

MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PORTSMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY  
January 9, 2019 - 2:00 p.m.  
245 Middle Street, Portsmouth, NH

The meeting began at 2:03 p.m.

**I. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT

LATE ARRIVAL

ABSENT

Chair Griffin

Commissioner Pickering

Vice Chair Schwartz

Commissioner Kennedy

Commissioner Ferrini

Commissioner Leith

Also present: Craig Welch, Valerie Labrie, Lauren Greenwald, and Peter Roche

Chair Griffin decided there is quorum and so the meeting could continue.

**II. READING OF MEETING MINUTES**

**Commissioner Kennedy motioned to waive the reading of the minutes dated December 12, 2018 and accept as presented.**

**Commissioner Ferrini seconded the motion. There were no additional comments. The motion carried. All in favor.**

**III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Welch introduced Lauren Greenwald, an attorney with New Hampshire Legal Assistance. Attorney Greenwald stated her interest learning more about the PHA and was specifically interested tenant's rights during and after our participation in the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program. Mr. Welch updated the Board on the recent hearing on the Court Street project in Rockingham County Superior Court and that we were now waiting for a decision on the appeal. Mr. Welch informed the board that PHA Housing Development Ltd. reviewed the Statement of Values for the construction for the Court Street project and that our goal remains to break ground on the project in the fall of this year.

Mr. Welch explained that we have started working on the Construction Management and Mitigation Plan with Eckman construction and that we were going to be working hard to ensure the safety of residents as well as resident access to transportation including their own vehicles.

Mr. Welch then discussed The Meadows Preschool and how the project was initiated by a study that was done by the Portsmouth School Department and funded by the United Way. The study found that for PHA residents transportation and affordability were cited as primary impediments to enrolling children in early childhood education programs, and this led to our creating The Meadows Preschool in partnership with the Seacoast Community School in Portsmouth. Mr. Welch said the goal is to enroll 100% of children ages 3-5 in preschool. PHA will see what the affordability gaps are for families to see if grants or funds could be matched with what families could pay. The preschool is scheduled to open on January 22, as the original January 7 date had to be changed because of delays associated with State licensing.

Mr. Welch reported that our HUD Resident Opportunity in Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) grant was recently re-approved for a three year term.

Mr. Welch gave an update on the RAD program and explained that PHA is still studying whether to choose Project Based Voucher (PBV) or Project Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) as our new source of subsidy after RAD.

Mr. Welch also passed on some of the concerns some tenants articulated about the RAD program about whether they were going to need to relocate. Mr. Welch explained that with RAD, the tenants will be the same, the owners and managers of the property will be the same (PHA and Ltd.), and the tenants will have the same rent (except for 11 specific units that are already paying the maximum flat rent and will see slightly more of an increase under a RAD PBV or PBRA program).

Mr. Welch explained that we were proposing a multi-phase RAD transaction where Feaster would be the first to see changes as early as 2019 or 2020, then Margeson, and then Woodbury Manor, State Street, Pleasant Street, and Gosling Meadows in years to follow.

Commissioner Kennedy asked if the government shutdown affects the work of Portsmouth Housing. Mr. Welch explained that the HUD office is unable to be contacted during the government shutdown so we are experiencing some delays, but overall it has not had a significant impact on our operations. Mr. Welch warned that if the shutdown goes on into March, the PHA will be unable to make Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) to all of our 160 participating landlords. Ms. Labrie added that PHA has had money allotted for January and February. It is unsure if PHA will have voucher funding for March.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Welch said he previously covered the Old Business in the Executive Director's Report.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

##### Write offs - Bad Debts

Mr. Welch mentioned Ms. Labrie's proposal to write off bad debts of \$5,300.

**Commissioner Ferrini motioned to approve the proposed write-off of bad debts. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

## VI. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

### Financial Reports

Ms. Labrie explained some costs associated with property improvements including some flooring replacement and Mr. Welch mentioned that the quality and price of laminate makes it preferable to square VCT tile. Commissioner Ferrini asked for clarification about training expenses. Ms. Labrie explained the need for additional staff training. Mr. Welch mentioned that our software provider Tenmast has been acquired by MRI Software and that we will need more training for staff as they convert some of their systems, and emphasized that with upcoming RAD transition we should be investing in additional staff training. Mr. Welch informed the group of the improved social atmosphere in the Margeson and Feaster community rooms due to the new flooring, televisions, appliances as well as the planned coffee hours.

### Waitlist Report

Mr. Welch mentioned how the total number of applicants is exceeding 500 and the total number of applications is exceeding 1,200. He said the demand for Wamesit one-bedroom apartments is so high, there are people on the list who will likely never be housed, and that this confirms our decision to for 2/3 of our units at Court Street to be one-bedroom units. Mr. Welch said he has been asked how to get on the waitlist for 160 Court Street, and explained that there is currently not a waitlist for the property and that we will be creating one 4-6 months prior to the building being ready to occupy.

### Vacancy Report

There were no questions or comments.

### Rent Collection Report

There were no questions or comments.

### Housing Choice Voucher Utilization Report

There were no questions or comments.

### Court Street Predevelopment Budget and Expense Summary Reports

**Commissioner Kennedy motioned to adopt the agenda items 1-6. Commissioner Leith seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.**

## VII. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Kennedy mentioned how he is very impressed by Tammy Joslyn's work in Resident Services.

**Commissioner Kennedy made a motion to submit the RAD application. Commissioner Ferrini seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.**

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**Commissioner Kennedy moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:08 p.m. Commissioner Leith seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

---

Craig W. Welch  
Secretary

---

**Accepted by:** Ruth L. Griffin  
Chair

Amy Schwartz  
Vice Chair

---

Date