

KENT COUNTY HOUSING COMMISSION

121 Martin Luther King Jr St SE, Suite 110
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
Phone: (616)632-7950



Kent County Housing Commission Board Meeting

Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 8:00 am

MINUTES

Present: Joshua Lunger, James Peacock III, Louis Berra

Absent: Courtney Christensen, Heather Bradley

Staff: Gustavo Perez, Ashley Huey, Brenna Kotchka, Jen Kozlowski, Mayra Diaz-Rodriguez, Emily Stroka, Queyonna Hunt

1. Call to Order and Roll Call for Quorum

- a. Commissioner Lunger called the meeting to order at 8:10 am

2. Approval of November 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Motion by: Commissioner Peacock

Supported by: Commissioner Berra

Motion passed

3. Approval of Today's Agenda:

Motion by: Commissioner Berra

Supported by: Commissioner Peacock

Motion passed with the following change- the time for today's meeting will be changed from 8:30 am to 8:00 am

4. Public Comment: None

5. Election of Officers:

- a. Election of the President:

Commissioner Peacock nominated Commissioner Lunger; motion supported by Commissioner Berra. Commissioner Lunger is elected as President of the Kent County Housing Commission.

- b. Election of the Vice President:

Commissioner Lunger nominated Commissioner Peacock; motion supported by Commissioner Berra. Commissioner Peacock is elected as Vice President of the Kent County Housing Commission.

6. Communications: None

7. Report of the President: Commissioner Lunger welcomed the members of the Housing Commission and expressed his gratitude that they were able to meet today. He notified

the other members that Commissioner Bradley submitted her resignation. The position will be posted to fill the vacancy.

8. Report of the Director:

Gustavo notified the commissioners that staff have begun the process to get the vacancy posted. The position will be offered to someone who will be able to meet the requirements and attend the meetings. Recently staff has been in conversation with HUD to try to increase the number of vouchers we have as an organization. Gustavo gave kudos to the team for getting creative with their efforts. Staff are also working on pulling people from the list. The team anticipates we may be able to open the waitlist in the next couple years, which hasn't happened in nearly 14 years. Trying to get creative about how we engage with landlords. There have been challenges filling some vouchers because of the market rate and because of hesitation on the part of landlords because they don't understand the process. However, our organization does frequently receive praise from landlords that we do currently work with. There are about 5,000 vouchers combined in our community and we should be able to engage with landlords together with other PHAs in a collaborative manner.

Gustavo also provided the commissioners with a staffing update. Today will be Mayra's last meeting. She has enjoyed her time with the HCV team and clients but feels called continue working in Emergency Services. The director and fiscal team are still working in collaboration with Human Resources to see what it would take to get a supervisor position. Reporting and other supervisory responsibilities have fallen on the team, so we are looking to fix that. One of the other program areas in the department will be launching a mortgage assistance program. Staff is looking at how to connect that with our FSS program participants. Queyonna shared that they have a tentative date for the next landlord appreciation event in October 2024. Save-the-dates will be going out soon and all the Commissioners are welcome to attend. Commissioner Berra inquired what the current vacancy for Kent County is. Jen said they haven't looked at that in a while, but they will find the information and pass that along. Commissioner Lunger followed up and asked if KCHC is at 110 market value. Jen replied that we have 120 for VASH, and we are at 110 for all the other vouchers. Payment standards are the highest they have ever been. It puts our voucher holders back into competition and they are not priced out of the market as they had been.

9. Financial Report:

Brenna Kotchka shared the financial report, which goes through November 2023. The fiscal year-end changed to September 30. Because of this, the 2023 fiscal year only has 9 months. Fiscal year 2024 will have 12 months and will run through September 2024. The FSS drop did come through and Brenna is doing monthly draws. If you look at revenue and expenses for HCV, you can see that our expenses every month have been higher than what our revenue is. That is because we are increasing our leasing. Brenna asked HUD for additional HAP funding, we haven't gotten it yet, but are working on it yet.

10. Old Business: Bylaws – Commissioner Lunger is going to reach out to Jason Grinnell to ask where he was at with the bylaws.

11. New Business: Welcoming Commissioner Berra – Commissioner Berra introduced himself and shared that he had 30 years’ experience with HUD and was the director of the HUD field office here before it closed. Everyone present did a round of introductions.

12. Adjournment:

Motion by: Commissioner Peacock

Supported by: Commissioner Berra

Meeting adjourned at 8:42

**Next scheduled Kent County Housing Commission Board meeting
March 21, 2024 at 8:30 am**