

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE

Minutes – September 25, 2023 – 1:15 p.m., DST

The Housing Authority of the City of Erie met at 1:15 p.m., on Monday, September 25, 2023, at 606 Holland Street.

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Bishop Dwane Brock, and, upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

Present

Bishop Dwane Brock
Patricia E. Mickel
Ned Smith
Sean Dugan
Donald J. Fuhrmann, Jr.

Absent

Also in Attendance

Michael R. Fraley, *Executive Director and Secretary*
Tim Wachter, Esquire, *Solicitor*
Dusti Dennis, *Deputy Director*
Linda Lewis, *Controller*
Cherie Kinem, *Resident Initiatives Coordinator*
Robin Bambauer, *Administrative Assistant*

Jennifer Sheldon, *Assoc. Director of Compliance*
Cynthia Grayson, *Manager*
Elizabeth Twohig, *Manager*

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

None

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

None

MINUTES OF AUGUST 28, 2023 MEETING

Bishop Brock introduced the following resolution:

#8125 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE THAT THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 28, 2023 REGULAR MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY ARE HEREBY APPROVED AS MAILED.

It was moved by Ned Smith, and seconded by Patricia E. Mickel, that the resolution be adopted as introduced and read.

On the question, roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia E. Mickel, Ned Smith, Sean Dugan, Donald J. Fuhrmann

Nays: None

DISBURSEMENTS FOR AUGUST 2023

Bishop Brock introduced the following resolution:

#8126 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE THAT THE DISBURSEMENTS FOR AUGUST 2023, COPIES OF WHICH WERE FORWARDED TO THE MEMBERS AND COUNSEL PRIOR TO THIS MEETING, ARE HEREBY ACCEPTED.

It was moved by Ned Smith, and seconded by Patricia E. Mickel, that the resolution be adopted as introduced and read.

On the question, roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia E. Mickel, Ned Smith, Sean Dugan, Donald J. Fuhrmann

Nays: None

PUBLIC HOUSING/SECTION 8 PROGRAM

2024 Agency Plan Schedule

Mr. Fraley: There is no action required. Just as a reminder on October 4th we will have a resident meeting to discuss community needs at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments Learning Center, 730 Tacoma Road at 6:30 pm. Notices have been sent out to all residents. We usually have a small crowd, but a good crowd.

2024 Fair Market Rent schedule, effective January 1, 2024

Mr. Fraley: There are about 327 flat rent participants right now. If they are currently on flat rent, they will be offered the new flat rent which in all cases will be an increase. This increase will be anywhere from \$12.00 to \$40.00 per month based on the schedule we have. They will be offered to go back to the income based rental amount. Typically, what residents do is choose the one that benefits them the most. Sometimes that will be because there is less cost if it is income based. Sometimes, they like the flat rent because they don't have to do as much certifying at flat rent it's every three years rather than every year on income-based rent. This is a yearly action by HUD and we are recommending that the Board approve the 2024 Fair Market Rents for public housing.

Bishop Brock introduced the following resolution:

#8127 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE THAT THE PROPER AUTHORITY OFFICIALS ARE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED TO AMEND ITS FLAT RENT POLICIES TO COMPLY WITH THE STATUTORY CHANGES CONTAINED WITHIN THE FISCAL YEAR 2014 APPROPRIATION ACT AS MOST RECENTLY AMENDED ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2021 (PIH 2021-27).

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE WILL SET THE FLAT RENTAL AMOUNT FOR EACH PUBLIC HOUSING UNIT THAT COMPLIES WITH THE REQUIREMENT THAT ALL FLAT RENTS BE SET AT NO LESS THAN 80 PERCENT OF THE APPLICABLE FAIR MARKET RENT (FMR), ADJUSTED, IF NECESSARY, TO ACCOUNT FOR REASONABLE UTILITY COSTS. THE NEW FLAT RENTAL AMOUNT WILL APPLY TO ALL NEW PROGRAM ADMISSIONS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024.

BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2024, CURRENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS THAT CURRENTLY PAY THE FLAT RENTAL AMOUNT, WILL BE OFFERED THE NEW FLAT RENT AMOUNT, AS WELL AS THE INCOME-BASED RENTAL AMOUNT OPTION, AT THEIR NEXT ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION.

It was moved by Patricia E. Mickel and seconded by Donald J. Fuhrmann Jr. that the resolution be adopted as introduced and read.

On the question, roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia E. Mickel, Ned Smith, Sean Dugan, Donald J. Fuhrmann

Nays: None

Adoption of 2024 Section 8 Fair Market Rents and Payment Standards

Mr. Fraley: This is the adoption of the 2024 Section 8 Fair Market Rents and Payment Standards. These are the rents that landlords can charge for properties that are in the HCV/Section 8 program. The landlord receives the difference between what the resident is required to pay and whatever their rent is under the Fair Market rent. This is a yearly item that changes as HUD sets the fair market rents, so we are asking the board to approve this resolution.

Bishop Brock introduced the following resolution:

#8128 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE THAT THE PROPER AUTHORITY OFFICIALS ARE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED TO AMEND ITS SECTION 8 FAIR MARKET RENTS TO COMPLY WITH THE 2024 FAIR MARKET RENTS EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024.

It was moved by Sean Dugan, and seconded by Donald J. Fuhrmann, Jr., that the resolution be

adopted as introduced and read.

On the question, roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia E. Mickel, Ned Smith, Sean Dugan, Donald J. Fuhrmann

Nays: None

BIDS/PROPOSALS RECEIVED

Computer Network Administration Services

Mr. Fraley: We received four proposals for Computer Network Administrative Services. We are recommending that the Board approve Networking Technologies. They were scored separately by myself, Linda Lewis, our controller, and Dusti Dennis, our Deputy Director. Networking Technologies is our current provider. They are not the low bidder, but they were within \$3,000 of the low bid and based upon their services in the past and their proposal which overall indicated that they would provide all of the services that we require plus additional services. The other part that we like is the \$103,000 they guaranteed for all five years of the contract, with the understanding that this is a one-year contract that we can renew yearly for the next four years, at our discretion.

Bishop Brock introduced the following resolution:

#8129 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE THAT THE PROPER AUTHORITY OFFICIALS ARE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED TO RENEW THE CONTRACT WITH NETWORKING TECHNOLOGIES, TO PROVIDE COMPUTER NETWORK ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR A 12-MONTH PERIOD COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2023 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, AT THE HOURLY RATE OF \$125.00, NOT TO EXCEED \$103,000.00 FOR A 12 MONTH TERM.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT THE AUTHORITY RESERVES THE OPTION, AT ITS SOLE DISCRETION TO RENEW THE CONTRACT WITH NETWORKING TECHNOLOGIES FOR AN ADDITIONAL FOUR YEARS.

It was moved by Ned Smith, and seconded by Patricia E. Mickel, that the resolution be adopted as introduced and read.

On the question, roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia E. Mickel, Ned Smith, Sean Dugan, Donald J. Fuhrmann

Nays: None

Furnace and AC Upgrades at Better Housing Developments.

Mr. Fraley: This is for Furnace and Air Conditioning at Better Housing East and West and is for 40 properties. We received three bids. The low bid was from the Wm. T. Spaeder Co. for \$293,000 plus an alternate amount of \$24,000 for a total of \$317,000. We are asking the Board to approve a Contract with Wm. T. Spaeder Co. to install heating and air conditioning at Better Housing East and West at a cost not to exceed \$317,000.

Bishop Brock introduced the following resolution:

#8130 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ERIE THAT THE PROPER AUTHORITY OFFICIALS ARE AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH WM T. SPAEDER, CO. INC. THE LOW RESPONSIBLE BIDDER, FOR FURNACE AND AC UPGRADES AT BETTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS, AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$317,000.

It was moved by Ned Smith, and seconded by Sean Dugan, that the resolution be adopted as introduced and read.

On the question, roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Bishop Dwane Brock, Patricia E. Mickel, Ned Smith, Sean Dugan, Donald J. Fuhrmann

Nays: None

OTHER

Mr. Fraley: As I told the Board earlier, we took over Better Housing about three and a half years ago. At that point, Better Housing probably could have been in better shape. During that time, we have put new entry doors in the front and back of the apartments, new security screens and windows in all the apartments. We have upgraded the electrical systems. We are in the process of installing hardwired carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. This will allow us to have new heating and add air conditioning to all these units. The only major items we have left to do is some outside work. We have really turned these apartments around. I'm very proud of the staff and what we have been able to do there over the last 3 ½ years.

Mr. Fraley: Cherie, would you like to give an overview of your activities over the last month?

Cherie Kinem: Summertime is very busy at The Housing Authority with our residents, and we have built a wonderful team between the QUEBEC Unit, HomePlus, GECAC, MCRC, and Gannon Nursing. We do all kinds of events for residents. We do the family picnics, the Waldameer day, we have fishing and golf for the kids there is always something, it's very busy. The one thing that I really want and I hope that the whole team understands is it's very nice to hear the residents

appreciation of everything that we do. They are very appreciative of what the Housing Authority does and I'm sure they know that they are pretty lucky to have that. I'm sure what we do for them and with them in the summertime, not many places can say the same. The one thing that we changed is the senior picnic. It was always at Waldameer and it was great but the residents with mobility issues struggled out there. So, Tom Covatto, Sargent of the Quebec Unit put us in touch with Nick's Place on Edinboro Road. What a beautiful venue that was. They had a wonderful day, we had lunch, they played bingo, we had outside games, etc. The real fun part was we had the Police Officers vs the residents in cornhole. The Quebec Unit is always on board with everything, they are absolutely wonderful.

Mr. Fraley: What people don't realize is, this works both ways. It's great for the residents because they interact with our Police officers at our special events. It is great for the officers because it humanizes our population to them. So when they show up at say a domestic, they may have had the kids in that house in the fishing program. If something has gone wrong here whether it is a fire or whatever, because those things happen, they know that resident in many of those cases. Cherie left one thing out, that is what she has become. It is called, feed the world. Cherie is probably doing in one month 500 food type items to residents every single month now. Whether it's senior boxes, produce express, lunches and dinners for kids before and after school or the food rescue program. We are providing food 3 to 5 days a week throughout public housing. Why do we have all these partners? It's very simple, if we say we are going to provide an event with you, there will be people there, there will be helpers there. If you have 120 food boxes you want to give away that day you will have 20 residents that won't get served so you know that you can bring 140 next month. That is why it works. All these partners, if you ask them who they work for, may get paid by other agencies but they will tell you they work for The Housing Authority. That is what Cherie does with her program. It makes a huge difference. It is why we don't have graffiti in our neighborhoods, its why we don't have major crimes in our neighborhoods. Do we have vandalism, yes; do we have drug problems, yes; do we have assaults; not really, do we have murders, not really. I have been here for 34 years doing programs for The Housing Authority. The number 1 crime in public housing is domestic violence. By the way, we have a domestic violence counselor and every time a police report is written, they make sure the report gets to Cherie, she gets the counselor together and they all meet with the resident. It may take 4 or 5 different meetings, but they will get services. Here is a quick story about one of our new officers. We have a tenant with serious mental health issues and there's also a language barrier. She fights with everyone. We don't want to evict her because if we do we know she's going to end up on the street. We don't want that to happen. She had a court date due to a physical fight with the police officers. She didn't show up for court and they were going to issue a warrant for her arrest. One of our newer police officers said no, give me a chance. He got a new court date, had it translated and took it to her house and slid it through the mail slot. Then got down to make sure it went through and saw two eyes looking back at him. She made it to her court date and is now on probation and she may get mental health services now. That's what the Quebec program does that no other police program in the country does in my opinion.

Bishop Brock: I think it is very important that the residents and citizens of our city know the extent of the services that The Housing Authority provides. I would like to see the Editorial board, Kevin Flowers or someone do a story on The Housing Authority on not just the different ethnicities but the different programs and support services that we have.

I also want to say to Cherie, you have been such a tremendous asset to his organization. I have never seen the type of bond that these young people have with Cherie. It is incredible that Cherie commands respect and she is respected without question. Not just the children but the older folks as well, you are very versatile. We commend you for what you are doing.


The Board would like to do something officially for Sargent Covatto. The Quebec Unit is embracing what we have been pushing for a very long time, Community policing. They are proving that Community policing works as far as bringing down crime and earning the respect for police officers. He has done an outstanding job.

Mr. Fraley: Sargent Covatto does a tremendous job. He is very committed, and he cares about his officers. He also holds his officers accountable. He is good with the detectives as well, they follow-up. We have been very pleased with the Quebec Unit.

There being no other comments, the meeting was adjourned upon proper motion at 1:35 p.m.



Bishop Dwane Brock, Chair



Michael R. Fraley, Executive Director and Secretary