

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE COUNTY OF JACKSON, ILLINOIS
November 28, 2018**

The regular meeting of the Housing Authority of the County of Jackson, Illinois was held on Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. to conduct regular monthly business. The meeting was held at the Housing Authority offices located at 300 North Seventh Street, Murphysboro, Illinois.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairwoman Brenda Hinton called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. with the following members present: Chairwoman Brenda Hinton, Vice Chairwoman Mary Campbell, Commissioner Wileta Brown-Martin, Commissioner Whitney Endres and Commissioner Theresa Doerr. Also present were Executive Director Young, Assistant Director Rosemary Finnegan and Attorney John Clemons.

Introduction of Visitors

There were no visitors present, but in attendance were Housing Authority employees Accounting Payable Manager Sheila Rae and Property Manager Oueida Mills.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the October 24, 2018 meeting were presented to the Board for approval. A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Campbell to approve the minutes; which motion was seconded by Commissioner Endres. Upon roll call the ayes were five, nays none. Chairwoman Hinton declared the motion carried and the minutes of October 24, 2018 were approved as published.

Approval of Payment of Bills

Bills for October 2018 were presented to the Board for approval of payment. The water bill was mentioned, and Executive Director Young stated that while the Authority has no control over that utility, he does shop around for the lowest price for electric and gas. Chairwoman Hinton questioned the \$2,000 a month to the Jackson County Sheriff and Vice Chairwoman Campbell asked how many vehicles the Authority had. Assistant Director Finnegan stated there are 39 and they all come back to the main office every day. Commissioner Brown-Martin had a question regarding a bill she had not seen before to PHADA. Executive Director Young explained that was the Public Housing Authority Director's Association. Assistant Director Finnegan stated it was for annual dues. Executive Director Young informed the Board that PHADA gives away scholarships every year and that the Authority has had resident's win them in the past – in 2013 a resident won a \$7,500 scholarship and in 2015 a resident won a \$5,000 scholarship. Executive Director Young stated they both went to the University of Illinois and both were Engineering Majors, of which one has already graduated. Executive Director Young stated that the Authority sends out a letter with the information each year to the NAACP, all schools and the African American Museum. Chairwoman Hinton stated that the Authority might not pay taxes, but \$96,570.32 to the Jackson County Treasurer is a lot. Executive Director Young stated he was glad she had mentioned that and explained that this is the Authority's PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) – the Authority does not pay taxes in the traditional way, but it pays PILOT taxes – based on a formula and the number of units in each city. Executive Director then listed the individual amounts each city in the county received from the Authority. A motion was then made by Commissioner Endres to approve the payment of the bills, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown-Martin. Upon roll call the ayes were five, nays none. Chairwoman Hinton declared the motion carried and the payment of bills for October 2018 were approved for payment as shown on the attached lists.

Old Business

Currently there was no Old Business.

New Business

First on the Agenda was a Discussion of the Section 8 SEMAP score. Executive Director Young stated the Board had the document in their packets and this is how HUD rates the Section 8 Program. Executive Director Young stated that HUD grades the program on a number of things. Executive Director Young stated Kim Herrin, the Section 8 Program Manager, is beaming with pride as the program received 100% on SEMAP. Executive Director Young stated he wanted to make sure to bring it to the Board's attention. Executive Director Young stated the Authority is very happy about the score and there is a letter from HUD congratulating us on the score. Commissioner Brown-Martin asked who was over the program. Executive Director Young stated Kim Herrin.

Next was a Request for Increase in Legal Fees by Southern Illinois Law Center starting 2019. Executive Director Young stated he would let Attorney Clemons explain this. Executive Director Young stated that Attorney Clemons had sent a memo out to all the Board members, but there was a copy in the packets. Attorney Clemons stated he was prepared to answer any questions you have on it – essentially every once in awhile at my office we do a fee review and I realized there had not been a request for a fee increase here in a very significant time. Chairwoman Hinton stated 13 years. Attorney Clemons stated we want to stay competitive, but 2005 was the last time – he stated his office has entered into subsequent contracts and HUD asked us to do that but that the rates have been the same. Attorney Clemons stated that what he does that is different from any other attorney that practices in this area of evictions is that his fees come in two parts. Attorney Clemons stated he charges one fee for filing the case, preparing the paperwork and getting the papers to the Sheriff's office to serve and then he charges a second fee for going to court and sometimes very simple in that the resident does not show up and sometimes we have days like this morning where we have full fledged trials. Attorney Clemons stated that what he does by separating the two is if we dismiss a case before court, there is no fee for going to court, so the Authority and the tenant saves that money. Attorney Clemons stated most attorneys charge one flat fee for filing and eviction whether it goes to court or not and this fee averages in the area from \$350-\$400, so he is still well below it. Attorney Clemons continued to explain the number of cases the Authority approximately files each month and how a lot of those cases are resolved. Executive Director Young stated that Attorney Clemons was very reasonable compared to other attorneys and the Authority appreciates that he keeps his fees down. Executive Director Young stated that he would certainly recommend that the Board approve the request of the Southern Illinois Law Center. The following Resolution was introduced.

RESOLUTION 18-40

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE INCREASE IN LEGAL FEES

RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the County of Jackson, Illinois to approve an Increase in Legal Fees payable to the Southern Illinois Law Center.

A motion was made by Commissioner Endres to adopt the foregoing Resolution, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown-Martin. Upon roll call the ayes and nays were as follows.

Ayes: Chairwoman Hinton, Vice Chairwoman Campbell, Commissioner Brown-Martin, Commissioner Endres and Commissioner Doerr.

Nays: None.

Chairwoman Hinton declared the motion carried and Resolution 18-40 was adopted.

Reports

Capital Fund Program

Executive Director Young stated that the Capital Fund Program report was in the Board packets. Executive Director Young reviewed and summarized ongoing projects in the Capital Fund Program report for the Board. Executive Director informed the Board that he had received verbal notice that the demolition package for the 8 units in Carbondale had been approved, but that he was waiting on the approval letter. There followed a short discussion regarding City of Carbondale inspection of units.

Attorney

Attorney Clemons stated he would send his report to the Board the next day. Attorney Clemons stated that the only actions the past month were dealing with fees, some evictions and that he had the deed to sign for down in Grand Tower that the Board had approved. Attorney Clemons stated that Steven Bost, the attorney for Grand Tower, had drafted it and that he had reviewed it and it was fine, so he needed signatures from Chairwoman Hinton and Executive Director Young after the meeting. Attorney Clemons stated it was a pretty quiet month legal wise. Attorney Clemons stated that there were big battles looming regarding emotional support pets. There followed a brief discussion regarding this matter. Property Manager Mills stated the Authority has a Pet Policy but does not have any policy regarding emotional support pets. Attorney Clemons stated that the Authority probably should have a written policy. Attorney Clemons pointed out that you can ask for documentation, but that it is a violation to ask why the person needs the animal.

Executive Director

Executive Director Young stated that he had reported to the Board last month that the Authority had ordered a couple of vehicles – two Chevy Cruzes – and that one would be going to the Section 8 program and one would be for the Property Managers. Executive Director Young stated he had ordered them through a Joint Purchasing Program so the Authority did not have to go through the bidding process. Executive Director Young stated he did not expect delivery for another thirty days.

Executive Director Young informed the Board that the Authority was having major plumbing work being done at the high-rise on the corner of Walnut and Marion Streets in Carbondale. Executive Director Young stated this was being done on an emergency basis as it affects all 70 apartments. Executive Director Young stated there was a leak under the floor and that the pipe is buried six feet below the concrete. Executive Director Young stated the building was built in 1966. Executive Director Young stated that the leak has to be located and then fixed – A&W is doing a major portion of the work.

Executive Director Young informed the Board that the Authority was doing a number of evictions lately – around Christmas and the holidays it seems worse that people have a problem paying rent. Executive Director Young stated that the Authority tries to work out repayment agreements with residents, but that if they do not pay the Authority has to pursue eviction proceedings.

Executive Director Young informed the Board that the Authority had received an offer again to purchase the cell tower lease that is on the roof of the Marion/Walnut high-rise. Executive Director Young stated the offer was similar to the one given to the Authority before, which did not benefit the Authority.

Executive Director Young stated he would like to give an employee credit – Ms. Louise Alexander, Tenant Accounts Manager, does a very good job on 50058's. Executive Director Young stated that the last time the Authority received a statement from HUD we got 100%. Executive Director Young explained the process involved in filing 50058's. Vice Chairwoman Campbell stated that she has worked with Ms. Alexander and that she is wonderful.

Executive Director Young mentioned the Audit binders the Board had and that he would let Assistant Director Finnegan explain. Assistant Director Finnegan stated there were no findings, no issues, a very clean audit and

that there was a letter to the Board of Commissioners stating the Authority was financially sound. Executive Director Young stated that the auditors say that when they come to our Housing Authority everything is in order and they don't have to spend as much time looking for stuff – consequently the audit is not as difficult for them. Assistant Director Finnegan stated that all the staff have paperwork ready to go. Chairwoman Hinton asked who puts the book together. Assistant Director Finnegan stated the auditors do that – that is how it arrives at the Authority all bound.

Executive Director Young distributed handbooks to the Commissioners. Executive Director Young stated that the blue handbook just came in today and is put out by NAHRO. Executive Director Young stated the other book is put out by the Public Housing Management Institute and that both handbooks talk about Board members duties and responsibilities.

Vice Chairwoman Campbell asked if the Authority was having some type of recognition for Assistant Director Finnegan's leaving. Executive Director Young stated there probably would be but did not know what. Vice Chairwoman Campbell asked if he would keep them informed. Executive Director Young responded yes, he would.

Executive Director Young informed the Board that currently the Authority has 680 occupied units, which put it at 85.7%.

Executive Session

A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Campbell that the Board go into Executive Session, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120-2(c)(1) for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown-Martin. Upon roll call the ayes and nays were as follows:

Ayes: Chairwoman Hinton, Vice Chairwoman Campbell, Commissioner Brown-Martin, Commissioner Endres and Commissioner Doerr.

Nays: None.

Chairwoman Hinton declared the motion carried and the Board went into Executive Session at 6:40 p.m.

During Executive Session discussion ensued regarding personnel matters.

Upon motion made and seconded, the Board came out of Executive Session at 7:35 p.m.

Chairwoman Hinton stated that no official action was taken or requested during Executive Session.

Vice Chairwoman Campbell asked if the Board agreed that it found it acceptable for Executive Director Young to present the offer to the Assistant Director candidate. Commissioner Doerr asked if it could not be done for six months as you can't judge a person in 90 days. Assistant Director Finnegan stated that according to the Personnel Policy she will be done with probation at 90 days. A motion was made by Commissioner Brown-Martin that Executive Director Young offer \$85,000.00, with an increase to \$87,500.00 after 90-day probation period and an increase to \$90,000.00 at the six-month time frame, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Endres.

Assistant Director Finnegan inquired if there were any other issues. Commissioner Brown-Martin stated to table it until the new Assistant Director started. Commissioner Hinton stated the new Assistant Director may have input on operations as they are currently done. Commissioner Brown-Martin stated that since the new Assistant Director would not start until January 2019 and Assistant Director Finnegan was extending her retirement date into January, any operational changes should be tabled to a later date.

Adjournment

After a motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Brown-Martin and unanimously carried, Chairwoman Hinton declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Chairperson

ATTEST:

Secretary