

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PORTSMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY
245 MIDDLE STREET, PORTSMOUTH, NH
October 13, 2021 - 2:00 p.m.

Chair Ferrini called the meeting to order.

I. ROLL CALL

PRESENT	LATE ARRIVAL	ABSENT
Commissioner Leith		Commissioner Jewett
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		
Secretary Craig Welch		

Also present: Finance Director Valerie Labrie, Executive Assistant Mary Kelliher

Chair Ferrini declared a quorum present.

II. READING OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to waive the reading of the minutes dated September 8, 2021 and accept as presented. Commissioner Pickering seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		Chair Ferrini
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		

The motion passed.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Res 2021-003 – Vote on PHA Annual Plan for FY 2022 and 5-Year Capital Fund Plan

Mr. Welch summarized the PHA’s Annual Plan and items that make up that plan. He also summarized the Capital Fund Plan which outlines anticipated projects and expenses for the next 5 years. He explained that in the 5-Year Capital Fund Plan, year 5 consistently contains a large number of projects with a high estimated CFP grant, to give us flexibility to do a project sooner if the opportunity or need arises. We cannot do a project if it is not included in our plan.

Commissioner Rodenhizer referred to Attachment E Progress on Goals and Objectives, specifically the line that states “studied the feasibility of a dedicated housing plan,” where it states it was not pursued this year. Is this similar to the housing study that has been discussed? Mr. Welch said a designated housing plan could be a result of findings from doing an analysis on impediments in the area.

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to approve Resolution 2021-003 – PHA Annual Plan for FY 2022 and 5-Year Capital Fund Plan . Commissioner Leith seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS

Commissioner Leith		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

B. Presentation of 2020 PHA Audited Financials

Ms. Labrie summarized the PHA Audited Financials for 2020. PHA revenue increased 13% mostly due to COVID CARES Act, donated land, and insurance proceeds from the Woodbury Manor fire. Total expenses were \$8.8 million, which was a 4% change from the prior year. Total capital assets were \$10 million, which is a 6% increase. We had a \$650,000 increase in cash to almost \$4 million total. She added that we have a new 98-year ground lease for 160 Court Street, a transfer of Feaster land conveyed to 160 Court Street. We also received donated piece of land from LTD for 160 Court Street project. The PHA’s OPEB (Other post-employment benefits such as pensions and health insurance) liabilities are almost \$3 million. They are predecessor benefits where retirees were grandfathered in. It used to be a PHA policy that employees would receive lifetime health insurance after working a certain amount of years. We have discontinued that policy in 2007, but we have a few individuals that are still utilizing this. Commissioner Main commended Ms. Labrie and Mr. Welch on a clean and impressive audit.

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to accept the 2020 PHA Audited Financial Statement. Commissioner Pickering seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		
Commissioner Main		

Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

C. Res. No. 2021-004 – 2022 Section 8 Payment Standards – Adam Krans, HCV Program Manager

Mr. Welch introduced Adam Krans, PHA HCV Program Manager, who explained the employee makeup of the HCV Department, history of the HCV Program, process of receiving HCV assistance, types of vouchers (HCV, PBV, tenant protection voucher), and challenges that the HCV program faces, including getting landlords to participate. Contract rent payments have consistently exceeded payment standards for years. Payment standards are set based off of the fair market rent that HUD published yearly. We have the opportunity to set our payment standards between 90-110% of those fair market rent numbers each year. We are consistently at 110%.

Commissioner Rodenhizer asked if tenant protection vouchers are indefinite. Mr. Krans explained that the voucher holders can take their tenant protection voucher with them, but they don't get to take the higher rate with them that the voucher is covering. The voucher is covering their rent so that the tenant can stay in place, even though the landlord has increased rents above our payment standard. If the tenant chooses to move, they would have to use our set payment standards when finding a new apartment.

Commissioner Pickering asked if there is anything promotional we can do to get more landlords participating with Section 8. Mr. Krans said we are hoping that working with Hope For All will get more landlords on board. He explained that his view is that if a landlord has a good screening process, allowing HCV vouchers is simply a safety net for landlords. If a tenant who is a voucher holder loses their job, the PHA's portion of the payment goes up, the tenant's goes down, and the landlord still gets paid. Commissioner Rodenhizer asked for an explanation of the partnership with Home for All. Mr. Krans explained that Home For All brings a certain level of case management for getting voucher holders housed in apartments (economic coaching, budget making, bill paying). Home For All also has a list of landlords that are willing to participate and have units that they know are going to be put on the market and fit our payment standards.

Commissioner Leith motioned to approve Resolution 2021-004 – 2022 Section 8 Payment Standards. Commissioner Rodenhizer seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

D. Res. No. 2021-005 – 2022 Flat Rents Update

Mr. Welch explained flat rents. Flat rents cap what an individual pays. As an individual makes more money, their rent goes up. Individuals can opt to pay flat rent if they want to continue living in public housing. We are asking for an increase in flat rents. He referred to a chart comparing fair market rent and flat rent.

Commissioner Leith motioned to approve Resolution 2021-005. Commissioner Pickering seconded the motion.

Commissioner Rodenhizer asked why the flat rents do not coincide with fair market rent. It seems as though for some unit sizes, the fair market rent is higher than fair market rent and lower for others. Ms. Labrie explained that there are different options for choosing flat rent prices and utility allowances differ within those options. Chair Ferrini asked how we arrived at a number for flat rent that is higher than fair market rent. Is it market pressure related to the area we're in? Commissioner Main asked if 10 residents is a usual amount of residents participating in flat rent. Mr. Welch & Ms. Labrie said yes, the number remains about the same, give or take a few residents. Mr. Welch said he would like the resolution tabled to next month so that he can learn the definitive answer to the Commissioners' questions regarding this resolution.

Commissioner Leith motioned to table Resolution 2021-005 to the November Board meeting. Commissioner Rodenhizer seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed. Resolution 2021-005 is tabled to the November meeting.

E. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Welch summarized his report, including the scheduled work session with City Council for November 8th. Chair Ferrini encouraged the Board members to attend. It will be a conversation about housing. The request to have this work session was initiated by City Council.

Commissioner Leith motioned to accept the Executive Director's Report. Commissioner Rodenhizer seconded the motion.

The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		

Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

There was no discussion.

V. OPERATIONAL REPORTS

A. ORGANIZATION CHART

Commissioner Rodenhizer asked if the Occupancy Specialist we are hiring for will be involved in Court Street Project, which Mr. Welch responded that they would be. Commissioner Rodenhizer then asked if the Applications Specialist would be involved in processing applications for 160 Court Street. Mr. Welch responded that no, the PHA tax credit staff will be working on applications for 160 Court Street.

B. WAITLIST REPORT

There was no discussion.

C. VACANCY REPORT

There was no discussion.

D. LANDLORD-TENANT

There was no discussion.

E. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Commissioner Main noted that maintenance is still below budget for AMP 1&2. He asked if we feel as though things are being done; we're just not spending as much? Mr. Welch said he believes things are going well with maintenance. We've added a maintenance supervisor position. We've moved Joe Murray, previously Maintenance Technician, to fill that role.

Commissioner Main noted we are at 52% financial completion for Court Street Project.

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to accept the operational reports. Commissioner Leith seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		
Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no discussion.

VII. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chair Ferrini added that it would be great for the Commissioners to attend the November 8th work session with City Council.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rodenhizer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Leith seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The votes were as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTENTIONS
Commissioner Leith		

Commissioner Main		
Commissioner Pickering		
Commissioner Rodenhizer		
Chair Ferrini		

The motion passed and the meeting adjourned.