

MINUTES
OWATONNA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING on MARCH 22, 2021

The regular meeting of the Owatonna Housing and Redevelopment Authority was called to order at 4:00 pm on Microsoft Teams by Senior Member Olivo.

Housing Manager Ghassan Madkour read a statement to allow for the meeting to be conducted by telephonic or electronic means and all votes will be roll call votes.

Members present were John Hole, Shari Kropp, and Vicki Olivo. Also present were Housing Manager Ghassan Madkour, Community Development Director Troy Klecker, and Administrative Technician Kristen Kopp.

Approval of the Minutes: Senior Member Olivo called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2021 meeting. A motion was made by Kropp and seconded by Hole to approve the minutes. Commissioners voting Aye: Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 3-0, motion carried.

Executive Directors Report: Community Development Director Troy Klecker gave project updates. There are three apartment projects under construction right now, one of which is a tax credit project. We also have two apartment projects slated for this year—The Pearl and Riverwood—and plans are in review now. Council did approve a second purchase agreement on Cherry Street, and the City will work with the developer for another tax credit project. They won't apply until 2022. Typically, a tax credit project takes four years, but they're hoping to have this one done in three. There are four single family home permits issued so far this year. He said hopefully they'll be in the 40+ range for new single family houses this year. There is one new subdivision project by the future high school that was recently annexed. This will go through the platting process soon and will include about twenty single family lots.

Old Business: The Housing Choice Voucher program monthly report was presented by Madkour, including the City of Owatonna monthly balance sheet and revenue/expense report. Program utilization: The Housing Voucher program for February totaled 106. Total year to date assistance and administration costs were \$119,512.59 and revenues were \$152,992.97. The Housing Choice Voucher Program fund balance at February month end is \$99,893.07. Madkour provided City of Owatonna HRA monthly balance sheet and revenue/expense reports for the HRA General Fund including the Bridges Programs. The HRA Revenues year to date total is \$81,179.22 and the expenses total \$69,705.41. The HRA General Fund balance is \$337,841.82.

Madkour said he had one client call who wanted to terminate his voucher. He said that he's doing fine and would like to give it to someone else who needs it. He will be done as of March 31st. He said that he put two applications out. There's not much change with the numbers. We did add three new Bridges clients this month. The numbers will reflect that next month. One of our biggest issues is available housing limitations right now. We're not the only ones with that issue; Rochester is having a difficult time as well because all of their rents are much higher and people aren't qualifying. That is a major hindrance right now as people are shopping around. The HRA is going forward with the Mainstream voucher, and he will be updating the admin plan. The requirements to qualify are the same, non-elderly disabled, and we added homeless to it. There is no limitation on time for that voucher. He said he sent out nine letters today to clients with applications for those vouchers. They have two weeks to get them back. We'll hopefully house the majority of them, if not all of them. Kropp asked if they don't reply, are they taken off the waitlist. Madkour said yes, and that is also a HUD requirement. Olivo asked how many are on the waitlist at this point. Madkour said there are 176 on the waitlist, and they will be purging the list again in June. He said once applications come back, he sends out for a criminal background check on all adults and waits for the results before going forward. He said a felony less than five years old or a lifetime sex offender would disqualify the applicant. Klecker said while this seems like a lot, we've had a lot more on the waitlist in the past. The annual purging is good to give a more accurate number for those on the

waitlist. Hole asked if, after the purge, they have to reapply. Madkour said anyone who applied after June of last year won't get a purge letter since their application is current. They have two weeks to reply. If it is returned undeliverable with a different address, he will resend the letter. The letter does say that they have two weeks to respond, or they come off the list. Hole said that seems fair. Madkour said he'll go the extra step to find someone and do his due diligence. Bridges clients who are on the HCV waitlist also don't get a purge letter.

A motion was made by Kropp and seconded by Hole to approve the reports as presented. Commissioners voting Aye: Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 3-0, motion carried.

Commissioner Atkinson joined the meeting via telephone at approximately 4:20PM.

New Business: Housing Manager Madkour said that he has reached out to the Fire Department for a list of landlords in town. He put together a letter to all non-participant landlords to let them know the advantages of being a participant. There were 307 letters sent out. He got seven returned undeliverable today and resent the ones with new addresses and also updated Bonnie at the Fire Department. He said this is just an FYI that he is trying to reach out to landlords.

Other Business. Madkour said the funding application for Bridges went out last week. The current grant application will expire in June of this year. We are representing four counties: Steele, Mower, Waseca, and Dodge. Olmsted and the others will no longer be administered by our grant beginning July 1, 2021. He said he will have to be doing the administrating for Waseca and Dodge Counties as neither of those counties want to take on the Bridges program as far as the day-to-day stuff. Olivo asked if there was an amount for funding. Madkour said he put \$487,650 in the application. Our usage will end up in the \$230,000 mark. Olivo asked if the administrative fee will go up. Madkour said he did ask for a higher administrative fee, but that's up to them.

Madkour said that the State moratorium for evictions has been extended to April 14, 2021.

Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Kropp, seconded by Atkinson. Commissioners voting Aye: Atkinson, Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 4-0, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ghassan Madkour
Housing Manager