MINUTES
BROWN COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Monday, October 16, 2017, 3:30 p.m.
City Hall, 100 N. Jefferson Street, Room 604
Green Bay, WI 54301

(Note: This is a joint meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority and the Board of Directors of Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.)

MEMBERS: Sup. Andy Nicholson – Chair, Corday Goddard – Vice Chair, Tom Deidrick, Ann Hartman and John Fenner

OTHERS: Robyn Hallet, Cheryl Renier-Wigg, Stephanie Schmutzer, Matt Roberts, Pat Leifker, Kelly Runge, Andy Dilling, Jake Dittmann, Erik Pritzl, Sheri Konitzer, Paul Van Handel, Katie Olbinski and Jonathan Anderson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approval of the minutes from the September 25, 2017, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority.

A motion was made by C. Goddard and seconded by A. Hartman to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2017, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority. Motion carried.

A. Nicholson expressed that there was some confusion over the change in meeting dates for the month of September. Because he was unaware of the changes, he was absent from the September meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

REPORTS:

2. Report on Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program:
   A. Preliminary Applications
      For the Month of September, there were 114 preliminary applications.

   B. Unit Count
      The unit count for August, was 3,078.

   C. Housing Assistance Payments Expenses
      The September HAP expense totaled $1,384,873.00.

   D. Housing Quality Standard Inspection Compliance
      There were a total of 382 inspections, of which 215 passed the initial inspection, 53 passed the re-inspection, 78 resulted in a fail and 36 were no shows.

   E. Program Activity/52681B (administrative costs, portability activity, SEMAP)
      There were 367 vouchers that ported out with a HAP expense of $327,544, ICS was underspent by $14,315.82 and the FSS program was underspent by $2,386.41

   F. Family Self-Sufficiency Program (client count, participation levels, new contracts, graduates, escrow accounts, and homeownership)
      There were 86 active FSS clients, with 49 in level one, 16 in level two, 13 in level three and 8 in level four. There were two new contracts signed, zero graduates, 40 active escrow accounts and 51 home owners.

G. VASH Reports (new VASH and active VASH)
There were zero new VASH clients for a total of 28 active VASH clients.

H. Langan Investigations Criminal Background Screening and Fraud Investigations
There were zero new fraud investigations for the month of September, two old investigations were closed and 11 remain active. The fraud investigations by municipality indicated 11 fraud investigations in Green Bay, one in Pulaski and one in De Pere.

I. Quarterly Langan Denials report
There were no new applications were processed this quarter.

J. Quarterly Active Cases Breakdown
The cases were broken down into four categories: the head of household is either elderly or disabled, which included 53 percent; the head of household is not elderly or disabled, but there is some earned income included 34 percent; the head of household is not elderly or disabled, has no earned income, but has dependents included 10 percent; and the head of household is not elderly or disabled, there are no minors in the household, and there is no income included three percent.

K. Quarterly End of Participation
There were 119 total terminations. The top three reasons for termination were voluntary terminations, family obligation violations and zero assistance.

L. Quarterly Customer Service Satisfaction
P. Leifker reported the results of the Quarterly Customer Service Satisfaction Survey. 87 percent of respondents rated the customer service as "excellent", nine percent indicated "very good", two percent indicated "good", one percent indicated "fair" and one percent indicated "poor".

P. Leifker shared a success story from the FSS program: A single father of three sought out the program and has been involved for only a few months. He has attended every life skills seminars available and has actively pursued other resources as well. He is likely to make great progress in the next few months.

A motion was made by T. Diedrick and seconded by C. Goddard to accept the reports from the month of October 2017. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

3. Consideration with possible action on a proposal to change the time of the BCHA meeting and approval to change BCHA bylaws accordingly.

A. Nicholson brought up this communication in July. He suggested that the meeting remain scheduled at 3:30 p.m.

R. Hallet stated that if the meeting needed to be changed in an emergency situation, the bylaws would not need to be updated.

A motion was made by C. Goddard and seconded by J. Fenner receive and place on file.

During discussion, T. Deidrick recommended that the bylaws not specify a specific time and date, but rather indicate how often and when in the month the BCHA should meet.

R. Hallet offered to email the bylaws to the commissioners and add this discussion to the next meeting's agenda.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by J. Fenner to hold this item until the next meeting. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Consideration with possible action to approve new Voucher Payment Standard, effective January 1, 2018.

P. Leifker stated that annually, HUD publishes the fair market rents for each jurisdiction and each Public Housing Authority is responsible for adopting their Voucher Payment Standards within 90-110 percent of the fair market rates. A slight increase in VPS was proposed across the board for all bedroom sizes because there was an increase in the fair market rent amounts.

A. Nicholson inquired what the advantages of making this change were.

P. Leifker indicated that since rent has increased across community, an increase in voucher amounts will allow for individuals to continue paying similar amounts to what they were prior to the increase.

R. Hallet also shared that many clients have difficulties finding affordable properties that will accept their vouchers. There is a regulation called the 40 percent rule that prohibits clients from paying more than 40 percent of their monthly income towards rent. Sometimes clients will find a property, but their portion of the rent would cost more than 40 percent of their income, so they are unable to lease that property. Increasing the VPS will allow individuals to have greater access to units in the area.

An ICS Board member pointed out that if the VPSs are not increased, the only units that will be affordable for clients will be in the more impoverished areas. The BCHA is working to disperse clients outside of those impoverished areas so that poverty is not concentrated in the downtown area.

A. Nicholson inquired if the concentration of vouchers downtown has decreased since the last time the VPSs were raised. P. Leifker indicated it's difficult to correlate the reasons, but that the trends indicate a lower concentration of vouchers downtown.

A motion was made by A. Hartman and seconded by J. Fenner to approve the new Voucher Payment Standard effective January 1, 2018. Motion carried.

5. Consideration with possible action to approve Request for Proposals to be published for Project Based Vouchers.

R. Hallet shared that two property owners of scattered sites have expressed interest in working with the Project Based Voucher Program. As required by HUD, the Authority must do a competitive selection process for them to participate. She brought the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the board to review before it is published. If the RFP is approved, these property owners will be able to submit proposals to be approved by the Authority.

T. Deidrick expressed concern about having too many project based vouchers and inquired why owners would want a project based voucher over a regular tenant-based voucher.

P. Leifker shared that a positive aspect of a project based voucher is that the payment is more stable for landlords. The waitlist is also shorter than other housing choice vouchers.

C. Reiner-Wigg suggested that the Authority could prioritize properties that are outside of high poverty areas to further deconcentrate efforts.

R. Hallet also shared that project basing vouchers allows the Authority to have more control of the owners who participate in the HCV program. The proposals will provide information about the quality of the units and the management of the property managers, which allows the Authority to select units which will pass the Housing Quality Standards and ensure there are no other issues with the owners.

Discussion continued with inquiries about the two owners who have expressed interest, their units, and why they would want project based vouchers. Since this agenda item is requesting approval of the RFP, the proposals haven't yet been submitted and therefore the details are not yet known.

A. Nicholson expressed his concern, and that he's trying to downsize the amount of vouchers used in the area he represents, so without more information, he can't support this request.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by C. Goddard to approve the Request for Proposals to be published for Project Based Vouchers. Motion carried.

6. Consideration with possible action to apply for additional VASH Vouchers.

R. Hallet reminded the committee that VASH (Veteran Assisted Supportive Housing) Vouchers are for homeless veterans. HUD has invited housing authorities to submit a Registration of Interest if they are interested in requesting more VASH Vouchers. R. Hallet has communicated with the VA to get a letter of support and based on the Point in Time count, there are at least 15 homeless veterans in Brown County who could benefit from the vouchers, so the Authority would like to request 15 more vouchers.

A. Hartman asked how many VASH Vouchers are currently in circulation.

R. Hallet replied that there are 31 VASH Vouchers in Brown County and 28 are currently being used.

C. Goddard asked if the Authority should request more to plan for future needs.

R. Hallet replied that they could request more than 15 units, but since the data shows a need for 15, she was not sure if HUD would approve the additional vouchers.

A motion was made by C. Goddard and seconded by T. Deidrick to apply for additional VASH Vouchers. Motion carried.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by J. Fenner to move item number 10 up on the agenda. Motion carried.

10. Report on Brown County's Safe and Stable Housing Study.

R. Hallet presented information about a Safe and Stable Housing Study that Brown County commissioned. The UW - Green Bay's Center for Public Affairs performed a study on certain Brown County consumers in unstable or unsafe housing. The study targeted adults within the

Brown County Treatment Courts system for mental health and substance abuse issues, adults receiving outpatient care from the Community Treatment Center, adults on probation or parole with mental health or substance abuse issues and adults exiting the Brown County Jail with mental health issues.

Erik Pritzl, Director of Health and Human Services, elaborated that this study did not cover all individuals leaving the prison or jail, but individuals who have been referred to have additional relationships with Health and Human Services in their transition into everyday life.

R. Hallet continued stating that two professors and one graduate student at UW – Green Bay conducted this research. To gather their data, the center conducted interviews of service providers, used survey data and looked at secondary data. The study found common themes about the needs of the consumers studied. They further broke those needs down by needs for consumers with mental illness, substance abuse and consumers exiting jail. The common themes include a general lack of affordable housing in Brown County, personal barriers, such as health issues or additions, a lack of availability of landlords willing to rent to high barrier consumers and insufficient access to supportive services.

The study provided potential policy alternatives, which were divided into three categories: additional housing units; public and private funding strategies; and supplemental alternatives. Examples from other communities were cited for each. Furthermore, the study indicated that Brown County has the potential to act as a catalyst to expand affordable housing options to benefit all residents.

Commissioners and staff engaged in discussion regarding consumers in these situations, different methods of housing them and how the BCHA could play a role in alleviating this community problem. E. Pritzl stressed the County will take the process of determining the best method very slowly, examining all options from every angle.

A motion was made by J. Fenner and seconded by T. Deidrick to receive and place on file the Report on Brown County's Safe and Stable Housing Study. Motion carried.

A motion was made by J. Fenner and seconded by T. Deidrick to place numbers eight and nine before seven on the agenda. Motion carried.

BILLS AND FINANCIAL REPORT:

8. Consideration with possible action on acceptance of BCHA bills.

S. Schmutzer shared that the included bill was the final bill for the audit assessment.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by J. Fenner to accept and place on file the BCHA bills. Motion carried.

9. Consideration with possible action on acceptance of BCHA financial report.

S. Schmutzer said that we are about a quarter of the way through the year and that we are right on track with the budget.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by C. Goddard to accept the BCHA financial report. Motion carried.

7. Consideration with possible action on goal setting and input on BCHA's 2018 budget.

R. Hallet shared that this item was requested at a previous joint meeting. Staff would like to use this discussion to determine how to best use the BCHA's unrestricted funds ($1.8 million) to benefit the community.

C. Reiner-Wigg stated that previously this money has been donated to Habitat for Humanity to build properties for those in need. The Authority could also open up a pool of money for organizations to apply for. She also stated that this money is from repayments from old loan programs. It has been sitting idle for many years.

R. Hallet shared some suggestions from a survey she administered. The top six suggestions were: Emergency shelters and transitional housing supportive services; a Housing Navigator or Landlord Liaison type position to connect those in need of housing with potential landlords; homeless prevention programs; permanent supportive housing projects; supportive services for those with mental health or other specials needs; and programs for homeless youth or youth aging out of foster care.

The staff continued to analyze the comments from the survey, and created a proposal to budget $150,000 to be dedicated to one or more of the top six responses. She suggested that the Authority reach out to existing programs that benefit these areas who could submit proposals to request some of the money.

R. Hallet shared that she went to a recent presentation where she discovered that Brown County does a good job of keeping the homeless comfortable temporarily; however, more permanent options are needed in Brown County for homelessness to be alleviated.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by J. Fenner to hold this item until the board has access to more information about where this money originated from, and different options for its use. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT AND INFORMATIONAL:
11. Date of next meeting: November 20, 2017.

A motion was made by C. Goddard and seconded by J. Fenner to adjourn at 5:04 p.m. Motion carried.