

MINUTES
OWATONNA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING on MAY 24, 2021

The regular meeting of the Owatonna Housing and Redevelopment Authority was called to order at 4:01 pm in the City Council Chambers and 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 Nathan Dotson, John Hole, Shari Kropp, and Vicki Olivo. Also present were Housing Manager Ghassan Madkour, Community Development Director Troy Klecker, Planning Technician Kristen Kopp, and Mary Reedy of Clifton Larson Allen.

Approval of the Minutes: Senior Member Olivo called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2021 meeting. A motion was made by Kropp and seconded by Hole to approve the minutes. Commissioners voting Aye: Dotson, Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 4-0, motion carried.

Executive Directors Report: Community Development Director Troy Klecker gave project updates. He said that they got a letter of resignation from Cate Schnitzler. They will be looking for another HRA member following a new process where the Mayor interviews applicants. He encouraged the Commissioners to let anyone they know who might be interested to apply on the City website. Nathan Dotson is officially on the HRA board now. Klecker said that this is usually the meeting where we elect a Chair and a Vice Chair, but we don't have a full board. Olivo said that waiting to elect officers until we have a full board would be appropriate. Klecker said that 17 permits have been issued for new single-family homes, up from 6 at this time last year. We're off to a good start. There are two apartments under construction: Mound Street and Eastgate. The Pearl, a 43-unit market rate apartment on Pearl Street, will start construction in June or July. Plans have been submitted for the 71-unit apartment building on Lemond Road, but with construction costs rising, it's possible that it will not be underway this year. He said that they met with a national residential developer last week who was interested in building a planned community in Owatonna. This developer usually develops homes over a 20-year period. It's still in early stages, but if they're able to do it, they will start the process of getting zoning approvals. Kropp asked how the staffing shortages with companies around Owatonna impact what we're trying to do with building the community. Klecker said that they recently met with Amesbury Truth and they echo that housing is an obstacle to bringing workforce here. If we have the jobs and have the housing, we're much more able to bring people in. Housing is a stumbling block right now. Kropp asked if the level of housing that they're building would be affordable for someone with a manufacturing job. Klecker said that much of the discussion with this developer was around workforce housing. They want to build what the community needs. Dotson asked if it would be a mix of single-family housing and townhomes. Klecker said that they have a variety of housing types—they even plan on having some multi-family and commercial.

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 April totaled 100. Total year to date assistance and administration costs were \$240,369.15 and revenues were \$322,081.44. The Housing Choice Voucher Program fund balance at April month end is \$143,148.24. 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 \$166,746.52 and the expenses total \$146,214.27. The HRA General Fund balance is \$357,300.19.

Madkour said they're still pretty much status quo. He's happy to see four clients that have new jobs, which reduces our numbers.

He said that there is one more month with the old Bridges grant, then starting in July it will be just four counties. Because the grant is such a high amount for basically two counties, he's considering doing something else, on a case-by-case basis. Right now, he has 23 Bridges referrals.

The Mainstream Voucher program had 43 applications, but 26 have not responded for some reason or another. Nine vouchers have been issued, two have been denied, and two are currently going through the background process. He's waiting for more information on the rest. If the two qualify, we'll have 11 vouchers issued. One has been out shopping for a place. He said he's hoping they can all find places. They have a lot of money, but not a lot of places to house. He spoke with a larger landlord today about notifying him when units become available. He said he's meeting tomorrow with his HUD representative. There are a lot of changes and people are in motion.

A motion was made by Hole and seconded by Kropp to approve the reports as presented. Commissioners voting Aye: Dotson, Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 4-0, motion carried.

New Business: Mary Reed of Clifton Larson Allen, gave a review of the 2020 HRA audit. She said that it's a good, clean audit report with no findings. She asked if anyone had any questions. Olivo said that she's very happy with the report and thanked Mary for the report. A motion was made by Kropp and seconded by Hole to approve the audit report. Commissioners voting Aye: Dotson, Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 4-0, motion carried.

Other Business. Madkour said that the new Bridges grant will be \$487,650.00 that will cover four counties and last year there was money for 10 counties. He said that Vicki and Shari will need to sign those grants sometime this week, and they agreed to come in. Klecker said that going from 10 to 4 counties will mean less administrative work, but we're getting enough dollars to meet our need. The main concern is housing availability.

He asked the Commissioners if they want to do hybrid or all in person for the June 28th meeting. He said there is plenty of space, and said it was up to them. Kropp said that it shouldn't be a problem to come in. Olivo said it looks like the June meeting will be in person.

Olivo asked about the Partridge Avenue Pond Project. She asked where she could go to see the plans. Klecker said that our Engineering Department has the plans. The HRA contributed to the purchase because some of those lots will be single family lots. HRA and Stormwater split the cost. It will be platted and sold off when the pond is done.

Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Kropp, seconded by Hole. Commissioners voting Aye: Dotson, Hole, Kropp, and Olivo. 4-0, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:46. pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ghassan Madkour
Housing Manager