

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025  
MILLS PARK TOWER 7:45 AM**

**OFFICIAL RECORD**

**QUORUM**

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

**ABSENT:** None

**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 OCTOBER 14, 2025, OPHA REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Chairperson Muse asked if there were any corrections to the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes. There were none.

It was moved (Kelm) and seconded (Walz) to approve the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes of the Housing Authority of the Village of Oak Park. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Candice Webb (Apt. 3L):

Ms. Webb thanked management for the Thanksgiving celebration. She raised ongoing concerns about continuing cigarette smoke in the building, which affects residents' health. She noted some improvement in her unit but emphasized the need for stronger enforcement of the non-smoking policy, better smoke detection, and compassionate solutions for smokers.

Executive Director Pope explained the three-step enforcement process; 1) warning; 2) \$250 fine; then 3) eviction. He noted challenges in monitoring, especially nights and weekends. He encouraged continued reporting and acknowledged system limitations, stating management is evaluating solutions to balance resident health with policy and staff capacity.

Brian O'Dea (Apt. 8H):

Mr. O'Dea raised concerns regarding MPT's back door, which, while repaired, remains temperamental. He noted that its inconsistent operation creates ongoing challenges.

Charlene Lloyd (Apt. 11H):

Ms. Lloyd reported that the Mills Park Tower Resident Council Board met with Executive Director Pope to clarify the scope and timeline of the building's modernization project. The Board agreed the plans are a reasonable compromise. The project will update bathrooms (about 80 toilets and 87 vanities) and several kitchens, with work potentially starting in January. Community spaces will be reconfigured, and a third bathroom added. Ms. Lloyd emphasized that residents support the upgrades as meeting their needs and thanked Executive Director Pope for the clarity.

Vasso Powers (Apt. 16H):

Ms. Vasso Powers appreciated the Board's opportunity to discuss the plans with Mr. Pope but opposed the proposed exercise room. She noted that the current design, near the building entrance, does not meet residents' needs. While she supports an exercise area, she envisions a more private space.

David Kelm (Apt.12D):

Commissioner Kelm suggested paying our snowplow staff extra to clear the alley and driveway for improved safety, noting the village does not maintain these areas well. Executive Director Pope agreed it's important to address, but noted responsibility is shared with the village. He proposed coordinating with the village to understand plow frequency and develop a plan while acknowledging residents are impacted by the snow.

## **2026 BUDGET REVIEW AND ADOPTION**

Mr. Sinn reviewed the 2026 budget and forecast. Overall, income and expenses are largely in line with 2025, with slightly lower income offset by salary and insurance savings. Mills Park Tower's budget primarily reflects a modest increase over the 2025 forecast, with no major building issues anticipated.

Executive Director Pope mentioned that business activities, including office rent and Sojourner House leases, are budgeted for the full year. Potential federal funding changes were noted as possibly impacting Housing Forward programs, though no immediate threats to Mills Park Tower or voucher program funding were indicated.

Mr. Sinn confirmed that administrative funding and HAP voucher utilization are on track, with full staffing anticipated. Executive Director Pope assured residents that public housing and voucher funding remain stable.

It was moved (Socall) and seconded (Kelm) to approve the 2026 Budget for the Oak Park Housing Authority.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

## **MILLS PARK TOWER – CAPITAL NEEDS IDENTIFICATION AND INVESTMENT**

Executive Director Pope provided an overview of the Oak Park Residence Corporation's 2026 budget and operational outlook. He noted that Mills Park Tower is in good condition, with no major maintenance issues anticipated. Executive Director Pope emphasized the importance of balancing operational and capital reserves, particularly given HUD's requirements on the timing and use of funds, and reminded the Board that while operational reserves can be flexible, capital-related funds must be allocated and expended within HUD-mandated timelines.

### Units Upgrades

Executive Director Pope discussed plans for unit modernizations, noting that 2026 will continue to build on prior work. Bathrooms are set to be upgraded, including approximately 80 toilets and 87 vanities, with some kitchens also scheduled for modernization. The scope follows the 2025 forecast with moderate expense increases, reflecting a steady approach to improving resident living spaces. He emphasized that residents' needs are central to these plans, and that the upgrades will improve both comfort and functionality for all units.

Different projects will be handled by separate contractors and construction impacts will be managed carefully. Residents will temporarily use rear entrances while vestibule and entry flooring work is underway. Executive Director Pope also clarified that some in-unit furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) will be reused, with selective purchases anticipated as part of the project.

### First-Floor Upgrades

Regarding first-floor and community space improvements, Executive Director Pope explained that renovations will focus on enhancing shared areas to better serve residents. CFP funding is anticipated to support these efforts, though actual amounts and timing depend on HUD allocations. Planned upgrades include reconfiguration of community spaces and the addition of a third bathroom. He highlighted the Oak Park Housing Authority Board and residents' support for these improvements, noting that clarity in project scope and schedule has helped ensure alignment between resident desires and project plans.

For bathrooms, He confirmed that three new single-occupancy bathrooms will be added in accordance with state requirements. These will provide privacy with locking doors and will not be labeled by gender. Accessibility features, including pull cords, will be evaluated with the architect.

He addressed resident concerns about air conditioning, noting programs are in place to help eligible residents obtain and install units through township, state, and energy-related grants. The Oak Park Housing Authority will continue to coordinate with residents to ensure those without air conditioning receive assistance prior to the summer cooling season.

## **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 November. The property had a total of 182 occupied units, with four new move-ins during the month and one move-out. The property's vacancy rate stands at 9%. The total resident population is 190, comprising 57 men and 133 women. The waiting list remains strong, with 766 applicants, including 68 resident-preferenced and 698 non-preferenced individuals. Fifteen residents from the waitlist have accepted units and are scheduled to move in January 2026.

During November, 23 people requested applications, with 14 returned (3 preferenced and 11 non-preferenced). Two applications were returned to the waitlist. MPT Maintenance Staff continues to rehabilitate vacant units to maintain readiness for new move-ins. Maintenance activity included 52 work orders requested and 47 completed for the month, bringing the year-to-date total to 635 requested and 625 completed. Out of 16 vacancies in the building, 7 are ready, with maintenance staff continuing work on the remainder.

Resident engagement activities remain strong, including Tai Chi and yoga classes, coffee and conversation sessions, and home-delivered meals. Staff also met with residents to share findings from the all-unit INSPIRE inspections and assisted 33 residents with enrollment in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The Thanksgiving luncheon was well received, with positive feedback on the food and the event.

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

Director LaTaunda Cobb provided an update on the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program for November 2025. The program maintained a 98% lease-up rate, slightly below the 100% target at the start of the year, due to a net loss of approximately 17–20 participants. Efforts to restore full capacity included calling in 20 applicants from the waiting list; eight of these have leased units, one voucher expired, and two applicants ported out to other jurisdictions. The mainstream program is currently at 79% occupancy, and the non-elderly disabled program remains at 27%.

The waiting list remains active, with 20 applicants currently under review for eligibility, and additional participants expected to receive vouchers by early 2026. Ms. Cobb noted that applicants with resident preference may port their vouchers immediately, while others must reside in Oak Park for one year before porting. Year-to-date activity includes 29 participant withdrawals, 19 participants ported out to other jurisdictions, and 13 absorbed into Oak Park HCV. The program completed 54 inspections in November, abated one unit for failed inspection, and required two participants to move due to non-compliance; both have successfully relocated.

Additional program highlights include the addition of two new owners between October and November (seven year-to-date), completion of two informal hearing regarding eligibility and three non-eligibility determinations. Ms. Cobb emphasized that the current waiting list is sufficient for 2025 and that reopening the list is not anticipated until 2027, based on typical participant turnover.

**OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

**NEW BUSINESS**

NONE

**ADJOURNMENT OF DECEMBER 9, 2025, REGULAR MEETING**

Chairperson Muse asked for a motion to adjourn the December 9, 2025, regular meeting.

It was moved (Teitelman) and seconded (Kelm) to adjourn the December 9, 2025, regular meeting. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Andrew Teitelman, Secretary