCV Unit Months Leased has been sporadic. Finance Director Karen Rizer gave the reasoning for this and stated it will be explained in great detail to HUD in a response letter.

There were 2 findings that Ms. Reis said would be corrected within 60 days as required. Both findings are outlined in the report and are part of the official records in the agenda packet.

Ms. Rizer briefly updated the Board on the CDBG rehab program. Commissioner Hontos asked if the funds would be used up with COVID delaying contract work. Ms. Rizer said projects are delayed but we should still be able to use all the funds.


Open Discussion: none.


Chair Gohman announced a special treat for everyone – a video of the celebration of Executive Director Louise Reis being awarded the **ALLAN ANDERSON AWARD OF MERIT**. The Allan Anderson Award of Merit recognizes an individual who is a member of the MN NAHRO Chapter and has distinguished themselves with excellence and leadership in their career in housing and/or community development.

Ms. Reis was surprised with a "you have won" showing of support on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, when MN NAHRO Executive Director Shannon Guernsey, Clay County Executive Director Dara Lee and Board Chair Nancy Gohman showed up at the HRA office and presented her with the award. Staff and family were able to watch (with masks and social distancing) from inside and outside the building and ZOOM and cheer her on. The Board all gave their congratulations for the prestigious honor of winning this award.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
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Secretary, George Hontos

  
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Chair, Nancy Gohman