

MEETING MINUTES – RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD – OCTOBER 5, 2023

Present:

Mary Vang, Executive Director
Allen Falkosky, Public Housing Manager
Josh Freeman, Facilities Coordinator
Ka Bao Vang, Section 8 Program Manager
Lana Fanning, Huntington House
Joyce Lobner, 10th Avenue
Elaine McAllister, Parkview
Rhonda Sanders, Scattered Sites
VACANT, Section 8 Program

WISCONSIN RAPIDS HOUSING AUTHORITY

Excused: Josh Freeman and Ka Bao Vang

The Housing Authority of the City of Wisconsin Rapids held a meeting of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16, 2023 in the community room of the Huntington House Apartments, 2521 10th Street South. Executive Director Mary Vang called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Approve minutes of the February 16, 2023 meeting:

Lana moved to approve the minutes from the February 16, 2023 meeting, seconded by Elaine. No discussion, all aye votes.

2. Revision of Public Housing (PH) Admissions & Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) and Section 8 (S8) Administrative (Admin) Policy:

Housing Authority staff explanation of revisions to the PH ACOP and S8 Admin policies:

Mary provided a review and explanation of the following revisions to the PH ACOP policies: creation of Non public housing over income lease agreement per HOTMA over income section 103 requirements; revisions to the schedule of tenant fees and maintenance charges;

CHAPTER 3: Eligibility

- HUD mandates the Housing Authority of Wisconsin Rapids (HAWR) utilize HUD's Income Verification Tool (IVT) for income verification.
- Revised language regarding the use of arrests records as the sole basis for the denial or proof that the applicant engaged in disqualifying criminal activity.
- Additional language regarding dual subsidy in federally assisted programs/units. Assistance is contingent upon the move-out of currently occupied/federally subsidized assisted unit.
- Adopt language regarding Debts Owed to HAWRs and Terminations module as part of the eligibility determination for new households and as part of the screening process for any household members added after the household is admitted to the program. If any information on debts or terminations is returned by the search, the HAWR will determine if this information warrants a denial.
- Additional tool added to the eligibility screening process. The HAWR will utilize the MRI's software "Rental History Reports" as part of eligibility screening process.

CHAPTER 6: Income and Rent Determinations

- Mandated: Removal of old language regarding changes with Mandatory Earned Income Disallowance lifetime maximum from 48 months to 24 months
- Mandated: Exclusion of non-public housing over income (NPHOI) families from participation in family choice rents (Flat Rents)
- Adoption: Request for higher utility allowance as a reasonable accommodation/individual relief for medical needs

CHAPTER 8: Leasing and Inspections

- Adoption of 24-hour life-threatening language to include inoperable carbon monoxide detectors (In in situations where the unit or building has a fuel burning appliance or an attached garage, missing or inoperable carbon monoxide detectors)

CHAPTER 9: Reexaminations

- Adoption: Streamlining the income determination process for family members with fixed sources of income. While third-party verification of all income sources must be obtained during the intake process and every three years thereafter, in the intervening years the HAWR may determine income from fixed sources by applying a verified cost of living adjustment (COLA) or rate of interest.
- Adoption: Requiring household members who turn 18 to consent to criminal background check.

CHAPTER 10: Pets

- Adoption: Documentation from a licensed healthcare professional is required documenting how a household member's disability is directly related to the need of an assistance animal.
- Adoption: Residents are responsible for feeding, maintaining, providing veterinary care, and controlling their assistance animals. A resident may do this on their own or with the assistance of family, friends, volunteers, or service providers.
- Mandated: Cat declawing is not a requirement or condition of pet ownership in public housing and HUD encourages PHAs to refrain from engaging in this practice.

CHAPTER 12: Transfer Policy

- Mandated: Adopt an emergency transfer plan for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking. Verify incident through documentation and requestor must submit an emergency transfer request form (HUD-5383).

CHAPTER 13: Lease Terminations

- Adoption: For families whose income exceeds the over-income limit for 24 consecutive months, the HAWR will not terminate the family's tenancy. If, at any time during the 24-month period following the initial over-income determination, an over-income family experiences a decrease in income, the family may request an interim redetermination of rent. If, as a result, the previously over-income family is now below the over-income limit, the family is no longer subject to over-income provisions as of the effective date of the recertification.
- Adoption for eviction for non-payment of rent under the following circumstances:

During a nationwide emergency order-30 calendar days from the date the tenant receives the notice for nonpayment of rent

Upon the expiration of a nationwide emergency-14 calendar days from the date the tenant receives the notice for nonpayment of rent

- Adoption permitting remote hearings.
- Creation of a Non Public Housing Over Income (NPHOI lease).

CHAPTER 14: Grievances and Appeals

- Adoption of remote hearings and addressing barriers related to remote hearings for families/individuals with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and lack of technology. Ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and LEP individuals. Discovery of documents before the remote hearing to be mailed/emailed to parties before remote hearing.
- Removal of language to consult with resident organization before a person is appointed as a hearing officer.

CHAPTER 16: Program Administration

- Adopted language that is concurrent with Notice PIH 2022-23, which supersedes/replaces Notice PIH 2021-27. Removal of maximum rents and adopted HUD mandated flat rents set to no less than 80% of applicable fair market rent (FMR).
- Revisions to add protection under VAWA to victims of domestic violence, economic abuse, human trafficking, and technological abuse.
- Revision to documentation under VAWA
- Revisions to record retention of Enterprise Income Verification (EIV) income reports in tenant files for four years.

Mary provided a review and explanation of the following revisions to the S8 Admin policies:

Chapter 10: Moving with Continued Assistance and Portability

- Additional language for VAWA emergency plan transfers.
- Adoption of family move to new unit at zero HAP, the HAWR will not enter into HAP contract.

Chapter 11: Reexaminations

- Adoption of 3rd party verification of non-fixed income will be obtained annually.

Chapter 13: Owners

- Section 13-II.G. added regarding foreclosure per PIH notice 2010-49. HAWR will make all reasonable efforts to determine the status of the foreclosure and ownership of the property and will continue to make payments to the original owner until ownership legally transfers in accordance with the HAP contract.

Chapter 16: Program Administration

- Adopted policy to allow for the scheduling of remote informal reviews & hearings at the discretion of the HAWR during local, state, or national physical distancing orders, and in cases of inclement weather or natural disaster, or upon the request of the family/individual as a reasonable accommodation for a person with disability. Appropriate accommodations must be made for Limited English Proficiency and to accommodate the nature of an individual's disability.

- Adoption of VAWA language as it relates to the communication of information to a domestic violence victim/participant to lower the risks for the victim/participant. And protecting the confidentiality of the victim when there is conflict of with the victim and the perpetrator in the same household.
- Adoption of the effect of the final decision of the hearing officer. The Executive Director has the authority to determine that the HAWR is not bound by the decision of the hearing officer because the HAWR was not required to provide a hearing, the decision exceeded the authority of the hearing officer, the decision conflicted with or contradicted HUD regulations, requirements, or the decision was otherwise contrary to federal, state, or local laws. In such a case, the HAWR will mail a “Notice of Final Decision” to the HAWR and the participant on the same day. The “Notice of Final Decision” will be sent by first-class mail. A copy of this notice will be maintained in the HAWR’s file.

Chapter 17: Project Based Vouchers

- Adoption of emergency transfers under VAWA. When the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking has lived in the unit for less than one year, the HAWR will provide several options for continued assistance. Internal transfers under reasonable cause.

Chapter 18: RAD PBV

- Adoption of policy in adjusting rents for RAD PBV projects using HUD’s OCAF

Chapter 19: Special Purpose Vouchers

- This chapter was added as part of HUD’s efforts to provide special purpose vouchers for family unification, foster youth to independence, veterans affairs supportive housing, mainstream vouchers and non-elderly disable vouchers.
- The HAWR has an interest in administering vouchers for the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program which offers a case management component that would be supported by the Wood County Human Services (WCHS). This is a collaborative partnership between the HAWR and WCHS, as well as other local agencies, to offer youth who are phasing out of foster care the opportunity for housing and supportive wrap around services

Mary reported that as part of HUD’s initiatives through the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization (HOTMA) Act of 2016, Sections 102 & 104 of this act affect both the public housing and section 8 rental assistance programs. The sections address the following income and asset limitations that are to be implemented by housing authorities effective for 2024: Asset limitations for new admissions that exceed \$100,000; asset limitations for interim and annual reexaminations that exceed \$100,000; enforcement of asset limitation for real property ownership; self-certification of net family assets equal to or less than \$50,000; hardship exemptions for health/medical care expenses & reasonable attendant care & auxiliary apparatus expenses; hardship exemption to continue child care expense deduction; additional (permissive) deductions; de minimis errors in income determinations; interim reexaminations - decreases in adjusted income & increases in adjusted income; interim reexaminations - reporting changes & effective date; revocation of consent form (form hud9886); determination of family income using other means tested public assistance; and enterprise income verification (EIV) usage.

Resident Advisory Board comments: Elaine inquired about how the over assets limitations would apply to someone who inherits real estate that is split between several members.

Public comments: There was no public for comments.

4. **Public input:** Rhonda inquired about alternative low-income housing programs in the area with handicap accessible units. Mary stated that United Way 211 would be an option for those seeking alternative housing.
5. **Next meeting:** The next meeting of the RAB is to be determined.

6. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:05 a.m., with Lana moving for adjournment and Elaine seconding. All aye votes.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Vang
Executive Director, Wisconsin Rapids Housing Authority