

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2025  
MILLS PARK TOWER 7:45 AM**

**OFFICIAL RECORD**

**QUORUM**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Kelm, Socall, Sood, and Teitelman

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Walz and Chairperson Muse

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

**GUESTS:** Mills Park Tower Residents

Vice-Chairperson Socall called the meeting to order at 7:48 AM.

**APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2025, OPHA REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Socall asked if there were any corrections to the September 9, 2025, meeting minutes. There were none.

It was moved (Teitelman) and seconded (Kelm) to approve the September 9, 2025, meeting minutes of the Housing Authority of the Village of Oak Park. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Zenovia Mills (Apt. 5J):

Ms. Mills expressed concern about parking enforcement at Mills Park Tower. She noted that residents continue to observe vehicles parked in restricted areas without consequence and expressed frustration about a lack of follow-up communication from management. Ms. Mills also raised concerns about ongoing smoking violations, particularly during evenings and weekends when management offices are closed.

June Petricig (Apt. 7H):

Ms. Petricig stated that maintenance and work order responsiveness has been lacking. She noted that she had submitted work orders earlier this year and emphasized that other tenants had similar issues..

Maureen Darcy (Apt. 13F):

Ms. Darcy addressed previous remarks that suggested she did not represent residents. She clarified that she was elected as a write-in candidate and that she had spoken in support of the Resident Council's legitimacy. Ms. Darcy emphasized that the Council's mission was to give voice to residents' concerns and maintain active communication

between tenants and management. She commented on the limited posting of meeting notices and advocated for greater transparency in publicizing board meetings.

Janet Gratt (Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township):  
Ms. Gratt, a board member of the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township, invited OPHA and residents to attend an upcoming Housing Summit on November 5th, organized to explore inclusive housing models for individuals with disabilities. The summit would be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Oak Park Community Recreation Center, and Gratt provided flyers for distribution.

Marlene Scott (Apt.11C):  
Ms. Scott offered feedback on the revised first-floor renovation plan, noting that the proposed waiting area seemed too small for ADA Compliance. Ms. Scott suggested modeling the area after the Oak Park Library's third floor. She also urged management to communicate which buildings fall under OPHA oversight to avoid confusion among residents.

Executive Director Pope responded and clarified that Mills Park Tower is the only residential building owned by the Oak Park Housing Authority, and that MPT and the OPHA office are managed by OPRC through a contractual arrangement with OPHA. He explained his dual role and reaffirmed OPHA's responsibility for both property management and the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Candace Webb (Apt.3L):  
Ms. Webb expressed gratitude for her positive experience moving to Mills Park Tower but shared distress over exposure to secondhand marijuana smoke, which can trigger severe respiratory reactions, including for her. Ms. Webb emphasized that while she empathizes with individuals struggling with addiction, the smoking violations were jeopardizing her health and should be addressed. She also proposed the possibility of treatment resources for repeat violators.

Executive Director Pope responded by explaining OPHA's three-step enforcement process; warning, fine, and eviction for violating the non-smoking rules. He encouraged residents to report incidents promptly so that management could take action. He confirmed that despite Illinois' legalization of marijuana, federal HUD regulations still prohibit smoking within federally subsidized housing.

Charlene Lloyd (Apt. 11H):  
Ms. Lloyd echoed concerns about Ms. Webb's point, noting that residents often smoke after management staff leave for the day. She described how residents monitor management cars before engaging in prohibited behavior. Ms. Lloyd acknowledged management's efforts but urged the board to consider evening enforcement or on-site monitoring. She also explained how the Resident Council gathers and prioritizes resident concerns for monthly meetings, clarifying that while the Council doesn't speak for every tenant, it represents those who engage and provide input. She recommended a building-wide resident survey to collect broader feedback.

Executive Director Pope stated that in his vision, leadership consists of balancing representation with humility, recognizing that there are often diverse perspectives among varying residents. He outlined OPHA's approach to capital investment, maintaining both unit-level improvements and common area upgrades to enhance quality of life collectively. He reiterated that some necessary maintenance, such as the prior roofing and waterproofing projects, while not visible to residents, remains vital to the building's structural integrity.

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS WERE POSTPONED UNTIL THE END OF THE MEETING AND RESUMED AT THAT TIME.**

Nora Natof (Apt. 9F):

Ms. Natof raised issues regarding maintenance staffing, noting that bathrooms and public areas were being cleaned only once daily. Executive Director Pope confirmed that Mr. Regalado is the on-site maintenance technician. He announced that Ms. Carpenter and Ms. Bottoms had arranged for A+ Cleaning Services to supplement cleaning until a permanent hire is made, and service hours would be expanded to address resident feedback.

Linda Lee (18H):

Ms. Lee provided an update expressing appreciation for the recent maintenance work completed in her unit, noting that the repairs were handled efficiently and that communication from staff had been positive. However, she also raised concerns about issues with temperature control and airflow, stating that her apartment becomes uncomfortably warm during the afternoons despite the thermostat settings. She requested that management inspect the heating and cooling balance across upper-floor units. Ms. Lee also mentioned that several residents on her floor had similar concerns and hoped that these could be addressed collectively rather than through individual work orders.

Ellen Wade (18K):

Ms. Wade shared feedback regarding the need for clearer communication and timelier responses from management concerning maintenance requests. She explained that she had submitted multiple requests over the past few months and, while some were addressed, others remained unresolved.

Linda Harris (4F):

Ms. Harris provided an update highlighting her concerns about the cleanliness of the common areas and the frequency of housekeeping services. She stated that maintenance staff are generally responsive, but noted that the level of daily cleaning particularly in shared spaces such as the laundry room, lobby, and hallways had declined in recent weeks.

Diane Dugger (10D):

Ms. Dugger shared her appreciation for the efforts management has made to address residents' concerns but expressed frustration with delays in completing specific maintenance requests.

### **3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Mr. Sinn led the overview, providing a detailed look at the Oak Park Housing Authority's current financial standing. He began with Mills Park Tower, noting that the property's finances remain largely in line with the budget, particularly in building maintenance. Unlike in prior years, there were no widespread electrical or plumbing problems, and overall expenses in these categories were well below budget. Administrative expenses, influenced by staffing issues and turnover, were slightly ahead of budget, but overall, Mills Park Tower continues to perform well financially.

Mr. Sinn also reminded the board that the recently completed elevator project, while a major inconvenience for residents, has now concluded successfully. He invited questions from the board regarding the property's financials, emphasizing that the report reflects a stable and positive outlook.

Moving on to Sojourner House and the office building, Mr. Sinn highlighted the redevelopment of the caring center at the back of the office building, which has been leased to Housing Forward. The organization has begun to occupy the space, and rental income has been collected since July 15, offsetting most associated costs. He noted that utility expenses for this property were slightly higher than expected, but OPHA is actively billing Housing Forward to recover a portion of these costs.

Mr. Sinn then reviewed the voucher program, explaining that administrative fee income, which had been slightly low in the first and second quarters due to 2024 overfunding adjustments, has largely returned to budgeted levels. Administrative salary expenses are slightly ahead of budget due to staffing challenges, but the program remains financially sound. He emphasized that these figures will serve as the foundation for OPHA's budget planning in December, using 11-month projections to inform next year's budgets.

### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

#### **MPT REPORT**

Property Manager Cynthia Carpenter briefly summarized Mills Park Tower's occupancy, leasing, resident demographics, waiting list, building activities, and maintenance for the month of September. The property had a total of 177 occupied units, with four new move-ins during the month and six year-to-date. As of September, there were a total of 14 move-outs so far this year, one of which was an eviction. The property's vacancy rate stands at 21%, and the total resident population is 184, comprising 55 men and 129 women. The waiting list remains strong, with 745 applicants, 61 of whom are resident-preferenced and 684 non-preferenced.

There were 40 applicants pulled from the waitlist, 26 are actively in process, five have accepted offers, and scheduling of move-ins is ongoing. For September, 25 people requested applications, with 12 returned—split evenly between preference and non-preference applicants. Year-to-date, 210 applications have been requested, and 81 returned.

Regarding building operations, there was one elevator call-out for car number two in September. Ms. Carpenter explained that the elevator briefly stopped over a weekend due to calibration issues common with new elevators, particularly with the door's sensing system. The elevator repair team promptly addressed the issue, and it was resolved quickly. Maintenance work orders for the month totaled 50 requests, with 48 completed. Year-to-date, 500 work orders were requested, and 511 completed. Of the 21 vacant units, 13 are ready for occupancy, while the remainder are being rehabilitated.

Resident activities continued successfully. Tai Chi and yoga sessions remained consistent, and home-delivered meals were provided. The year-end ice cream social was moved outdoors, featuring a colorful setup with an ice cream truck, tables, balloons, and games, and was well-received by residents. Additionally, Jewel-Osco administered vaccinations on-site, providing nearly 30 residents the convenience of receiving their shots without leaving the building.

Ms. Carpenter also reported on maintenance improvements: Cummins Inc. replaced generator batteries, and the modules on the fire panel system connected to the Oak Park Fire Department were updated, ensuring ongoing safety and monitoring.

As part of old business, Ms. Carpenter addressed concerns with the building's ventilation and heating systems. Contractors have been engaged to provide quotes.

#### HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER (HCV) PROGRAM REPORT

Ms. Cobb, Director of HCVP, reported that the program is operating at 98% occupancy. She reported that for the month of September, the program achieved a total lease-up of 416 units, reaching 98% of capacity. Within this total, two new applicants were added to the program during the month. For mainstream vouchers, the lease-up stood at 63 units, representing 79% utilization, while the non-elderly disabled category maintained a 27% lease-up rate.

Ms. Cobb highlighted that the eligibility process for the waiting list began the previous day, with 20 applicants invited in for review. In September, two applicants successfully leased units, bringing the total to seven participants who have been placed so far. Additionally, two more applicants are anticipated to lease in November, potentially closing the gap in the waiting list by month-end. She noted that no foster youth referrals were received in September, but two participants had recently left, leaving a total of five active foster youth participants in the program.

On inspections and compliance, Ms. Cobb shared that 15 inspections were completed during September, primarily for new units. Two units were currently under abatement due to failed Housing Quality Standards, but the necessary corrections were expected to be completed before the end of the month. Ms. Cobb also announced the addition of one new owner to the program; this owner had previously participated several years ago but had not leased with the program for approximately seven years.

The report further provided six program participants had moved out of their units but were actively searching for housing within Oak Park. Nineteen participants were

residing in other jurisdictions, with the Oak Park Housing Authority continuing to provide oversight and support. Year-to-date, the Authority absorbed 14 program participants from other housing authorities and billed other jurisdictions for 30 participants, while 16 participants from outside jurisdictions were actively searching for units in Oak Park.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

It had been noted that some trees on OPHA properties required attention. During the meeting, members specifically pointed out a tree located near the corner of the property outside the building, which had numerous dead branches. They inquired whether Brookfield Tree Service, which had recently performed similar work at The Oaks, could be scheduled to address the dead tree and remove the hazardous branches. Ms. Bottoms took note of the request to ensure follow-up with the tree service.

## **ADJOURNMENT OF OCTOBER 14, 2025, REGULAR MEETING**

Vice-Chairperson Socall asked for a motion to adjourn the October 14, 2025, regular meeting.

It was moved (Kelm) and seconded (Sandeep) to adjourn the October 14, 2025, regular meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Andrew Teitelman, Secretary