

SOUTH METRO HOUSING OPTIONS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of Regular Meeting May 7, 2015

The regular meeting of the South Metro Housing Options (SMHO) Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 5745 South Bannock Street, Littleton, Colorado 80120.

THOSE PRESENT: Chairman Andrew Hancock (arrived at 7:45 p.m.), Vice Chairman Stewart Meagher, Commissioners Libby Bortz, Kyle Henderson, John Ostermiller, and Esther Varela

THOSE ABSENT: Commissioner Aaron Heumann

ALSO PRESENT: Jo Hamit, Executive Director; Gerald Humphries, Finance Manager; Jo Davidson, Community Housing Development Association (CHDA), and Jerry Hill, citizen.

Vice Chairman Meagher called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. and declared a quorum present. The revised agenda was reviewed and accepted.

Jerry Hill spoke as an unscheduled visitor. Mr. Hill stated that several people have expressed interest in SMHO's future plans for the vacant site on West Powers.

Jo Davidson, Executive Director of the Community Housing Development Association (CHDA) presented a check to the Board in the amount of \$20,000, representing a portion of the cash flow from the project during the previous year. SMHO provided a \$75,000 loan in 2005 for the Lara Lee Apartments acquisition and renovation. The loan has enabled CHDA to keep the rents affordable for the very low-income population it serves. Ms. Davidson stated that she continues to appreciate the relationship with SMHO and looks forward to working with the organization on future projects. The Board expressed their thanks to Ms. Davidson.

Executive Director Hamit presented the annual report to the Board, highlighting the following activities and achievements:

- The Littleton Transportation Network (LTN) was formed in March of 2013 to promote fund-raising opportunities to assist with the operation of the Omnibus and Shopping Cart for the City. In 2013 and 2014, SMHO sponsored spaghetti dinner fundraisers at the Libby Bortz Assisted Living Center, raising \$8,000 in 2013 and \$6,839 in 2014. The committee will continue its fund-raising efforts in 2015, and SMHO will again sponsor the fund-raising spaghetti dinner in July.

- An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the City of Littleton for health, dental and life insurance benefits was finalized in 2014, replacing the original agreement which was executed in 1996. SMHO utilizes its own payroll services, workers compensation insurance, and pension plans for the agency; however pension plans for SMHO are modeled after the City of Littleton's plans and are administered with the same carrier, International City Management Association Retirement Corporation.
- After a year of testing the private market for vehicle maintenance services, SMHO renewed its agreement with the City of Littleton Fleet Services Department. SMHO will be charged for actual charges, rather than a share of overall City charges.
- In the past, SMHO has been successful in obtaining Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds through Arapahoe County for upgrading health and safety items in its properties. SMHO received a \$62,000 grant to upgrade the fire panel system at Alyson Court in 2014, which was completed in April 2015. SMHO expects to submit an application for security cameras in 2015.
- Staff has begun working closely with Libby Bortz Assisted Living Center (LBALC) staff on actively referring SMHO residents into the LBALC facility as the needs arise. Staff hosted several "pie" socials for SMHO residents to provide information on the facility, and a tour of the facility for interested residents will be provided.
- Staff participated in a panel presentation on housing needs and led a break-out session discussion on future housing needs at the 2015 Littleton Community Retreat on April 17.
- Staff established a referral network with the Broadway Assistance Center, a new community non-profit organization that relocated to Littleton in August. The agency provides rent and utility assistance, GED preparation and testing, financial literacy classes and a community food bank.
- New door entry systems were installed at Alyson Court and Powers Circle Apartments in an effort to improve security for residents. Staff expects to install additional door entry systems at other locations and security camera systems at all buildings during 2015. The Amity Plaza community room renovation was completed in May 2014. New windows and sliding doors were installed in March, 2015. During the coming year, parking lot resurfacing is expected to be completed. The Bradley House roof was replaced, and elevator jacks in both passenger elevators were upgraded during the year. The fire panel at Alyson Court was upgraded in April 2015.
- The Powers Circle Apartments project was fully leased in June 2014. While there have been several move-outs in the past year, staff has kept the vacancy rate near zero and waiting list of qualified applicants is being developed. The final tax credit application was submitted to the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA), and permanent financing for the project has been completed. The Finance staff worked with Feldhake & Associates on the cost certification audit during the first quarter of 2015.
- The Resident Services Department organized numerous projects and events throughout the year including:
 - "*SMHO Sets Sail*" a four-week "cruise" for residents in each senior/disabled building where ports of Spain, Italy, Greece and the Bahamas were "visited."
 - *Pack the Backpacks* annual drive, which provided a total of 120 backpacks filled with school supplies for SMHO families and 50 students at Field Elementary School.

- *National Night Out* Block parties, held at Bradley House and Amity Plaza and funded through a City of Littleton Community Development grant.
 - Thanksgiving Day Dinner options.
 - *Jingle 'n' Mingle*, a holiday open house event for SMHO families and seniors.
 - *Adopt-a-Family* holiday gift drive.
 - Resident Services staff trained with staff of Arapahoe/Douglas Mental Health the *Senior Reach Program*, a new program designed to help SMHO staff identify and make referrals for at-risk situations or behaviors in the senior population.
- Staff worked with the Clean Energy Collective (CEC) to include 20 SMHO family residences in their program to lower tenant utility bills by tapping into Xcel's energy grid.
 - Staff made a presentation to the Colorado Center for the Blind on SMHO housing programs and policies, including information on accessibility, reasonable accommodations and service animals.
 - For the second year, staff participated in Denver Seminary's *Day of Service*. Seminary staff and students work onsite to help with a number of tasks—lifting or moving furniture, computer, phone and other technical issues, play games, engage in conversations, play music, etc. They also donate gift cards for any emergency situations that may arise for seniors during the year.
 - Staff hosted a neighborhood watch meeting with Littleton Police and residents of Geneva Village in October.
 - Staff worked extensively with the SB Clark Company on the submittal of an application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to convert all public housing units into the Rental Assistance Demonstration program (RAD). RAD allows housing agencies to finance public housing properties in much the same way that the Section 8 New Construction program is structured. In April 2015, it was determined that a physical needs assessment, a much more specific scope, and additional resident meetings are needed prior to submitting the application can be submitted to HUD. Development of an application for the RAD Program will be a priority for the next twelve month period.
 - The Board approved a Smoke-Free Housing policy for Amity Plaza, Alyson Court, Bradley House and Powers Circle Apartments on December 1, 2013. Residents were provided with information on the benefits of smoke-free living and mini health fairs were held at Bradley House, Alyson Court and Amity Plaza. A one-year “grandfathering” period for allowing smokers to continue to smoke in their apartments expired on November 30, 2014. SMHO staff are now in the enforcement process and are working with violators in an effort to avoid the eviction process. In 2015, staff expects to paint the units of known smokers in an effort to more easily detect ongoing violations. In October 2014, SMHO was awarded on of several “Public Health Hero of the Year” awards from the Tri-County Health Department for extraordinary commitment to providing smoke-free housing.
 - SMHO is fully committed to recycling. Amity Plaza serves as a community recycling site. During 2014, SMHO staff conducted recycling seminars at Alyson Court, Amity Plaza and Bradley House and provided valuable information to the residents.
 - The agency is continually researching more effective methods to reduce the volume of paper while becoming more efficient. In 2015, employee time sheets, leave request and pay stubs will be converted to online accessibility through a secure employee portal. Approval

processes are expected to become more streamlined and less burdensome. Staff is also exploring the feasibility of paperless reporting and record-keeping for all housing programs.

- SMHO redesigned its website in 2015. The new site provides more streamlined navigation, and information is available in 81 languages. Staff continues to provide enhancements to the website, including current information for residents on program requirements, wait list openings, vendor information on procurement opportunities and SMHO calendar of activities and events.
- Staff continues to refine lease enforcement and curb appeal for all SMHO properties. Weekly lease enforcement on all family units will be continued in 2015. New landscaping and parking lot improvements were completed at the Powers Circle Apartments project in early 2015.
- SMHO's Section 8 HCV program scored 100% compliance on its Section 8 Management Assessment Program certification. The Public Housing Program earned a score of 94% on its Public Housing Assessment Program compliance. Both programs have earned the designation of "high performer" by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Staff also attained a 100% compliance score from HUD's regional Department of Labor for a labor standards review that was conducted in March 2015.
- In 2014, staff began the transition to electronic filing and document storage, as well as automated processes for housing program and administrative processes. Utilization of employee and resident portals available through agency software will be implemented over the next several years to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Executive Director Hamit presented the SMHO mission statement and requested that it be reviewed and reaffirmed by the Board. She noted that the statement was amended in 2014. Vice Chairman Meagher suggested that the mission statement be reaffirmed at this time and reassessed further at the upcoming Board retreat.

It was moved by COMMISSIONER HENDERSON and seconded by COMMISSIONER OSTERMILLER THAT THE AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT BE REAFFIRMED, AS WRITTEN.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Meagher, Commissioners Bortz, Henderson, Ostermiller, and Varela.

Nays: None

Absent: Chairman Hancock, Commissioner Heumann

Motion Carried: 5:0:2

The minutes of the April 7, 2015 regular meeting were reviewed. Executive Director Hamit stated that Commissioner Heumann had contacted her with several grammatical and formatting changes, which have been made.

It was moved by COMMISSIONER VARELA and seconded by COMMISSIONER HENDERSON THAT THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 7, 2015 REGULAR MEETING BE APPROVED AS AMENDED.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Meagher, Commissioners Bortz, Henderson, Ostermiller and Varela

Nays: None

Absent: Chairman Hancock, Commissioner Heumann

Motion Carried: 5:0:2

Vice Chairman Meagher opened the floor for nominations for officers for 2014-15. He stated that he had a brief discussion with Chairman Hancock, who indicated that he would be willing to continue in his role as chairman, if such action is supported by the Board. Commissioner Bortz asked Vice Chairman Meagher if he was willing to continue to serve as Vice Chairman, and he replied in the affirmative.

It was moved by COMMISSIONER BORTZ and seconded by COMMISSIONER VARELA THAT THE CURRENT SLATE OF OFFICERS, NAMELY ANDREW HANCOCK AS CHAIRMAN AND STEWART MEAGHER AS VICE CHAIRMAN, BE RETAINED.

Ayes: Vice Chairman Meagher, Commissioners Bortz, Henderson, Ostermiller and Varela

Nays: None

Absent: Chairman Hancock, Commissioner Heumann

Motion Carried: 5:0:2

Finance Manager Humphries presented the March 2015 financial reports, the sixth month of Fiscal Year 2015. Through March, the agency year-to-date (YTD) total revenue is \$4,057,010, which is 2% below projections. Revenues are below projections as a result of the delay in receiving developer fees on the PCA Project. Mr. Humphries stated that \$242,866 in reimbursement of cost overruns has been received, and will be reflected on the April financial statements.

Expenses are \$3,966,485, which is 4% above year-to-date projections. A number of public housing capital fund grant expenses have been incurred but not reimbursed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which we expect to be drawn down on the 2015 capital fund budget. The 2015 Capital Fund allocation was made available to SMHO during April; however, an environmental review, currently being conducted by Arapahoe County, is required before the funds can be drawn.

Finance Manager Humphries stated that the agency received approximately \$66,000 in unvested funds from previous employees.

There was a brief discussion regarding renewal of the lease agreement with Love, Inc., a non-profit organization that is renting the SMHO building at 5854 South Datura Street.

Finance Manager Humphries reported that staff is exploring more convenient methods for residents to pay rent, such as bill-pay and electronic deductions.

Mr. Humphries noted that Powers Circle financial statements have been included in the packet, and the project is cash-flowing at the present time.

Commissioner Bortz asked if some residents pre-pay their rents. Mr. Humphries stated that a small number of them tend to do this, at certain times of the year. Commissioner Bortz inquired about the large number of cash accounts carried by the agency. Mr. Humphries said that there is one general fund and other accounts are tied to the specific projects. Some accounts are required by HUD, and some are for specific purposes, such as security deposits and investment accounts.

It was moved by COMMISSIONER BORTZ and seconded by COMMISSIONER OSTERMILLER THAT THE MARCH 2015 FINANCIAL REPORTS BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED.

Ayes: Chairman Hancock, Vice Chairman Meagher, Commissioners Bortz, Henderson, Ostermiller and Varela

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Heumann

Motion Carried: 6:0:1

Executive Director Hamit reported that the July Board meeting is scheduled for July 2, one day before the Independence Day holiday. Due to the holiday, the Board may want to reschedule the meeting to July 9, one week later. There was a general consensus to move the July board meeting to July 9.

Executive Director Hamit asked when the Board would like to hold the Retreat. It was agreed that a doodle poll for the last two weeks in June would be issued. Ms. Hamit asked the Board to provide topics for discussion at the Retreat.

Executive Director Hamit reported that the waiting lists for all housing programs have just been purged, reducing the number of families on the lists for all programs.

It was moved by COMMISSIONER BORTZ and seconded by CHAIRMAN HANCOCK TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. The motion carried. There being no further business, VICE CHAIRMAN MEAGHER adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

Stewart Meagher
Vice Chairman

Jo Hamit
Secretary