

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2024  
MILLS PARK TOWER  
7:45 AM**

**OFFICIAL RECORD**

**QUORUM**

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

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF:** Pope, Swaggerty, Carpenter, Cobb, Sinn, and Jones

**GUESTS:** Director Stratman and Various Mills Park Tower Residents

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

**APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 8, 2024, OPHA'S REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Chairperson Muse asked if there were any corrections to the October 8, 2024 meeting minutes. There were none.

It was moved (Teitelman) and seconded (Walz) to approve the October 8, 2024, OPHA regular meeting minutes. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nora Natof (Apt. 9F):

Ms. Natof raised concerns about ongoing elevator issues. She reported that for at least a month, if not two, the elevator has been unreliable, often bypassing floors or failing to stop when called. Ms. Natof questioned whether these problems were related to pending elevator upgrades or the transfer process and requested clarity on when the issues would be resolved.

Executive Director Pope responded, sharing information provided by Suburban Elevator, highlighting the ongoing work of reconstructing elevators. Arrangements are underway to install an Internet connection via the traveler line to ensure continuous connectivity and enhance performance. While no exact timeline could be provided, Director Pope reassured residents that the team is prioritizing the completion of the work and is awaiting the inspector's availability to move forward.

Garnet Faye (Apt. 12F):

Mr. Faye echoed Ms. Nora Natof's concerns about elevator functionality, noting that residents must hold the call button to ensure the elevator stops on their floor. He also raised an additional

issue about the visibility of the Mills Park Tower sign. Executive Director David Pope assured him that the matter would be addressed.

Linda Harris (Apt. 4F):

Ms. Harris expressed frustration over the cleanliness of downtown Oak Park porta potties, describing them as poorly maintained and unpleasant. Director Pope explained that the porta potties were reintroduced at the request of downtown property owners to mitigate public urination issues. He confirmed with residents that he would raise the maintenance concerns with the relevant property owners and service providers.

Charlene Lloyd (Apt. 11H):

Ms. Lloyd brought forward concerns from residents about heating systems in their units, reporting that some residents have experienced cold conditions on particularly cold days. Ms. Carpenter responded, noting that many of the reported heating issues were related to thermostat settings, particularly an energy-saving feature that some residents were unaware of. She indicated that management would conduct unit-wide checks to ensure thermostats are properly configured and functioning. Additionally, the team plans to include instructions in the newsletter to educate residents about thermostat operations.

Director Pope mentioned that some residents have used plastic thermal insulators on windows to improve heat retention, which has proven helpful. He emphasized the importance of addressing heating issues promptly, reminding residents to report problems immediately to the management office.

## **HA-2024-12-01 APPROVAL OF THE 2025 FISCAL YEAR OPERATING BUDGET**

### Budget Overview

Mr. Sinn provided an overview of the budget, noting no major changes to the programs. For Mills Park Tower, the renewal of the ROSS Service Coordinator Grant is in progress, pending HUD approval. Administrative salaries remain consistent, with an expectation of staffing stabilization during the year.

Building and maintenance expenses for Mills Park Tower have been high, particularly for elevator repairs, as efforts to maintain aging equipment have incurred substantial costs. Most of these expenses were not capitalized and were instead expensed during the current year. However, costs are expected to decrease once the elevator renovation is completed. Overall, the financial position remains stable.

### HUD Subsidy and Revenue Adjustments

Commissioner Sood inquired about the relatively small increase in HUD revenue. Executive Director Pope explained that HUD determines subsidy levels based on factors such as building occupancy, tenant rent contributions (approximately 30% of income), and individual economic circumstances. Variations in tenant rent directly impact HUD subsidies.

Commissioner Socall asked about service coordinator expenses, confirming that they remain in the budget despite no associated revenue. Mr. Sinn noted that revenue would be added if the ROSS Services Coordinator Grant is approved.

### Housing Forward Lease for Accolade Space

Executive Director Pope reported progress on lease negotiations with Housing Forward to utilize the Accolade space for overnight shelter services. The lease terms will mirror those of the previous agreement with Catholic Charities. A significant capital investment will be required to install a sprinkler system for compliance. While initially planning to connect the sprinkler line through Humphrey, it will now come from South Boulevard. The Oak Park Residence Corporation is collaborating with Housing Forward to address these infrastructure needs.

Director Pope also highlighted that both staff and the board would be conscious of potential impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, particularly regarding hours of operation and procedural activities. Mr. Sinn indicated that revenue from this lease is not yet included in the budget, and Director Pope stated that a draft lease agreement would be circulated for electronic approval, once finalized.

Chairman Muse asked if there were any further questions. There were none. She then asked for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget for the Oak Park Housing Authority.

It was moved (Sood) and seconded (Socall) to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget for the Oak Park Housing Authority.

**AYES:** Commissioners Teitelman, Sood, Kelm, Walz, Socall, and Chairman Muse

**NAYS:** None

**ABSENT:** None

### **HOUSING FORWARD LEASING UPDATE FOR 112 S. HUMPHREY**

Executive Director Pope provided an update on the proposed lease of the property at 112 S. Humphrey, a space previously occupied by Accolade Adult Daycare until late 2023. After the daycare vacated, the Oak Park Housing Authority held the space for several months while considering its use to support the Village of Oak Park's efforts to provide temporary housing for migrants. When that need was resolved over the summer, attention shifted to alternative uses for the property.

Discussions began with the Village of Oak Park and Housing Forward, focusing on addressing the persistent need for temporary overnight shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness. Executive Director Pope explained that Housing Forward had transitioned from a pre-pandemic rotating shelter model, which moved between houses of worship, to a residentially based model during COVID-19. This change allowed them to offer longer-term transitional housing at locations like the Write Inn and Carlton Hotel. However, the ongoing demand for temporary shelter prompted Housing Forward to explore additional shelter options.

The 112 S. Humphrey space was identified as a suitable site for temporary overnight shelter. It features a commercial kitchen, existing showers with room for additional installations, and space to accommodate up to 42 cots. The layout also allows for the division of space, such as areas designated for women and children.

Executive Director Pope informed the board that the project required a special use permit and a text amendment to the Village of Oak Park's zoning code. These were presented at a Plan Commission hearing, where the proposal received unanimous approval. With this approval, Housing Forward is preparing for renovations, including the installation of sprinklers and other modifications. The organization is working with the Village of Oak Park and Cook County to secure funding for the project, with plans to begin renovations in the first quarter of 2025. The shelter is expected to open in the second quarter of 2025.

Commissioner Andy Teitelman expressed his full support for the project, commending it as an excellent example of collaboration. He emphasized how partnerships like these enable the Housing Authority to increase housing options without constructing new buildings and maximize the value of existing resources. He praised the initiative as a creative and impactful way to address homelessness in the community.

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

### **MPT REPORT**

Property Manager, Carpenter briefly summarized the Mills Park Tower occupancy, leasing, resident demographics, waiting list, building activities, and maintenance for the month of November. She noted a November occupancy rate of 93% and stated that two new residents moved in, and there were no move-outs. Of the 12 vacant units, 7 are ready for leasing, with ongoing efforts to expedite move-ins before the freight elevator becomes unavailable.

A small COVID-19 outbreak required an adjustment to the usual Thanksgiving luncheon, with staff delivering meals to residents, maintaining a festive spirit. COVID protocols were discussed, including masking and self-isolation recommendations per CDC and local public health department guidance.

### **HCV REPORT**

Ms. Cobb, Director of HCVP, reviewed her monthly report with the board. Efforts are underway to schedule 20 applicants for January 2024 and expand outreach for the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program vouchers. Two participants have leased housing under the FYI program, and outreach efforts have been broadened to increase utilization. Executive Director Pope emphasized the importance of retaining FYI vouchers and encouraged staff to raise awareness of the program in their interactions with relevant stakeholders.

### **Inspection Services RFP**

Executive Director Pope announced the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for inspection services for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The RFP aims to ensure compliance with HUD regulations and maintain proper certifications for inspections and rent reasonableness calculations. Responses are expected by January 17, after which a recommendation will be presented for board approval.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

## **NEW BUSINESS**

NONE

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

As the final meeting of 2024 concluded, heartfelt reflections and expressions of gratitude were shared by board members and staff.

Chairperson Muse acknowledged the swift passage of the year, expressing gratitude to the board for their support, patience, and kindness as she adjusted to her role. She wished everyone a happy and safe holiday season, sharing personal sentiments about her long-standing connection with the board and the organization. Special recognition was given to Ms. Swaggerty on her retirement, with Chairperson Muse thanking Ms. Swaggerty for her professionalism, dedication, optimism, and deep institutional knowledge.

Ms. Swaggerty also reflected on her time supporting the Oak Park Housing Authority Board Members, emphasizing the honor and privilege of serving Mills Park Tower residents. She recounted the challenges and successes of implementing COVID-19 protocols and the resilience of the residents during an unprecedented time. Ms. Swaggerty expressed deep gratitude for the kindness of the residents and board members, describing her experience as rewarding and impactful.

## **ADJOURNMENT OF DECEMBER 10, 2024, REGULAR MEETING**

Chairperson Muse asked for a motion to adjourn the December 10, 2024, regular meeting.

It was moved (Sood) and seconded (Walz) to adjourn to the December 10, 2024, regular meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Andrew Teitelman, Secretary