

# VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 22, 2019

### 1. ROLL CALL

At the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Vermont State Housing Authority beginning at 11:05 a.m., the following Commissioners were present: Cory Richardson, Jo Ann Troiano, Caryn Feinberg, Linda Ryan was present via teleconference and Alex Farrell was expected. Chair, Caprice Hover and Vice Chair, Mary Miller were absent.

Staff personnel present: Richard Williams, Secretary/Executive Director; Kathleen Berk, Director of Housing Program Administration; Kelly Pembroke, Director of Finance and Information Systems; Arlene Shorten-Goodrich, Director of Human Resources and Administration; Susan Kuegel, Director of Property and Asset Management; Krister Adams, Housing Development Specialist; and Laura Macieira, Office Services Coordinator.

### • ELECTION OF INTERIM BOARD CHAIR

Since both the Board Chair and Vice Chair were unable to attend today's meeting, the election of an interim Board Chair to conduct the meeting was held.

Williams opened up the meeting to nominations. Ryan moved to nominate Richardson as interim Board Chair; Troiano seconded the motion. Williams inquired if there were further nominations and there being none, nominations were closed. Williams cast one vote. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

### 2. MEETING AGENDA

There were no changes to the meeting agenda.

### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were two public participant, Jonathan Bond, HFI Executive Director and Chair of the Vermont State Housing Authority Staff Federation of the Vermont State Employees Association, Nathan Schmechel.

#### 4. MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING – MARCH, 2019

Troiano moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 27, 2019 and Feinberg seconded. Richardson inquired as to further discussion, there being none a vote was taken. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

#### 5. SECRETARY'S REPORT – APRIL 2019 / MAY 2019

Williams presented updates to his Secretary's Report.

Legislation is running overtime at the State House, discussions related to the minimum wage and to the paid family leave were held; all money bills were all agreed to. There appears to be additional funding available for supportive housing for low-income seniors (SASH).

The Senate's conferees agreed to a study language that was in the appropriations bill that was included in the Board packages, which examines the use of specialized housing vouchers that are going unused with the VSHA and Burlington Housing Authority. We're facing some issues because of the lack of case management and support services for the various agencies we deal with and that are working directly with the homeless.

Richardson asked for a motion to approve the Secretary's Report. The motion was made by Feinberg and seconded by Ryan. Richardson inquired as to further discussion, there being none a vote was taken. All others voted in favor and the motion passed.

#### 6. FINANCIAL REPORT THROUGH APRIL 30 , 2019

Pembroke presented the following highlights:

- We've received all of the taxes for the remaining partnerships that VSHA manages and we are done with all of our year-end requirements.
- Return to Owner (RTO) has been calculated for all the partnerships; we were able to pay out on 11 of the 13 properties, where RTO is allowed.
- We're starting to receive all the questions from Rural Development (RD) regarding the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018, year-end reports.
- We have received our FY19 voucher funding and Berk included the voucher expenditure report in the Board packets, showing the FY19 projections.
- HUD was going to pay our Administrative Fees at a prorated rate of 80% and we actually received 80.615%. The proration rate of FY20 is set at 79%; the difference between the FY19 and the FY20

proration rates is a loss to VSHA of \$59,306. Currently for the Administrative Fees, we are over where we projected to be.

- The Other Income column is over where we projected and it is mostly due to the property management department increasing the front line fees that VSHA receives.
- We are receiving more for the inspections that are performed by Section 8 and the biggest change in that line item is that accounting has been very successful in collections through the tax-set off program. VSHA has been repaid over \$90,000 for this program.
- The Salaries line item is under due to the various positions we are currently recruiting for.
- The Office Facility and the Building line items are both running over due to the security upgrades we've performed.
- Overall we are \$22,000 behind compared to where we were last year at this time, but we are \$300,000 over where we projected to be.
- In the Balance Sheet, cash is up, receivables and payables are down; which is very good.

Richardson asked for a motion to approve the Financial Report. The motion was made by Troiano and seconded by Feinberg. Richardson inquired as to further discussion; there being none a vote was taken. All others voted in favor and the motion passed.

## 7. HOUSING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

- **5-Year PHA and Annual Plan**
- **Award of Project Based Vouchers**
  - **Downstreet Residential Recovery FUP**
  - **Rural Edge First Home**
  - **Depot Apartment (New Avenue Apartments, St. Johnsbury)**

Berk mentioned that at the July, 2019 VSHA Board Meeting there will be a Public Hearing to discuss the adoption for the Annual Plan, 5-Year Plan and any policy amendments that are being proposed for FY 2020.

In prior years the plans have been welded into one document and since last year, HUD has changed the process, the Annual Plan and the 5-Year Plan are now two separate documents.

The Annual Plan is a statement of the agency's policies about our housing needs as it relates to what they are today; about the consolidated plan; the housing needs analysis; statistics from our waiting list; as well as demographics from our participants; a statement of our financial resources; rental determination policies, etc. Berk presented other statements; programs that VSHA manages and its policies that are included in the presented draft plan.

Berk is proposing a policy change related to interim changes at the next Board Meeting. Currently if a family has an increase or decrease in income, they need to report the change so we can determine the amount of subsidy that the family is eligible to receive. HUD regulation requires that we process changes as a result of decreases in income but it is a policy discretion on whether or not the family is required to report when there are increases in income; and that is the change Berk will be proposing.

The Plan also highlights new activities that the agency plans to undertake. VSHA received new requests to expand the Project Based Voucher (PBV) program, specifically for the New Avenue Apartments (former Depot Square Apartment) in St. Johnsbury. We received a formal proposal from Rural Edge to project base family unification vouchers for families in recovery for a redevelopment project of Depot Square Apartments. Williams presented some background information that relates to the proposal received, which also resulted from the issue of not being able to utilize all the PBVs we've been awarded, as mentioned in previous discussions.

Downstreet Housing and Community Development is currently looking at purchasing a building in Barre with the purpose of having a recovery residence for women with children through the Family Unification Program and receive the supportive services designed specifically for them. The residents would be then encouraged to participate in the VSHA Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program and if they graduated from the program, they could convert their PBV to a portable tenant-based Section 8 voucher and move to a unit of their choice.

Ryan moved to recommend the Award of Project Based Vouchers as presented; Feinberg seconded. Richardson inquired as to further discussion; there being none a vote was taken. All others voted in favor and the motion passed.

Berk continued with some of the highlights of the Annual Plan and made aware to the Board that the document is going out for comment and to be prepared to approve it at the next Board Meeting.

This year, we are on target of doing our 5-Year Plan which begins October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 and covers the next five years. This draft document is a planning document that sets forth the goals and objectives as Berk understands to be in keeping with the agency's mission. The Board held a discussion about the draft presented.

- **Moving To Work Program Discussion**

This is an opportunity that VSHA is not eligible to participating for now. For years, HUD has offered housing authorities to apply for a moving to work demonstration program, which offers them an opportunity to be more flexible with their programs, to set their own rent structures and to develop policies that really work for their states. Back in March, Berk wanted to apply for this program but did not meet the criteria in order to be eligible to participate in this cohort because we needed to be serving

at least 1,000 families that are not receiving assistance as part of a targeted funding program. Targeted funding is family unification and main stream housing for folks with disabilities. In the next few months there will be another opportunity that will address housing authorities of similar size and nature of VSHA's and Berk hopes to submit an application for that program.

Williams added that this program addresses families that are not working and as they move into work, they would end their participation in the voucher program. There is a five year requirement period for families to be in the program and after that ends, they will go off from receiving a rental subsidy.

Berk presented the expenditure report that demonstrates the allocation for the year for the Housing Choice Voucher program. The actuals through April, show that we are doing well; the voucher utilization is on the uptick and it will continue to move up as we go throughout the year. Our goal is to utilize as much of the Housing Assistant Payment (HAP) dollars as we possibly can.

#### **8. POINT-IN-TIME: PRESENTATION BY ANDREA HURLEY AND DANIEL BLANKENSHIP**

At 11:50 a.m. Andrea Hurley, Daniel Blankenship and Alex Farrell joined the meeting.

The Point in Time count is the only time there is a collaborative effort to do a sheltered count and street outreach. Once a year, on a day determined, everyone coordinates together for this report.

Andres Hurley, Continuum of Care (CoC) Support Specialist, began the presentation by handing out a statewide point-in-time count results to the Board, by giving an update on the coordinated entry process for homelessness and by going over the numbers that were on the report. This year, the date chosen was January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, and it was not an all adverse condition weather night, which makes a difference on the numbers that resulted from the count. The county of Newport was the only one that had an adverse weather night compared to last year's count, where all the counties were under an adverse weather night count. Hurley and Blankenship engaged in a conversation with the Board that related with their presentation.

At 12:15 p.m. Blankenship and Hurley left the meeting and the Board recessed for lunch.

At 12:30 p.m. the Board returned to session.

#### **9. DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

Williams started the Development update by introducing Jonathan Bond, HFI Executive Director, who also has some involvement with the two next topics that will be presented.

- **Deepwoods Mobile Home Park, Brattleboro**

Williams gave a background of the Deepwoods Mobile Home Park (MHP). Back in the late eighties, VSHA and HFI worked with the Tri-Park MHP's residents and the second cooperative MHP in the state of Vermont was formed. During that process HFI held retainage of a back lands with approximately 85 acres with the intent of developing additional lots for mobile homes; 44 lots were created and Deepwoods MHP was born. Since then, there have been discussions about the transfer of Deepwoods to the Tri-Park cooperative.

Williams mentioned that recently, HFI received a letter from the Tri-Park lawyers with the intent of pursuing the transfer. The Board held a discussion about the several possibilities that are available, about the implications of the bonds that need to be paid off, and about how the HFI Board is trying to deal with this request.

- **Sterling View Mobile Home Park, Hyde Park**

In 1985, VSHA wrote a community development grant application for the town of Hyde Park to create a 79 lot mobile home community, which currently is over one hundred from expansion of the park. This is a privately owned park by Mr. Ken Harvey, and a community for adults over the age of 50. There is a covenant that runs on the land that VSHA put on at that time, which states the park can only be used for a MHP and with an age restriction. Mr. Harvey is selling the park, the residents are interested in acquiring it, forming a cooperative and managing it. VSHA's role is to make sure this is a good deal for the tenants that doesn't not create financial issues for them; and to ensure it stays as a MHP.

Adams gave a brief update on the VSHA's managed projects and capital constructions for HFI properties.

The Lauredon Apartments redevelopment improvements in Greensboro is underway. USDA Rural Development (RD) is the major funder for this project and shortly we will close on a loan through the RD 515 program to the work this summer. We also have soft commitments for funding through the 3E Thermal and Efficiency Vermont for energy efficiency improvements and the Vermont Center for Independence Living for accessibility improvements.

The parking lot paving, scraping and signage of the Brightwood House Apartments in So. Royalton, a property owned and managed by VSHA, is being completed.

## 10. PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATES

Kuegel requested the Board's permission to submit the FY 2020 budget for Brightwood House in South Royalton to USDA.

Troiano moved to authorize Kuegel to submit the FY 2020 budget for Brightwood House as discussed and Feinberg seconded. Richardson inquired as to further discussion; there being none a vote was taken. All others voted in favor and the motion passed.

Kuegel is still waiting for the approval of the homeless preference from RD since September 2018; and we don't have any of the limited partnerships budgets back. All the MHP budgets and the RD budgets that are HFI owned, as well as Brightwood House budget will be started and submitted soon.

#### 11. JONATHAN BOND - HFI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bond introduced himself to the Board and gave a background of his work experience and expertise.

Bond made himself available to the VSHA Board and to participate in any meetings; to present directly any updates related to HFI and its Board of Directors, as a way to establish a more direct communication and collaboration between the two Boards.


Bond gave some highlights about Deepwoods MHP and Sterling View MHP.

Richardson asked if there were any specific topics that Bond should bring on a periodic basis to the meetings, there being none Bond was given free rein to do his reports and bring forward topics that he thinks it would be of importance and could affect VSHA.

Bond asked that his attendance to the VSHA Board meetings be communicated so he could plan his work schedule accordingly.

#### 12. OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, Troiano made a motion at 1:06 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Feinberg and all voted in favor.

  
Respectfully Submitted,

Richard M. Williams  
Executive Director/Secretary

