

MINUTES
BROWN COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
Monday, January 15, 2018, 3:30 p.m.
City Hall, 100 N. Jefferson Street, Room 604
Green Bay, WI 54301

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Robyn Hallet, Cheryl Reiner-Wigg, Stephanie Schmutzer, Pat Leifker, Matt Roberts, David Pietenpol, David Vander Bloomen, Guy Zima, Erik Hoyer, Janet Angus, Tom DeWane, and Scott Schoeneman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Approval of the minutes from the December 18, 2017, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority.

A. Nicholson requested that the minutes be sent back for more clarification on item number five.

A motion was made by A. Hartman and seconded by C. Goddard to bring the minutes back for approval at the next meeting. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

REPORTS:

2. Report on Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program:

A. Preliminary Applications

For the Month of December, there were 62 preliminary applications.

B. Unit Count

The unit count for December was 2,993.

C. Housing Assistance Payments Expenses

The December HAP expense totaled \$1,351,808.

D. Housing Quality Standard Inspection Compliance

There were a total of 383 inspections, of which 213 passed the initial inspection, 63 passed the re-inspection, 71 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 \$328,561; ICS was overspent by \$31,861.21. For the year, ICS was underspent by \$35,134.71. The FSS program was overspent by \$2,367.85, but underspent by \$2,665.66 for the year

F. Family Self-Sufficiency Program (client count, participation levels, new contracts, graduates, escrow accounts and homeownership)

There were 77 active FSS clients, with 49 in level one, 15 in level two, 7 in level three and seven in level four. There were zero new contracts signed, zero graduates, 40 active escrow accounts and 50 homeowners.

- G. VASH Reports (new VASH and active VASH)
There was one new VASH client for a total of 29 active VASH clients.
- H. Langan Investigations Criminal Background Screening and Fraud Investigations
There were no new investigations assigned. One investigation was closed, 15 remain active, and no new applications have been processed as ICS is not currently pulling from the waiting list. For the breakdown of investigations by municipality, 13 were in Green Bay, and two in De Pere.
- I. Quarterly Langan Denials report
There were no new applications 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 55 percent; the head of household is not elderly or disabled, but there is some earned income included, at 33 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 earned income, two percent.
- K. Quarterly End of Participation
There were 81 total terminations for the past quarter. The top three reasons for termination were voluntary terminations, family obligation violations, and deceased tenant.
- L. Quarterly Customer Service Satisfaction
P. Leifker reported the results of the Quarterly Customer Service Satisfaction Survey. Out of a total of 93 responses, 90 respondents rated the customer service as "excellent", and three indicated that the customer service was "very good".

A motion was made by A. Hartman and seconded by C. Goddard to receive and place on file the Report on Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- 3. Discussion on recent recommendations on Chapter 17 and how these recommendations were determined.

A. Nicholson shared that at the previous BCHA meeting, this item was held up because he wanted to have more discussion about it. A. Nicholson stated that he was unaware of the committee's existence and questioned why this issue was listed as a separate agenda item.

R. Hallet indicated that she set up the committee as was indicated by the RFP. The committee did not have any input on Chapter 17; they only discussed the two proposals that were submitted. She explained that prior to publishing the RFP, R. Hallet discussed EPH's mission with leaders of their organization and based on her knowledge and understanding of the PBV program and the Administrative Plan, she concluded that, to maintain EPH's mission, a

separate waiting list would be needed under the PBV program, and thus a change to Chapter 17. This change would be modeled after an already existing waiting list for veterans at Veteran's Manor. The difference is that EPH's priorities would be given to homeless families exiting shelters.

A. Nicholson asked R. Hallet to define what she meant by "homeless families exiting shelters or transitional housing programs."

R. Hallet answered that this mission was indicated in EPH's proposal; it is the population that EPH serves. These families would need to be referred by shelters or transitional housing programs like Freedom House, for example. Currently, when someone applies to the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the applicant must indicate which programs' waiting list they would like to be on (HCV, Project Based Vouchers, or Veteran's Manor). When a PBV owner has a vacancy, they contact ICS, who provides them the list of applicants on the PBV waiting list. If Chapter 17 is not amended to allow a separate waiting list for EPH's units, EPH would get a list of all the PBV applicants, most of which would not be homeless and thus not meet EPH's mission and residency criteria.

A. Nicholson asked if Chapter 17 was discussed by the RFP committee. R. Hallet stated it was not. A. Nicholson stated he thought that was the discussion last month.

A. Hartman asked R. Hallet to specify the population that would qualify for EPH project based voucher. R. Hallet replied that only homeless families who are referred by a shelter or transitional housing organization would be eligible.

C. Goddard added that as a participant in the EPH program, the family must agree to work with the Salvation Army as a caseworker to create a plan to work toward financial independence. It is intentionally moving them from homelessness to a more stable housing situation.

A. Hartman questioned if ICS provides this service. P. Leifker clarified that ICS does not provide transitional housing. ICS offers an optional Family Self Sufficiency program that is open to any HCV participant.

M. Roberts indicated that a mission of ICS is to help participants achieve self-sufficiency, so they market the FSS program heavily. However, the federal government prohibits them from mandating participation.

A. Hartman asked for clarification by inquiring if it's correct that HCV participants can't be forced into the FSS program, but if they volunteer ICS tries to work with and encourage them; but if they don't volunteer, they can just want to sit and watch TV and play video games.

R. Hallet asked that the committee members do not make such assumptions about the people they serve.

A. Nicholson questioned why he didn't know about the committee. R. Hallet stated that in October, when she brought the RFP to the Authority for approval, the RFP explained the committee and she also verbalized at the meeting that anyone who wished to participate in the committee should let her know.

A. Nicholson stated that he wished he would have been notified of the recommendations that came out of the committee.

D. Pietenpol from EPH directed the committee to a document that articulates EPH's place in the community. It stated that many families enter the system through a shelter. Some families are able to get back on their feet quickly, while others need more support. For these families, transitional housing is a good option. Brown County is lacking in affordable housing, so even when a family later becomes ready to leave transitional housing, they are often unable to do so because they are unable to afford unsubsidized rent. EPH therefore has started to provide long term supportive housing for families like these. The families live in a subsidized rental unit while they continue to work with The Salvation Army's case management program to take further steps toward self-sufficiency. EPH is a big advocate of the Housing Choice Voucher Program because for a lot of families, that is the only way they can move forward to self-sufficiency. EPH is requesting a separate waiting list so that they can continue their mission of serving homeless families referred from shelter or transitional housing. If there would be no such families on the waiting list, then they would defer to the general PBV waiting list.

A. Nicholson asked if this change would speed up the process of getting a voucher for those who qualified.

D. Pietenpol stated that depending on the length of ICS's waiting list, this separate waiting list could allow homeless families to access vouchers faster than through the general HCV program.

A. Nicholson asked if EPH would be providing the same service as ICS on a smaller scale. D. Pietenpol clarified that the eligibility still goes through ICS, with the same eligibility process. EPH is simply asking that instead of them drawing from the general PBV waiting list, that they be allowed a separate waiting list for those who have applied to ICS but are homeless.

A. Nicholson asked if this change would create a separate waiting list. R. Hallet and D. Pietenpol clarified that it is a separate eligibility requirement.

G. Zima asked about the percentage of HCV participants who are families. R. Hallet and P. Leifker directed him to the quarterly report shared earlier in the meeting.

G. Zima asked why a separate waiting list is being created if only 45% of participants are families. R. Hallet replied that this waiting list would specify the families that qualify for EPH's program as their mission connotes.

G. Zima stated that he felt that project based housing goes against the free enterprise system. He worried that certain landlords could take advantage of the system.

R. Hallet explained that HUD mandates that general PBV rents are set at the lowest of three criteria: 110% of the fair market rate for the area, rent that is reasonable compared to other unassisted units, or the rent the owner requests. This keeps landlords from taking advantage of the system. The HUD fair market rents for the Green Bay Metropolitan Statistical Area were displayed.

D. Pietenpol informed the commissioners that all of their properties rent out well below market value as to provide the best assistance for their clients.

Upon questioning, P. Leifker stated that the rent amounts include utilities. A. Nicholson inquired what happens if the tenant doesn't want to pay utilities. P. Leifker answered that not paying the utilities would violate their lease with the landlord, so it would be the landlord's responsibility to decide the consequences. If the tenant was evicted, he or she would be terminated from the program. He also added that ICS mandates that the rent on their properties align with reasonable market rate. They have inspectors run rent comparables with other units before rent can be raised.

G. Zima inquired about how rents amounts for PBV units compare to rents on the general HCV program. P. Leifker and R. Hallet responded that such data wasn't immediately available but could be gathered. P. Leifker reiterated that the rent needs to meet rent reasonable requirements.

A. Nicholson stated that he is worried about straying from the traditional system. At January's meeting, he thought that the selection committee was also making recommendations about Chapter 17, but after clarification he understood.

A motion was made by T. Deidrick and seconded by C. Goddard to place this item on the agenda for the next BCHA meeting.

Under discussion, A. Nicholson asked if the families in EPH's program have to maintain some type of employment. D. Pietenpol answered that the families are required to maintain some type of employment. EPH also does background checks on criminal activity. Though they do not screen for evictions, they do screen for chronic addiction issues.

G. Zima asked if the landlords for project based vouchers are nonprofits and if the same rent criteria apply to nonprofit landlords. He worried that because nonprofits do not pay taxes, they have an unfair advantage. He opined that they should charge lower rents. He felt that nonprofits get more money than they deserve and are paying big salaries.

D. Pietenpol reiterated that all of their units are below market value. EPH subsidizes rent out of their own funds, collected through generous donations, prior to families receiving a voucher. He said that they are not amassing wealth and he would be willing to share his salary history with the Authority.

T. Diedrick also commented that as an Executive Director of a non-profit, he feels the generalized comment made by G. Zima about non-profits amassing money was inappropriate.

G. Zima explained that in his experience, there have been a lot of nonprofits that were not held accountable.

J. Angus, a local landlord, stated that she charges much less than fair market rent. She worries that, as a taxpayer, she has to compete with nonprofits and with subsidized rental units and this will make the rents increase in the community. She also expressed concern over the number of PBV units in Brown County and if those are nonprofits that are not paying property taxes, that is costing the community a lot of money.

C. Goddard stated that the fair market rents were determined by averaging the rents in the area. They are not made up by the federal government or designed to make economically challenged families pay more. The specific methodology is listed on the HUD website.

J. Fenner indicated that the Authority has no control over the amounts of the fair market rents. The federal government sets the fair market rates.

Motion carried.

BILLS AND FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

S. Schmutzer shared that Habitat for Humanity made their first drawdown on the funding BCHA had committed to their Western Avenue projects.

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

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

S. Schmutzer stated that the year-end financials will come back at the February meeting for final approval for the year.

A motion was made by A. Hartman and seconded by C. Goddard to accept and place on file the BCHA financial report. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT AND INFORMATIONAL:

6. Lead the Way Training, PIH Lumberton Case Study.

R. Hallet stated that this is the last segment of the Lead the Way Training.

Authority members commented that they were not able to access the website for the case study.

A motion was made by A. Hartman and seconded by J. Fenner to carry this item over to the next agenda. Motion carried.

R. Hallet stated that she would look into the issue with the website.

On another note, she reminded the commissioners of the Housing Summit taking place at the Brown County Library on January 17.

7. Date of next meeting: February 19, 2018.

A. Hartman stated she would be unable to attend the next meeting.

A motion was made by C. Goddard and seconded by J. Fenner to adjourn at 4:50 p.m. Motion carried.

LNC:RAH