MINUTES
BROWN COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Monday, November 17, 2014, 3:00 p.m.
City Hall, 100 N. Jefferson Street, Room 604
Green Bay, WI 54301

MEMBERS: Tom Diedrick—Chair, Ann Hartman—Vice Chair, Corday Goddard, and Adam DeKeyser

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sup. Andy Nicholson

OTHERS PRESENT: Robyn Hallet, Kim Flom, Matt Roberts, Patrick Leifker, Nicole Tiedt, Yvette Tice, Stephanie Schmutzer, and Sadie DiNatale

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approval of the minutes from the October 20, 2014, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority.

C. Goddard made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2014, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority. A. DeKeyser seconded. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None

REPORTS:

2. Report on Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program:
   A. Preliminary Applicants
      P. Leifker reported that ICS collected 165 preliminary applications for the month of October 2014.

   B. Unit Count
      P. Leifker stated that the unit count was 2,983 for the month of October.

   C. Housing Assistance Payments Expenses
      P. Leifker indicated the HAP expenses were $1,113,648 for the month of October.

   D. Housing Quality Standard Inspection Compliance
      P. Leifker reported that 219 units passed the first evaluation, 66 passed re-evaluation, 92 failed, and there were 24 no-shows.

   E. Program Activity/52681B (administrative costs, portability activity, SEMAP)
      Y. Tice reported that there were 210 port-out vouchers in the month of October, with an associated HAP expense of $158,848.

      Y. Tice continued the reports, stating that ICS administrative expenses were under-budget by $5,464. FSS Administrative expenses were under-budget by $893.

   F. Family Self-Sufficiency Program (client count, escrow accounts, graduates, new contracts, homeownership)
      N. Tiedt reported that there are 72 participating in the FSS program as of October. Level One has 44 participants, Level Two has 16 individuals, Level Three has 10 participants, and Level Four has two participants ready to graduate. There were four new FSS Contracts signed in October. There were no new graduates for the month of October however the Family Self-Sufficiency Graduation Ceremony was held which celebrated nine graduations for the year of 2014.

N. Tiedt then shared a story from a past graduate who was celebrated at the 2014 FSS Graduation Ceremony. This graduate is a married mother of four children who began the program in January 2010, when she was searching for structure in her home. She worked full time while achieving her bachelor's degree in Art from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. All of her goals were completed and she graduated taking $4,084.64 from her FSS escrow account with her. She is still enrolled in the Housing Choice Voucher Program and is participating in the Home Ownership Program as she is looking to purchase a home by the end of this year. She stated in her own words: "This program has really helped me to get a better handle not just financially but also professionally and emotionally. What I learned being a participant will help me as I continue moving up the ladder of hope, something I see as a lifelong process. I truly value the knowledge I have gained because I feel confident in being a good example for my kids and others in my community".

R. Hallet asked if N. Tiedt could provide an explanation as to why an FSS graduate could still remain on the Housing Choice Voucher Program. N. Tiedt explained that someone may graduate from the FSS Program in one of two ways. One way for an individual to graduate is to complete all personal goals, which does not necessarily mean the person must leave the Housing Choice Voucher portion of the program. As the goal of this program is for participants to no longer need assistance, allowing an individual to retain their HCV after graduation ensure that they will be supported while working through the process of achieving home ownership. The other way to graduate is if a participant is able to achieve enough income in their household, and therefore can afford housing on their own. In this instance, this person would no longer need assistance from the Housing Choice Voucher Program so they would graduate automatically.

A. DeKeyser asked if the Program could be used to supplement house payments. N. Tiedt confirmed this stating that with the Home Ownership Program, house payments could be supplemented. This works in that instead of providing assistance for rental assistance, the program would work with the family to provide assistance toward their mortgage. Nevertheless, the family would have to be able to qualify for their mortgage on their own (credit wise). A. DeKeyser then asked, from a banking standpoint, how this would get approved. N. Tiedt stated that unfortunately not all area banks are willing to work with this program. However, certain banks will use the homeownership Housing Assistance Payment that the family is eligible for toward the calculation of their household income.

N. Tiedt continued with her report stating that there are currently 30 escrow accounts open. There are 62 homeowners for the month of October.

G. VASH Reports (active VASH, new VASH)
N. Tiedt reported that there are three new VASH clients for the month of October and 21 total current VASH clients.

R. Hallet asked if the new VASH clients are operating under BCHA vouchers or the old ones, in which N. Tiedt replied that they are operating under the old ones as there are no new locked-in vouchers yet for VASH.

H. Langan Investigations Criminal Background Screening and Fraud Investigations
P. Leifker reported that there were five new investigations assigned; ten previous investigations were closed; and two still remain active; 171 applications were sent in October of which 168 were approved and three were denied.

3. Report on port out data

P. Leifker discussed a current breakdown of the BCHA's port out's by locality. The majority of the port out's that the BCHA is currently being billed for are from Minnesota, Virginia, Washington, Illinois, and Wisconsin (outside of Brown County).

K. Flom asked if it would be possible to see data of other PHA's port out programs. P. Leifker stated that in terms of locality, there would not necessarily be many common patterns but in terms of numbers Green Bay is in the top percentile of port outs per PHA. He stated that he could look into the data as he does not know exact numbers off hand.

A. Hartman asked if the driving force behind the number of port outs that BCHA administers is due to the number of vouchers available. P. Leifker stated that there were a couple of reasons for this phenomenon. The first being that we do have vouchers available and second is that our waiting list is open.

T. Diedrick stated that this information would be great to include in the BCHA's letter to legislatures regarding port out issues observed.

M. Roberts stated that there are some interesting demographics that show high cultural characteristics which accurately reflect some of the assumed issues we are having in Brown County, especially as it relates to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

P. Leifker additionally discussed that it is important to identify the discrepancies between average HAP expenses of port outs between localities. For instance, for port outs to localities outside of Brown County, the average HAP expense is $752.42 whereas the vouchers that are currently being utilized within Brown County limits, the average HAP expense is $341.52.

M. Roberts added that if the Authority needs any additional statistics or information to please let ICS know and they will assist with the data collection and compilation of information.

OLD BUSINESS:

4. Discussion and action regarding payback of ICS staff's second furlough.

S. Schmutzer stated that from January to November 2014 there has been $1,194,565 received via Admin funds. It is estimated that by the end of the year there will be an additional $110,077 admin funds received totaling $1,304,642. In the budget prepared for 2014, it was estimated that only $1,104,840 would be received in admin funds, so the actual funds received were much better than anticipated (at $199,802 more). To offset Reserve funds, there will be a reduction of $105,723 making the difference $94,079. The BCHA portion of HUD Admin is only $58,500, the second half of furloughs was $12,900, and the repayment of furlough days taken by ICS was $11,532.31. This results in $11,146.69 left over to be added into the Authority's reserve. Therefore, financially there are no financial issues as it relates to paying these funds forward to ICS.

A. DeKeyser made a motion to approve payback of ICS staff's second furlough, seconded by C. Goddard. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Final approval of ICS's 2015 budget.

Y. Tice stated that there were no changes made to the budget since it was last presented.

R. Hallet stated that at the last meeting, the health insurance was still in question; she asked if this proposed budget ended up being the same. Y. Tice confirmed that it remained the same with a locked in 15.9 percent increase.

A. DeKeyser made a motion to approve ICS's 2015 budget, seconded by A. Hartman. Motion carried.

6. Final approval of BCHA's 2015 budget and Approval of Resolution #14-02 Approving Operating budget.

S. Schmutzer stated that the approval of BCHA's 2015 budget and the approval of Resolution #14-02 go hand in hand. There was a slight change to the budget as proposed legal fees had increased from $4,000 to $8,000. Nevertheless, this increase should be offset by additional funding that the Authority will receive by going after people who have committed fraud. The Resolution is to ensure HUD that the Authority has seen the budget and that it has been approved.

C. Goddard made a motion to approve BCHA's 2015 Budget, seconded by A. DeKeyser. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL:

7. Update on new VASH vouchers

R. Hallet stated that since the last update on VASH vouchers, she had attended a VASH meeting in Milwaukee with P. Leifker and two additional individuals from ICS who work directly with VASH voucher clients. This meeting clarified some operational questions and aided in the understanding of the program and its procedures for assisting VASH referrals and recipients. P. Leifker stated that they are still waiting on clarification of a few questions from HUD and are working to establish a quarterly meeting to work toward utilizing the VASH vouchers adequately and as efficiently as possible.

C. Goddard inquired whether any of the vouchers were being utilized currently. R. Hallet stated that the clients have all had their briefings and appointments but most are at the point of looking for a unit. P. Leifker stated that there are currently 15 referrals, of which eight are at the point in the process where they have a voucher and are searching for a unit.

R. Hallet stated that one issue discussed at the meeting was that the Authority needs to make sure areas of the Administrative Plan are updated, in which R. Hallet assured that she is currently working on. This is not so much for the VASH Vouchers but for the Project Based Vouchers. The approval of the updated Administrative Plan will be brought forward to be presented to the Authority at a future meeting.

R. Hallet additionally discussed that the VASH voucher recipients are currently port ins from Appleton and Racine. Therefore, a question had been posed to HUD whether the BCHA is required to absorb those or if it may move forward with issuing vouchers to individuals who are new to the program. This issue has been forwarded to John Finger of HUD who is looking into it; he will let the Authority know at his earliest convenience. However, as Veterans are already being leased up, this issue cannot wait for J. Finger to reply. In the meantime inquiry will be sent to HUD to determine if the Authority needs to absorb the remainder of the VASH vouchers.

A. Hartman asked how long the Authority has had the VASH Vouchers from Appleton. R. Hallet stated that it has been since 2010. A. Hartman then asked why they were not living in Appleton. R. Hallet replied that these are Veterans who live in Brown County and who were recommended by the VA to have a VASH Voucher; but because Brown County, at the time, did not have their own VASH vouchers and Appleton and Racine had some not being utilized, Brown County residents were allocated them. The Brown County VASH voucher recipients are considered port ins because their paper work was the same as would be required for port ins, but they are and have been residents of Brown County. A. Hartman followed up with a question regarding whether their vouchers will be the same value as Brown County's new vouchers. R. Hallet stated that values will be dependent upon the housing unit found by the Veteran; as far as calculating how much assistance a Veteran would receive, that remains the same as the general program.

8. Letter to legislatures regarding port out concern

T. Diedrick stated that the current state of the letter to legislatures regarding portability of vouchers is nothing more than a draft. The second paragraph provides some history about the program and

there are some pieces in the letter that requires accurate data, which are highlighted for easy reference.

R. Hallet stated a few suggestions for the letter regarding grammar and rewording. The addition of the fact that port ins often result in Brown County paying more per unit for port out vouchers than locally retained vouchers was also recommended. R. Hallet expressed that statistics would drive the point home further. In the second to last paragraph, some terminology changes would be needed. In the last paragraph, another suggestion is to state that the portability policy is a statutory requirement thus HUD does not have the means to make this policy change but rather it must be changed by Congress.

C. Goddard stated that it is also important to specifically and directly state what the Authority would like to see happen. T. Diedrick stated that the last paragraph gets at what the BCHA would like to see happen by recommending some solutions. A. Hartman stated that in regards to the Authority's recommendation of requiring vouchers to be absorbed after a period of time, she believes a year is too long. T. Diedrick stated that this time frame may be more acceptable to the politicians.

A. Hartman asked if once a voucher is absorbed, if it comes back to Brown County. R. Hallet confirmed and stated that the receiving PHA can only absorb if they have vouchers available to give. A. Hartman stated that if a receiving PHA's wait lists are closed and they will not have any openings for several years, the voucher recipient should not be able to move to the receiving PHA's jurisdictions if they could not be absorbed within one year. The receiving PHA should know how many port ins they receive from Brown County and decline port ins if they do not have the money to absorb port ins.

M. Roberts stated that it is not that receiving PHAs do not have any vouchers, but rather that they have closed their waiting lists so as not to add more applicants to already long waiting lists. Every PHA selects people from their waiting list once a voucher opens up through natural attrition. There should be a requirement that instead of going to the waiting list, port ins could jump ahead of the line to be absorbed. A. Hartman asked if that is fair to the residents of the receiving PHA that are on the waiting list to allow a port in from another locality to receive service before them. R. Hallet stated that the person on the waiting list doesn't have a voucher whereas the individual wishing to port in would have a voucher; therefore this would give preference to the individual already in the program. A. DeKeyser stated, that in the same situation, if Brown County were ever in that position, the BCHA would have to accept someone who was previously not a Brown County resident and give them assistance with their voucher as opposed to someone on BCHA's waiting list. S. Schmutzer then added to the discussion stating that if the port in was able to jump ahead of the waiting list, there would be nothing to stop other individuals from moving to Brown County, getting a voucher, and then moving back to their original location with the understanding that they will be placed on the top of the waiting list. This would create a huge cycle that would not solve any problems.

S. Schmutzer also stated that this is a federally funded program so HUD is not looking at it as this state versus that state; they are looking at the program as the United States. HUD is not looking to help a specific county's people but all citizens in this country. A. Hartman then stated she would opt for the 110 percent cap.

C. Goddard asked what the requirement for residency is. R. Hallet stated that HUD does not allow PHAs to set a time limit for residency; PHA's can establish residency by documentation but not by time. A. Hartman asked how long the documentation process is, generally. P. Leifker stated that there are different forms of documentation that are acceptable. Documentation must include a photo ID with residency and two pieces of mail with correlated residency which could be heating bill, a lease, school records, doctor records, bank statements, etc. The time frame for receiving these documentations varies.

K. Flom asked if there is data that shows how much time it takes a voucher recipient to port out of Brown County once they have obtained a voucher. Flom stated that this data would be strong

information to add to this case. P. Leifker stated that there is a voluntary survey with port out data that he could compile for the letter. T. Diedrick stated that the chart of port outs by locality would be important to add to the letter.

R. Hallet stated that if it weren't for the lost funding due to porting out, this issue would not be of such high concern. If the receiving PHA would absorb the port outs this issue would not be so impactful, therefore, the financial burden must be laid out in the letter. A. DeKeyser asked whether the Authority should consider pursuing getting more money from HUD to offset the financial burden from porting out (for instance, getting reimbursed for lost funds as opposed to capping funds). R. Hallet pointed out that set asides serve this purpose, but S. Schmutzer stated that because of prorated funding from HUD, money set aside to offset port outs can be very minimal. T. Diedrick also mentioned that HUD and other federal dollars are experiencing significant cuts so asking for additional funds may not be a useful solution.

A. DeKeyser stated that the argument to make would be to house as many people as possible by keeping BCHA's vouchers in Brown County as housing costs are lower here.

T. Diedrick stated that going forward, R. Hallet's changes to the letters should be made and the recommended solutions should be reordered in the letter. Keeping the one year time limit is important, to ensure that the voucher recipient can be successful in their move (establishing a place to live, finding a job, etc.). After the one year, the BCHA voucher would not be viable any longer unless residency was regained in Brown County.

R. Hallet stated the letter should reference the portability section of the regulations. P. Leifker stated that he would be able to find the reference number of the portability section.

A. Hartman asked if other PHA's would be affected by this same issue. P. Leifker stated that other smaller PHA's have the same issue. R. Hallet stated that she would mention this issue to other PHA's at the upcoming WAHA meeting. A. Hartman acknowledged that the more PHA's that are mentioned in this letter that are affected by the issue, the stronger our case becomes. T. Diedrick stated that the BCHA should encourage other PHA's to write their own letters to State legislatures as this would be stronger than having a bunch of signatures in one letter. R. Hallet stated she would share this idea through WAHA.

T. Diedrick then asked who should sign this letter. A. Hartman stated that the Authority and staff should sign the letter. K. Flom stated it would be very strong if the letter were signed from the Authority as opposed to staff. K. Flom also wished to run this by the City Attorney's office to see the legality of staff being able to lobby. R. Hallet stated that WAHA makes a clear distinction between lobbying and educating legislatures. Educating legislatures is allowed and is very important but lobbying via staff resources is not permitted.

R. Hallet stated this may not require formal approval. Authority members could just come in to sign it upon informal approval of the letter via email.

The statistical corrections and changes to the letter that are required will be completed by R. Hallet.

BILLS:
S. Schmutzer stated she had received the billing from the City for August and September's wages and benefits. Also included in the bills is the 2012 and 2013 interest that BCHA received on HAP funds for housing assistant payment funds. These are supposed to be completed two months after the close of the year and repaid to HUD.

A. Hartman made a motion to approve the bills for the month of October 2014. A. DeKeyser seconded the motion. Motion carried

FINANCIAL REPORT:
S. Schmutzer stated that draft copies of the financial report have been seen by the Authority previously and not much has been changed, aside from some date and aesthetic changes; no numbers have been altered. Additionally, a letter was received in October from HUD informing the BCHA that they would receive $2,350,000 for the next HAP funding payment. These monies were expected to come in sometime in November but they have not as of yet. It is expected that this money will come in with BCHA's regular set aside funding in December. The correspondence regarding this additional money has not come with much information, which is of slight concern.

STAFF REPORT:
9. Date of next meeting: December 15, 2014 (cancellation is possible) or January 19, 2015
R. Hallet stated that if it is possible, we will cancel the December meeting, but it is too early to know for sure.

10. Date of Joint BCHA/ICS Board meeting: tentatively February 16, 2015
M. Roberts stated that he has contacted the ICS board regarding the joint BCHA/ICS meeting and this date, which is the regularly scheduled February BCHA meeting, will work.

A. DeKeyser made a motion to adjourn, seconded by C. Goddard. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:12 pm.

sd:rah:jd