

**ST. CLOUD HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

A Regular Meeting for the St. Cloud HRA Board of Commissioners was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 1225 West St. Germain Street. Commissioner George Hontos called the meeting to order at 5:55 p.m. Commissioners present: Mike Conway, George Hontos, Hani Jacobson, and Carol Lewis. Absent: John Dvorak, Seal Dwyer, and Nancy Gohman.

Consent Agenda:

1. Roll call was taken and the pledge of allegiance spoken.
2. Approval of Agenda – Commissioner Lewis moved for approval to add item 10 to the agenda and approval of all other items; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor; the agenda and consent agenda moved as presented.
3. Approval of Study Session Minutes, March 22, 2023 – approved as presented.
4. Approval of Regular Minutes, March 22, 2023 – approved as presented.
5. Approval of Contracts for Lighting Replacements with Emergency Battery Back-Up at Riverside Apartments – contracts approved with Electric Mikes in the amount of \$42,737.00 and Border States Electric in the amount of \$29,499.53.
6. Approval of Contract for Furnace, Water Heater and Air Conditioner Replacement at Cedar Ridge Townhomes 2023 – contract approved with Lyon Sheet Metal & Heating in the amount of \$92,000.00.

Open Forum: Commissioner Hontos 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:

7. Approval of Resolution 2023-04 – Authorization of Housing Tax Credit Suballocator Joint Powers Agreement - 2024 – Ms. Reis noted that in 2002 the St. Cloud HRA and Minnesota Housing entered into a Joint Powers Agreement for Minnesota Housing to perform all of the housing tax credit allocation and compliance monitoring functions on behalf of the St. Cloud HRA. St. Cloud is the smallest suballocator in Minnesota, with an amount of \$152,820. Commissioner Lewis moved for approval; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor; the motion carried.
8. Approval of Resolution 2023-05 - Acceptance of HUD CoC Rental Assistance Grants and Rapid Re-Housing Grants – Ms. Reis explained there are three grants the HRA applies for yearly and they were all approved. The grants are for chronic homeless households and providing rental assistance and support services for victims of domestic violence. Commissioner Lewis moved for approval; Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor; the motion carried.
9. Report on Activities – Ms. Reis received notification there will be a housing forum on Friday, April 28, at the Great River Regional Library in St. Cloud and the public is invited to attend.

Commissioner Jacobson noted she had heard about the forum and has heard from several residents in Waite Park that there has been a lot of management turnover and residents are suffering from a lack of transparent management and contracts changing without notice.


10. Approval of Application for Family Unification Program – Ms. Reis noted a grant application was announced on April 25, 2023 and applications are due on May 25, 2023. The St. Cloud HRA will work with Lutheran Social Services and Benton and Sherburne Counties to provide needed support services for the vouchers. The vouchers will be issued to families working with Benton and Sherburne County child welfare services. Commissioner Jacobson asked if Stearns County would be applying. Ms. Reis indicated they were not interested in applying at this time. Commissioner Conway asked Voucher Programs Manager Lori Lygre how this would impact her team’s workload. Ms. Lygre responded the team is equipped to handle the additional vouchers. Commissioner Hontos asked for clarification on whether or not families that receive the voucher are placed on the St. Cloud HRA’s waiting list. Ms. Lygre confirmed the families are added to the HRA’s waiting list so when the time expires on the provided voucher, they will continue to receive support. Commissioner Conway moved for approval; Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion. All commissioners voted in favor; the motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

ATTEST:



Secretary, Ham Jacobson



Acting Chair, George Hontos

ST. CLOUD HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY STUDY SESSION MINUTES

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

A Study Session for the St. Cloud HRA Board of Commissioners was held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 1225 West St. Germain Street. Commissioner George Hontos called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Commissioners present: Mike Conway, George Hontos, Hani Jacobson, and Carol Lewis. Absent: John Dvorak, Seal Dwyer, and Nancy Gohman.

Finance Director Karen Rizer opened the Study Session by stating the HRA wanted to begin the discussion about the 2024 tax levy to leave room for further conversations prior to submitting for an amount to the City Council. Commissioner Hontos asked Ms. Rizer what amount of funding remains available to request. Ms. Rizer responded approximately \$460,000. Commissioner Hontos mentioned just because it would be an additional, low amount to the community, there should be a need and clear plan for the money to request the additional funds.

Commissioner Conway added if there is a specific project or purpose to raise the levy for the next five or six years, it would be an easier conversation to have with the public. Commissioner Lewis mentioned there are several options, like the Lincoln Center, that could use additional oversight and funding. Commissioner Conway agreed that while there is a need for help with the Lincoln Center, it does not align with the HRA's mission and he would rather the HRA purchase a blighted property or build additional scattered site homes for rent.

Commissioner Lewis wants to see the levy increased because there is a need for more affordable housing. She would like to have the full levy to try and remediate some of the housing issues in the community. Commissioner Conway argues that he cannot justify to the constituents by taking the full levy.

Commissioner Hontos asked what the state of the Fix-up Fund loan program is; noting the CDBG loans do not go as far with the costs of building materials. Ms. Rizer responded the Fix-up Fund program has helped supplement the CDBG loans and would recommend increasing the funding towards the Fix-up Fund loan program. Commissioner Hontos asked the agency how many years it had been since the HRA purchased a house and demolished it. Executive Director responded a few years ago when the new scattered site home at 418 Wilson was the last home purchased and demolished. Commissioner Hontos added he likes when the HRA purchases a lot and donates it to Habitat for Humanity because it creates a good marriage between the agencies. Commissioner Jacobson added that she works with many families that need affordable housing and would like to see the HRA do more for the community.

Commissioner Lewis and Commissioner Jacobson continued discussion on the homeless population in the City of St. Cloud and indicated that without more resources, there is no path forward for the people that need help. Commissioner Conway interjected that he does not feel that is the HRA's mission or objective. Ms. Rizer added that the HRA applies for emergency housing vouchers for the homeless population and other voucher programs and that is how the agency tries to fulfill the role in the community for helping the homeless population.


Commissioner Conway revisited the Fix-up Fund loan program and contributing more funds so the programs already in place succeed. Commissioner Hontos asked Ms. Rizer to pull some numbers on the average rehab loan project and also requested the average cost of purchasing a blighted property. Commissioner Conway asked if Ms. Rizer could pull what the agency is charged from the city for fees when building a new property. Ms. Rizer responded she would pull a report on the scope of work for each project and how much it costs and how many exceed the \$25,000 CDBG loan amount, as well as the previous costs of purchasing a blighted property, and the fees previously charged by the City of St. Cloud.

Commissioner Jacobson asked if someone receives the CDBG loan, do they automatically qualify for the Fix-up Fund loan. Ms. Rizer responded that they do need to apply for both programs, but if they qualify for the CDBG loan, they would also qualify for the Fix-up Fund loan program.

There being no further discussion on the tax levy, Ms. Rizer informed the Board the agency is looking at new software because the current software lacks features for automation and improved efficiencies and is not properly technically supported. Commissioner Hontos asked where the funding comes for that large of a purchase and Ms. Rizer responded reserves will have to be used, and once numbers are received about the costs of the new software, it can be decided if it will be a part of this year's budget or included in next year's budget.

Commissioner Hontos adjourned the Study Session at 5:54 p.m. The Study Session moved immediately into the regular meeting.

ATTEST:



Secretary, Hani Jacobson



Acting Chair, George Hontos