

**OMAHA HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
1805 Harney St, Omaha, Nebraska 68102  
8:30 a.m. February 25, 2016

Chair Jennifer Taylor called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. The meeting falls under the Open Meetings Act and copies of the law were available near the entrance of the room.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners Present: Jennifer Taylor, Chair  
Karen Watson, Vice Chair  
Jamie Berglund  
David Levy  
George Achola

**PUBLIC COMMENTS.** None.

In the absence of the Deputy Director, Ms. Judith Carlin, the report was given by Ms. Gale Sayers-Proby, Human Resources and Risk Management Director. She informed the Board that the fee accountant, Urlaub, was present and working on the year-end close. OHA is reviewing their processes and procedures with Urlaub to determine improvements and changes that need to be made. REAC is taking place at Pine Towers. She thanked everyone for their diligence in Ms. Carlin's absence.

**A. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**  
**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Commissioner George Achola asked that item #7 be removed from the consent agenda, pending review of revisions.

**MOTION** by Commissioner Jamie Berglund, seconded by Commissioner Achola, to remove items #7 from the agenda, and approve items #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 and #6. Motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Watson – Aye  
Commissioner Berglund – Aye  
Commissioner Achola – Aye  
Commissioner Levy – Aye  
Chair Taylor – Aye

**B. ACTION ITEMS:**

**1. Resolution 2016-13 – Write-Off Summary**

Chair Jennifer Taylor requested the Memorandum and Resolution be revised to reflect the correct total write-off amount, as opposed to the average write-off per unit. The amended documents had already been produced, and the Board confirmed the change had been made accurately. Commissioner Karen Watson asked whether the write-offs will be completed quarterly in the future. Mr. Greg Knudtson responded they will be completed

monthly. Chair Taylor commented this practice will give OHA a better handle on tracking and forecasting.

**MOTION** by Commissioner Achola, seconded by Commissioner David Levy, to approve the write-off Memorandum and Resolution, as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Watson – Aye  
Commissioner Berglund – Aye  
Commissioner Achola – Aye  
Commissioner Levy – Aye  
Chair Taylor – Aye

## **REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **C. BUDGETS AND FINANCE**

#### **1. OHA Financials**

Mr. Knudtson reported Public Housing was at a net loss before noncash interest income from inter-property HIO loans. Section 8 Operating had a net income. Section 8 Admin likewise had a net income. The COCC had a net income.

#### **2. HIO Financials**

HIO had a net loss. Commissioner Achola inquired why 2015 saw a significantly smaller loss than 2014 in noncash revenues. Mr. Knudtson replied he could not provide specific details without further research. Ms. Taylor added revenues were also up over the previous year. Conversely, expenses such as utility payments and administrative costs were down. Mr. Knudtson reiterated what he had indicated at the Finance Committee meeting: MUD bills were arriving later, and some of the reflected utility expenses were an estimated accrual. Ms. Sayers-Proby stated the AMP reports may elucidate further reasons for the significant differentials, and actuals will give a clearer picture.

#### **3. Accounts Payable**

Mr. Knudtson stated payables were up, most likely due to an extra week of payables being reflected on the report. The check payment cycle had been pushed ahead of when it normally runs in order to accommodate department workload. Commissioner Achola asked about the Bradco and HAIG expenses. Mr. Knudtson responded the expenses were for the roofs of Pine Towers, and for property insurance, respectively. Mr. Steve Schrader added OHA was also billed for the roof repairs the previous year by H&S.

Commissioner Watson voiced concern that the report would not be representative of all payables if they were not entered in the system until being matched up with a PO, per the discussions in the Finance Committee meetings. There may be activities that are recorded at a delay due to a lapse in purchase order submittal. Mr. Knudtson explained OHA was changing procedures to streamline the process, as previously indicated. Chair Taylor asked the reason for the Leo Daly expense. Mr. Knudtson responded it was for fire pumps at the Towers. The 1805 Harney Street Renovation had used Schemmer.

Commissioner Achola asked how Asset Management information relevant to payables was being accounted for. Mr. Terence Jackson, Sector Property Manager, responded that there is a form with specific benchmarks that had been submitted at the Operations Committee meeting that would allow sources of specific expenses to be viewed and analyzed. This process would be fully implemented at the conclusion of REAC inspections. Commissioner Watson asked how this practice would be helpful in tracking expenses. Commissioner Achola stated the payables report on an agency wide level was unspecific; seeing which payables were attributed to which properties with comments would allow for a dynamic view of the health of each property. Mr. Jackson added this would likewise allow for an analysis for major issues that are not immediately evident on the agency-wide report. Commissioner David Levy added it would be helpful to know which expenses are recurring, and which are due to larger projects.

## **D. ASSET MANAGEMENT**

### **1. Omaha Housing Authority/Housing in Omaha**

Mr. Jackson stated the past month ended at ninety seven percent occupancy, down one percent from the average this past year. He relayed that staff time had been consumed with REAC inspections. There were five inspections to be completed, and two pending scores. Seven properties were at one hundred percent occupancy. Overall, there were no major deficiencies found in the inspections. The Park North score had decreased significantly, but Mr. Jackson was confident regarding his chances of appealing both Park North and Evans Towers REAC scores, based upon appeal history. Mr. Jackson observed there were some major capital needs that, if corrected, would increase REAC scores, such as window replacement. In addition it would be an investment that would greatly decrease utility costs.

Commissioner Levy mentioned a student in a class he was teaching had emailed Ms. Carlin regarding a maintenance concern, and it was already being addressed. Commissioner Levy thanked staff for their timely response, saying this type of response would show the Omaha community that OHA is neighborly and responsive.

Chair Taylor stated the Park North mural was a way for OHA to be demonstrative of creativity and community. A subsequent mural project at Underwood Tower would be another positive addition. Mr. Jackson commented the REAC inspector appreciated the mural at Park North. Chair Taylor noted HUD should know about these projects. She continued to ask about the notifications to residents regarding the Resident Commissioner position. Ms. Sayers-Proby responded the notices and applications would be sent by the following Friday.

## **E. HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

Ms. Joan Anderson, Section 8 Director, stated that the first briefing had been scheduled, and thirty families were scheduled to be awarded vouchers. There were fewer than one hundred families on the waiting list. Ms. Anderson explained that there was a new system on YARDI that

would select prospective Section 8 HCV recipients via lottery. This would prevent tie-ups on phone lines. OHA hopes to have this implemented by April 1. The SEMAP scoring had also been submitted early to PIC.

Commissioner Jamie Berglund inquired whether OHA gave preference to vulnerable individuals. Ms. Anderson responded there were already reasonable accommodations granted. Ms. Berglund asked whether there was priority given along a continuum of vulnerability. Commissioner Achola added there was a preference policy for Public Housing, but that the Board would have to approve a policy for Section 8, if it so desired. Commissioner Levy noted that moving the people OHA serves from homelessness to homeownership should be a goal implemented over time. Chair Taylor commented goals such as this should be considered when building OHA's strategic plan.

Commissioner Watson inquired whether the Auditor's plan response has been accepted by HUD. Ms. Sayers-Proby replied she did not know, but would follow up.

## **G. SUPPORT DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **1. Capital Development and Construction**

Mr. Schrader stated OHA has been awarded grant money that needs to be expended by the beginning of March. Ms. Denise Parker, Project Facilitator, rewrote the budget to attain the grant, and got the project approved with HUD. It has been signed off on, and the money will be available to OHA to expend by the deadline. Chair Taylor commented that the Board had approved the 1805 building renovation contract.

### **2. Procurement/Contracting**

Mr. Schrader noted that every PO used to have to be on paper and required a physical signature, taking three to four weeks to be approved. This created a bottleneck effect. All signatures are now electronic, with several users authorized to approve POs. It now takes a week or less to approve POs, expediting the process.

Ms. Sayers-Proby asked Mr. Schrader to speak about staff cuts and the effect on contracts and costs. Mr. Schrader extrapolated, saying regular maintenance staff handles tasks that are too large or specialized for their knowledge or time constraints. OHA is spending double the amount it used to when it had someone specialized on staff to supervise capital projects, and daily operations are a large enough task without adding specialized projects. OHA could ensure it is only paying for the services it requires by hiring additional staff to manage this process. This staff member would manage/supervise service contracts and suggest strategic methods of repair. Commissioner Achola summarized the individual would be a liaison between Capital Development and Operations, and understand what maintenance needs to be approved.

Commissioner Levy asked how this position would be allocated in the budget, as the workday is spent in the field, but based at the Central Office. Commissioner Achola added that the logistics of the position needs to be worked out to prevent the past tension between operations and capital budgeting. Mr. Schrader confirmed the position can be

allocated, although it would require more in-depth planning. Commissioner Watson asked in what manner this position would be future-focused, as a physical needs assessment considers day-to-day repairs. She stressed the importance of a strategic maintenance plan to ensure cost-effectiveness and durability of existing housing infrastructure. Mr. Schrader replied that would be a significant consideration for this position, adding that HUD expected OHA to adhere to proposed capital planning budget. However, large maintenance expenses arise, and require flexibility with budgeting according to needs.

Commissioner Taylor mentioned that it may be worth considering having several positions in-house, such as a boiler specialist, given OHA spends more money on third party costs. Mr. Jackson added OHA could save thousands long-term this way. Lower expenses short-term may not be the most effective in long-term budgeting.

### **3. Human Resources**

Ms. Sayers-Proby stated OHA was still searching for a Director of Planning and Capital Development. It is more important to find someone who will be the correct fit for OHA, with relevant Public Housing experience, than find someone to simply fill the position. OHA is also looking to fill a position in IT. Commissioner Levy stated there could be overlap between the Director of Planning and Capital Development and proposed Service Contract Manager position, in terms of functionality.

Commissioner Achola asked where OHA was in securing training opportunities for the staff. Ms. Sayers-Proby replied Mr. Murphy Knight and Ms. Parker were to attend a training, and there were other trainings planned for multiple staff members, both onsite and offsite, throughout March through May. She would compile a calendar to present to the Board. Commissioner Taylor asked if the Lund Company could come to OHA to do a training with the Property Managers, as their trainings had been valuable in the past. Ms. Sayers-Proby replied this could be a possibility.

### **4. Family and Community Services**

Mr. Sal Issaka spoke about the Charles Drew Mobile Clinic. He stated it had been difficult to staff the clinics in the towers since the last provider had left. Commissioner Watson asked whether the attrition had to do with Charles Drew, or with OHA. Mr. Issaka replied that the doctors hired by Charles Drew who work at the clinics for OHA are hired specifically for that purpose. Attaining adequate staff is something OHA and Charles Drew are working to resolve.

Mr. Issaka stated OHA is going to be a work site for the Summer Step Up Program. There are more funds available this year. The number of workers that OHA will receive has not yet been determined. They will be focusing on the older participants. Commissioner Watson asked whether the youth will be paid for by OHA, and OHA is reimbursed. Mr. Issaka replied that OHA is paid directly by Step Up.

Mr. Issaka stated FCS was also working to re-establish the homeownership program after the loss of the Homeownership Program under the Ross Grant. He is in dialogue with

Habitat for Humanity regarding the Pilot Program. They are also going to be participating in upcoming Homeless Connect.

Commissioner Levy mentioned he had met with Earl Redrick of local HUD, and their discussion had focused on how OHA can be a part of the community and involve local HUD in its community development plans. Chair Taylor appreciated Ms. Carlin's extensive conversations with local HUD, particularly her work in the repayment agreement.

Commissioner Watson stated she wanted OHA to be aware she had seen a GoFundMe page for Girls, Inc. dedicated to sending them to Washington, D.C. The manner in which the page was phrased made it seem as if OHA had previously funded the girls' trip, but that it was no longer supporting the endeavor. Mr. Issaka replied that OHA had not received a request for OHA to help fund the trip this year, and that the funding in the past had gone specifically to sponsor a few kids from the Housing Authority to participate, not Girls, Inc. specifically.

#### **5. Public Safety**

Ms. Chris Peters relayed criminal occurrences were at an all-time low. There had been little violence comparatively the past few months. The FBI/OPD gang arrests had made a big difference in occurrence of violent crime.

#### **6. Legal**

Mr. Brian Hansen, General Counsel, presented his report. He noted the report will change to reflect the court progression of the eviction process. Mr. Hansen also commented criminal evictions were low, likely also due to FBI/OPD sweeps.

**MOTION** by Commissioner Berglund to move into Executive Session for legal matters at 9:36 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Levy.

Commissioner Watson – Aye  
Commissioner Berglund – Aye  
Commissioner Achola – Aye  
Commissioner Levy – Aye  
Chair Taylor – Aye

*The Board moved to Executive Session at 9:40 a.m.*

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION** by Commissioner Berglund, seconded by Commissioner Watson, to come out of Executive Session at 10:00 a.m. Motion Passed (5-0).

Commissioner Watson – Aye  
Commissioner Berglund – Aye  
Commissioner Achola – Aye

Commissioner Levy – Aye  
Chair Taylor – Aye

**MOTION** by Commissioner Berglund, seconded by Commissioner Watson, to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Motion Passed (5-0).

Commissioner Watson – Aye  
Commissioner Berglund – Aye  
Commissioner Achola – Aye  
Commissioner Levy – Aye  
Chair Taylor – Aye

*The meeting was adjourned at precisely ten o'clock.*