

## **MASON COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY MINUTES**

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF MASON COUNTY (MCHA) HELD AT 2:30 P.M. ON **November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**, IN PERSON AT MASON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM AND ONLINE VIA ZOOM

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:** George Blush called the meeting to order at 2: 32 pm. Roll call was as follows:

**Present:** George Blush, April Pooler, Dan Armstrong, Randy Neatherlin

**Others present:** Colleen Carmichael – Quixote Communities, Christeen Brickert – Community Lifeline, Todd Parker – Mason County Public Health, Melissa Casey – Mason County Public Health, Jaden Evans

**Public Comment:** Colleen Carmichael, executive director of Quixote Communities, spoke to the group. She said, I just wanted to meet, Tanya Frazier was supposed to be the spokesperson today and also Susan Kirchoff from Youth Connection, but they could not attend. We are looking to increase housing in our community. We wanted to ask about doing a community market study because our fair market value is lower than the actual market rate in the Shelton area. We wanted to find out if we could get a study done so that landlords we work with can get a better price for rent. If you're interested, we can talk to the University of Washington. Kitsap County did this and it increased their values by 20%. It'd be very beneficial for us to do that, if this is something we could achieve it would be fantastic. Randy asked, did the Housing Authority already do structure through HUD? Bremerton Housing Authority did, our County did not said Todd. They normally do it by region, my understanding was that we could not go higher than HUD recommendation said Randy. Correct, but if you do a study that shows HUD rates are substantially lower, then we can increase those rates with the market area result. Every year, there's a study to establish fair market areas, said Dan. April said yes, we are way far behind because it should be higher, we could present and say you know fair market is x-amount, and from our study, it shows our area should equate to x-amount says Dan. Have they seen recent numbers? asks Randy. That was off of the state recommendation rent value, no marketing analysis was done, they confirmed. What is the cost to do that, and what does it take? asked Randy. I happen to be a realtor and I know a lot of realtors. Seth asked, you guys have a RD (rural development) and HUD building, I wonder how that would impact either property? I'm not aware of doing a study like that, I'm wondering how it would affect our property. It has to be by a 3rd party says Colleen, it was an \$80k cost for Kitsap County, would you be willing to get a study done? You could find out how much it may cost and ask/tell them that we don't have that kind of funding. It may be that we have to write a grant, April said. Kitsap has a lot more area than we do, so perhaps UW would consider that we wouldn't have that much. One of the things we recently discovered with Bremerton Housing Authority is Mason County has available housing vouchers under their program says Christine, but fair market rents or anything that would apply can sometimes delay the process as it's not affordable. Also, those wanting to rent the units should get a fair market cost for their unit, not something much lower, it's not fair for landlords willing to rent to our potential tenants to take such a hit, so it'd help them. It's not so much for our current properties says April, it just makes perfect sense for the community. So, an organization of organizations, are we looking to do it this way? Randy asked. Yes, we have been

working together with Turning Pointe, and Chris is representing Community Lifeline, 5 agencies working together right now, including Tanya from Crossroads and Susan from Youth Connection. You may want to request from the county out of ARPA funds, as a realtor, they have management companies that actually rent out these places as well, as they get a percentage benefit. WA state realtors' association, that's 2 places right away you could look at, I'd recommend getting the Housing Authority to buy on, and then structure what you're going to do. Call UW, see what it will cost. We are happy to do whatever we can to make it happen, says Colleen. We'd appreciate knowing you heard us and being willing to do it. The open forum for public comment was concluded.

***April said, she would be willing to make a motion to investigate this further, George says he seconds, Motion to entertain bringing this forward as a topic to be updated on, seconded by George, all said aye.***

**Chairman comments:** None

2. **Adoption of Agenda:** April Pooler motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by Dale Elmlund. Unanimously accepted.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Approval of minutes motioned by George Blush, seconded by April Pooler. Approved, unanimously.
4. **New business – Dan Armstrong**
  - a. Dan spoke for Becky as she could not attend this meeting. Becky wants authorization to speak on MCHA's behalf, and would like this displayed on the minutes to get signator authorization.

***A motion was made by April Pooler to authorize Becky Cronquist to speak on behalf of MCHA and to be added to the bank account as a signator, seconded by Dale Elmlund. Motion approved, unanimously.***

- b. Seth Davick, Ad-West, spoke to the topic of compliance with Pine Garden Apartments. He wanted to talk about a red flag that has developed. It's been frustrating as we came on board trying to help turn around the property, having a rent red flag placed has been a hard obstacle which we are appealing right now. It is in the process, basing off of a baseline from 2018, not where it is now, not thinking about where we've come in the last 6 months. Dan agreed, it was almost 2 years behind on everyone's certs, health, and safety violations across the board, and no one cared until we fixed it and then we got red flagged. Seth said, I asked my compliance specialist to think how much time we spend on this property to get vouchers going and certs redone, and she's put in approximately 142 hours. I can forward the response to you guys says Seth, the property is livable and caught up on certs and compliance and then they come after the management company. HUD

came in, did an inspection and red flagged Ad-West and won't let them manage any more properties HUD related, when Cascade had condemned units and 87 certs behind, they never got red flagged. Get me what you have and keep me in the loop says Randy, remember I'm a silver bullet there's only so many of me, I'd say you have any interactions, I praise them and think they're doing a great job, but this kind of stuff is very unhelpful. I sent out pictures to everyone of a remodel says George, I'll be off properties on the 28<sup>th</sup> and hoping to do 100%-unit inspection that day says Seth.

- c. Seth discussed Ad-West recommendations for Financial Submissions. He agreed to send over 2 recommendations. As of the day before yesterday, financials for Pine Garden were submitted and hopefully that goes through in the next week or so. If we are still doing this in a couple months, we want to make sure we get that audit done for Pine Garden too says Seth.
- d. The group discussed joining a non-profit. There is an institute Becky found here in WA, once we become a non-profit, it would be a good institute to pair with. Part of the process of linking together to make a legitimate stable housing authority, we will put this as old business next month and Becky can circle back to this topic.
- e. Dan said, we inspected Fairmount and Goldsborough, about 5 units a piece. There were a couple of issues in units, all being addressed. Over all, properties are coming up, cleanliness of units and patios improving, and we will keep going through and picking 5 random and revisiting. Next month we will go back and hit the 3 units that had serious issues. I gave a list over to the office, and also recommended giving notice to everyone about fire code in the apartments. Clutter was an issue, will work on fire egress notices, hoping to link one gentleman with Catholic Services, this will be key to the board, staying on top and knowing what's going on. if you do 10 units per quarter you will eventually see all units, where we had the absence in past years, now the residents start to get trained and expect the accountability.

**Good of the Order:**

2. **Questions** – None
3. **Future meeting is December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023**
4. **Adjournment of meeting**, motioned by George Blush, seconded by Dale Elmlund. Meeting adjourned.