

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024
MILLS PARK TOWER
7:45 AM**

OFFICIAL RECORD

QUORUM

PRESENT: Commissioners Teitelman, Kelm, Sood, Socall, Walz and Chairperson Muse

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Pope, Swaggerty, Burgos, Carpenter, Cobb, Sinn

Chairperson Muse called the meeting to order at 7:49 AM.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR OPHA MARCH 12, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

It was moved (Teitelman) and seconded (Kelm) to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2024, regular meeting of the OPHA Board.

Chairperson Muse asked if there were any corrections to the March 12, 2024, meeting minutes. There were none. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Natof (9F) asked if all incidents of the elevator(s) malfunctioning are reported on the monthly report to the Board or only those that result in a service call to the elevator company. Senior Property Manager, Burgos stated that only incidents that require a technician to service the elevator are reported.

Resident Lloyd (11H) welcomed back the Resident Council Vice President, Victoria Artega. She then asked for the timeline for preparation of the 2025 annual plan presentation to the Board and the date for the Resident Advisory Board meeting (RAB) to review the plan. She said that over twenty (20) residents have indicated they want to provide input into the development of the annual plan and be prepared to provide appropriate comments at the RAB meeting. Executive Director Pope explained that there will be a discussion at the Resident Council meeting following the Board meeting to review the timeline. Once the timeline is finalized with the Resident Council leadership, the information will then be made available to all the residents.

Resident Perkins (19B) asked when MPT will once again become a public polling site now that the risk of COVID-19 has decreased significantly. Executive Director Pope stated that it would be a topic for discussion with the Resident Council. He said that if there was a desire for MPT to be a polling site, then it would be discussed with the Village of Oak Park. He stated that he was unsure as to whether the Village would be willing to make that change in between the primary and general elections or if they would wait until after the general election to avoid any confusion regarding voting locations.

Resident Reeves (19L) asked when there would be a follow-up on the subject of MPT as a polling site. Executive Director Pope stated that it would be discussed with the Resident Council leadership at their meeting to be held right after the Board meeting.

HA-2024-04-01 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL RENEWAL OF OPHA PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

Ms. Swaggerty briefly summarized the annual renewal process for OPHA's property and liability insurance and presented the current proposed renewal costs along with her recommendations.

Commissioner Sood asked if we had looked into raising our deductible(s) to lower our costs given our history of no claims and our pro-active risk mitigation practices. Ms. Swaggerty stated that we have, but because the habitational property market (particularly senior housing) is considered high risk, we would have to raise the deductibles considerably for it to make an appreciable difference. She added that what is being proposed is what underwriting has recommended based on our risk tolerance, but we can continue to look at the options. Ms. Swaggerty asked if there were any further questions, there were none.

It was moved (Socall) and seconded (Walz) to approve HA-2024-04-01 annual renewal of OPHA property and liability insurance.

AYES: Directors Teitelman, Kelm, Sood, Socall, Walz, and Chairperson Muse

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

REVIEW OF 1ST QUARTER FINANCIALS

Mr. Sinn provided a brief review of the 1st quarter financials and stated that we are on target for this period. He noted that electric costs are high as expected during the 1st quarter due to the season but should go down when the heat is no longer needed. He asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Executive Director Pope added that there would be a more substantive conversation in the 2nd and 3rd quarter financial reviews.

Commissioner Socall thanked Mr. Sinn as well as the team for keeping us on track.

Chairperson Muse asked the commissioners if there were any questions. There were none.

HCVP 2024 WAITLIST UPDATE

Ms. Cobb provided a brief update of the HCVP 2024 Waiting List. She reported that the 18,481 pre-applications received through Rent Café have now been transferred into YARDI for sorting by potential preference. She stated that we have asked YARDI for a list of the pre-applicants who may qualify for the local preference, and we anticipate that we will have that list by the end of the current week. She added that we anticipate all pre-applicants will receive a response by June 30th, 2024.

Executive Director Pope stated that we should have a much better idea of how many pre-applicants qualified for the local preference very soon. He explained that Ms. Cobb and her staff will begin residency verification to confirm the 135 candidates to be added to the waitlist. He added that this will be a very busy time for the HCVP staff and expressed his gratitude for all their hard work. Ms. Swaggerty added that the temporary staff that assisted during the Waitlist opening will also assist in this verification process.

Chairperson Muse asked if the 135 waiting list spots correlated to 135 vacancies in Oak Park. Executive Director Pope stated no, the 135 correlates to a portion of the 150 waiting list spots that are going to be filled. He added that we selected the 150 number based on our past experience of awarding roughly 50 vouchers to waitlist households per year. This would mean we would need to re-open the waitlist in 2-3 years.

Commissioner Walz asked on average how long it takes for someone on the waitlist to receive a voucher. President Pope explained on average it is about a year and a half.

Commissioner Kelm asked if the information regarding the vast number of applicants gets sent somewhere to show the predominate need for more vouchers. Executive Director Pope stated that the information does get published to make the public aware of the need for affordable housing and assistance, but it falls on the federal government and HUD to decide the level of funding the program receives.

Chairperson Muse stated the Village of Oak Park is in discussion about affordable housing. She explained that there had been previous discussion in which the Village determined they would require new developments to either set aside 10% of the units for low-income households or pay a specified amount into the Villages Affordable Housing Fund. However, since most of the developers have chosen to pay into the fund rather than set aside units for

lower-income households, there is now a debate underway for not allowing developers the option of paying into the fund. Executive Director Pope added that there has been an update to the Homes for a Changing Region Report that the Village of Oak Park adopted back in 2011-2012. He explained that it highlights a number of areas that will require more community dialogue and policy direction and that OPHA will continue to contribute to this discussion and policy dialogue. Chairperson Muse agreed and stated she believes the discussion of maintaining diversity in Oak Park is a central component that has been lost over the years.

Commissioner Walz stated she would like to explore the possibility of using vouchers for homeownership and discuss the challenges of matching voucher families to newly constructed units in Oak Park. She added that this is important and hopes OPHA will speak with the Village regarding this issue as she would hate the opportunity to be missed.

Chairperson Muse added that the Chicago Housing Authority has a voucher program where a participant could use the voucher for home ownership. She stated that she and OPRC's Chair Wayne Pierce have been discussing how to bring that conversation to the Village President and Board. She added that the lack of affordable housing is a national problem that is difficult to solve, but that Oak Park has been at the forefront of addressing this issue and a role model for the rest of the country and should continue to do so.

Chairperson Muse asked if there were any further questions or comments. There were none.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

MILLS PARK TOWER

Property Manager Carpenter briefly summarized the administrative, maintenance and resident activities for the month of March. She highlighted occupancy with a lease-up rate of 92%. She reported that Jewel/Osco Pharmacy conducted on-site vaccinations for shingles, Covid, and flu. She stated that eighteen (18) residents took advantage of this program.

Chairperson Muse asked how many vacant units there were and how long it would take to fill them. Ms. Carpenter stated that there were fifteen (15) vacant units at the end of March, but that currently there are eleven (11). She stated staff are hoping to identify 8-10 eligible applicants during the waitlist briefing they were conducting right after the Board meeting. She added that Resident Perkins (19B) had volunteered her unit as a model unit for the applicants to view.

Senior Property Manager, Burgos, provided an update on the elevators. He stated that we are currently waiting for delivery of the drawings of the inside panels and for review and approval from our consultant Lurch and Bates before ordering and starting the renovation. Executive Director Pope added that we have finally received the key piece of back-ordered equipment from California which was the reason for the nine (9) month delay.

Chairperson Muse asked for the new elevator refurbishment timeline. Mr. Burgos stated that the timeline has not been finalized because we are still in discussion with Suburban about other aspects of the project, but residents will be notified as soon as we have a confirmed start date. Commissioner Kelm added that he hopes staff can also provide a solid finish date when notifying residents of when the project will start.

Executive Director Pope reminded the board that under the contract with Suburban, the first elevator will take 8-10 weeks and the second elevator will take 12-16 weeks. Commissioner Kelm stated that there is usually a penalty under the contract if the work is not completed within the stated timeframe. Executive Director Pope agreed and said that it would be the same for this situation as well.

Commissioner Teitelman asked if there was a timeline for the remaining eleven (11) unfinished units to be made ready for occupancy. Property Manager Carpenter stated that there are only minor repairs which she does not expect to take longer than thirty (30) days.

Chairperson Muse asked if there are any other commissioner questions. There were none.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER

Director Cobb briefly summarized the Housing Choice Voucher Program activities for the month of March. She highlighted a lease-up rate of 99% for regular vouchers and added that HCVP would temporarily halt absorbing any port-ins since there are 16 applicants currently searching for housing. She stated that we are doing well, but we need to ensure we do not exceed the annual utilization. Executive Director Pope added that we cannot exceed an average of 433 a month every month for the entire year.

Commissioner Socall commented that she has received a lot of feedback regarding the waiting list and thanked Director Cobb for her hard work. She then asked if those searching for housing receive assistance from The Regional Housing Center and OPHA, do they search independently? Director Cobb explained that when the HCV staff conducts briefings, there is a representative from the Regional Housing Center in attendance and available housing information is also provided in the briefing packets. She added that HCV also receives weekly referrals to available housing and passes that information along to the participants who are searching.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

Executive Director Pope shared that the Resident Council informed management that the gardening/landscaping committee would like to work with management on the landscaping of the east side of the building and have created a plan they would like to be considered.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved (Kelm) and seconded (Sood) to adjourn the OPHA April 9, 2024, regular board meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50a.m.

AYES: Directors Teitelman, Kelm, Sood, Socall, Walz, and Chairperson Muse

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Teitelman, Secretary