

MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND ASSISTED HOUSING BOARD
COMMITTEE MEETING
RICHMOND REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY
HELD AT 600 EAST BROAD STREET
IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
ON THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024, 5:30 P.M.

Attendees

Commissioners

Charlene Pitchford, Vice Chair
Barrett Hardiman, Commissioner
Veronica Blount, Commissioner
Edward Jackson Jr., Commissioner

RRHA Staff

Steven Nesmith, CEO
Kenyatta Green, SVP of Affordable Housing
Precious Washington, Senior VP of Finance
Colene Orsini, VP of Procurement.
Ralph Stuckey, VP of Resident Services.
Fatimah Smothers-Hargrove, VP of Tenant Selection & Housing Choice Voucher
Marty Harrison, VP of Public Housing
Calandra Trotter-Assistant VP of Compliance
Theodore Reynolds, Assistant VP & Deputy of Public Safety
Pamela Kearney, Assistant VP of Public Housing Operations
Christie Smith, Assistant VP Coordinator of Homeownership
Monte Gayles, Public Safety Program Analyst
Tiana Parker, Executive Administrative Assistant of Affordable Housing

Call To Order

Vice Chair Pitchford called the meeting to order. A quorum was not established.

Approval of Minutes, February 8, 2024

Minutes could not be approved as there was not a quorum established.

Citizens' Comment Period

Two Citizens signed up to speak, Ms. Cora Hayes and Ms. Patrice Shelton, however they were not online at the time of the meeting to speak.

Old Business

Lease Enforcement, Kenyatta Green

Aged Receivables: 1,588 families with a balance of \$51.00 or more for a total of \$3.2 million which is an increase from last month. These numbers continue to grow and increase and now is up to 195 families as now April's rent is now due for them. CEO Nesmith and SVP Green attended a City Council subcommittee meeting to get assistance to try find a solution to help residents with balances to bring this \$3.2 million in aged receivables down. Work is being done diligently to find a solution as opposed to evictions, short-term and a long-term solution. Good conversations are being had but at some point, we have to make sure the department is working efficiently in collecting rent and there is a broad and standard regulation that if you don't pay, you don't stay. Mr. Nesmith discussed that the agency can't be afraid to do lease enforcement and has to hold the line. The current balances cannot just be written off due to HUD regulations. It also was discussed that there cannot be behavior that would be enabling behaviors to not pay rent. It was also discussed if maintenance costs are included in rent owed as far as lease enforcement or is it separated. Families are encouraged to come for help before it gets to court and some families coming to court saying that there are errors in the ledgers concerning balances. Discussion was also had concerning tenants that don't report income changes that may contribute to rent owed.

New Business

- **Towing of Vehicles** – AVP Pamela Kearney was speaking on behalf of Mr. Charles Williams and stated that VP Williams is working with various contractors to see if there is vendor availability on the weekends. The goal is to have policy in place within the next 60 days. A report will be provided.
- **2024-Mid-Year Department Updates and Goals**
 - **Affordable Housing, Kenyatta Green** – SVP Green gave an overall update regarding the Affording Housing and what's going on. The case manager module was discussed and how it would improve customer service across the agency. Staff also had Yardi Training. The software will be going live on April 22, 2024. SVP

Green discussed the home ownership program and there will be an educational workshop the week of March 18th. There was a tremendous amount of interest from families from the HCV Program as well as public housing. Concerning the Save My Spot, SVP Green indicated that reopening of some of the wait lists may be opening. An MOU is in the works and in the hands of the RDSS attorney for execution. A process for youth and young adults moving out of foster care is also being worked on.

- **Public Housing –**
 - The goal for rent collection is to be at 95% by the end of the fiscal year.
 - Maintenance inspections to be at 100% in accordance with REAC and NSPIRE inspections. Two elderly sites will be the end of the fiscal year.
 - All sites have preventative maintenance inspections scheduled according to REACT And INSPIRE inspection protocol. A year-round NSPIRE protocol manual and work orders to be at 98% with on time closing.
 - Current work order closing percentage is 97%.
 - A mobile work order process has been implemented with the IR radios with 75% of the staff up to par with training. The additional 25% will also receive training.
- **Housing Choice Voucher Program Tenant Selection Office, Fatimah Smothers-Hargrove –**
 - Call center is fully staffed.
 - Want to increase call center specialists' knowledge to better assist housing specialists more other than just taking calls.
 - TSO major goal is to assist LIPH with filling their vacancy.
 - Fill project-based voucher vacancies in a timely manner.
 - Increase voucher issuance.
 - Open waiting list for Save My Spot.
 - The HCVP Leasing Team has two vacancies currently, but they are currently up to date with their work meaning inspections are being scheduled timely. New moves are also being processed in a timely manner.

- Other goals include landlord engagement and landlord education such as how to navigate in the landlord portal. Also want to help landlords get their ledgers up to date.
- The HCVP Recert Team is up to 10 specialists with four still in training. A new supervisor is starting at the beginning of the week. Hoping to decrease caseloads to provide better customer service and hiring more staff will help with this. The major goal is with recertifications.
- Save My Spot was advertised the entire month of February and was live for the entire month of March (this was an effort to purge the wait list).
 - Pre-Save My Spot 32 wait list with 154,000 applications out there (some dating back to 2019).
 - The current Save My Spot there are 94,000 remaining on the wait list. About 60,000 were dropped with the purge.
 - Very minimal negative feedback.
- The next goal will be to open the wait list on the HCVP specifically public housing and elderly wait list.
- TSL will be fully staffed for the summer.

It was mentioned that they are having to pull 500 people from the wait list to issue 100 vouchers. This is not the best practice. However, on Monday since the wait list purge is done there is a fresh wait list and will give a better opportunity to get these families determined eligible. There are currently 76 units ready and waiting.

Discussion was had concerning getting more landlords interested in the voucher program. A recent event was held with some landlords and RRHA and there should be more held to get back in front of the landlords to help them have a better system. We want current landlords to be ambassadors so more will want to work with RRHA. Discussion was also had concerning how great it would be if the Virginia Housing had a sort of “clearing house” where all waiting lists were put together.

Public Safety, Martin Harrison

- Revamp the tip line: The tip line has been branded not just for negative issues but for positive issues for citizens to give feedback on employees or security issues. Last year's tip line calls were 12. This year so far there have been 31. The goal is to maintain 90% closure on tip lines. Currently, it's 100%. The tip line is very instrumental for RPD as well.
- Reduction in homicides: Goal is to reduce the homicide rate to 24% for 2024. This will be done with the use of the cameras and by the change in the hours that the security force is on patrol and because of this the normal peak hours for crime has changed.
 - 2022 there were 14 homicides, 10 were resolved with the use of the cameras.
 - 2023 there were 16 homicides, 6 were resolved with the cameras.
 - Security patrol force came on in September and from September to December there were only 2 homicides and last year by August there had been 14.
 - Work is being done with the RPD liaison by receiving reports from the detectives which is helping to reduce crime.
 - Looking to have quarterly meetings with residents and staff to stay on top of things.
 - Funding is an issue, but Mr. Nesmith has done a great job with this. Two grants have been applied for and will apply for a third. Funding helps cover the cost of things such as cameras and lighting.
 - The cameras for the senior sites are delayed due to some infrastructure issues. The contractual issues have been resolved and next the wiring issues need to be resolved which may incur some expenses but is being worked on.
 - Hoping to have more referrals which in turn will help reduce crime. Last year there were a total of 295 referrals.
 - Additional training for the security staff such as active shooter training as well as Narcan training. The drug overdoses have been trending down.

Discussion concerning the use of the two kiosks has been helpful and the transferring of the Calhoun Center over to the city will be beneficial and will carve out space for the stem program as well as create a resident/client service center there. Mr. Nesmith discussed that

the announcement was made, and the modernization of the senior sites is beginning with Lombardy.

Resident Services, Ralph Stuckey

- Focus is on post-secondary scholarship education. The goal is to raise \$100,000 this year. This is the 5th year awarding scholarships. There was a state record of 23 applications for kids this year and we had 8 kids compete, with 4 from RRHA.
- A 3rd stem site was opened a month ago at Hillside Court. The goal being to open stem centers all sites for not only the youth but for the adults as well including the seniors. This will help adults to navigate technology and such.
- Youth Leadership/Employment program for the summer: Last year there was 200 youth. Also, there is a pilot exploratory careers program for the 18-year-olds who have graduated. This will create a pathway for them for the future. We are working with Community Wealth Building and some other partners in this program. There were 13 that applied, 7 were accepted, 5 came into the program and 3 completed the program.
- A survey of the senior sites was performed, and that information is being tabulated. But it is important to get the seniors involved with activities such as card games, Bingo, etc. which will help with cognitive development for the seniors.
- Government Self-Sufficiency Program: Training was had in the fall and policies and procedures are being developed for the program. This will assist the homeownership program moving forward because it will be giving people the tools to become self-sufficient and move forward.

Housing Compliance, Calandra Trotter

- One major goal is to assist HCVP with reestablishing it's high-performance status with the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (CMAP). A continued quality control/internal audit of files is ongoing with quarterly reporting of the findings provided to Ms. Fatimah so that corrections/errors can be fixed earlier. Also, the hope is to take this quality control/auditing into the low-income public housing communities before the end of April.
- Work is continuing drafting standard operating procedures (SOP) to enhance productivity to ensure consistent following of procedures and policies through the staff of the agency.

- Resident Council elections were had for the 2024/2027 term. Four elections were had, three in family communities and one in a senior community. Efforts alongside Resident Services to establish councils in all communities is ongoing.

Vice Chair Pitchford brought up the issue that the new Bylaws need to be updated with new language concerning some issues with elections.

Closing Comments

CEO Nesmith and VP Stuckey attended a recent RTO meeting and VP Stuckey gave a great speech about empowerment and coming up with strategic goals for 2024 to get funding. Also CEO Nesmith expressed he is working with Ralph Stucky on establishing a Youth Leadership Campaign to recruit two young people from each of the Big 6 to be leaders.

Next Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 9, 2024.

Adjournment

As all minds and hearts were clear, Vice Chair Pitchford adjourned the meeting.