

# Presidents Council Zoom Meeting Minutes

November 23, 2020

## CALL TO ORDER

Melanie Fox, Montreal, Chairperson, called the Presidents Council Meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and took a roll call of hi-rise representatives present.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Bob Knutson, PC/RPC Secretary, Ravoux, stated there is always a copy of the Minutes on the PC website. He also asked Representatives to instruct their resident council Secretaries to print a copy of the PC Minutes and post them along with the Minutes from their resident council meetings. John Cardoza, Cleveland, made a Motion to accept the Minutes as they stand. Yasmine Aminou, Central, seconded and the Motion carried.

## JON GUTZMANN

John Gutzmann, PHA Executive Director, had two things he wanted to talk about. The first was that the PHA is entering into their Budget season and he wants everyone to know one of the things he's looking at is ways that the PHA can increase funding. The PHA has received additional funds from HUD, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and he wants to be sure that they are doing their job to pass on needed money to the resident councils, through the Presidents Council. He's working on a plan and will be submitting it to his Board when they do their Budgets. He said they are looking to find ways to increase the funding, as councils do their very important work of representing the residents in their hi-rises.

Secondly, he talked about hi-rise community rooms. He wanted to talk about four background items before sharing an idea he has.

1. Presently we all are operating under the existing emergency powers from the Governor, such as the new one that was issued last week asking that events be limited to the number of those living in a household.
2. The pandemic continues to rage on and the infections in Minnesota are at their highest, along with fatalities, and the pandemic still presents a real and present danger to all of us in society.
3. The PHA has inherent rights as the building owner to make decisions that protect the health and safety of the residents, the staff and the public. They must also protect themselves against liability claims if they take careless actions during an emergency.
4. The hi-rise community rooms were left open 24/7 during the hot summer, so residents would have a place to go that was air conditioned. But now that summer is over we are at a point of deciding what we should do with the community rooms. In checking around with other housing authorities, it was discovered that they have their community rooms completely closed.

## **JON GUTZMANN** (continued)

In recognizing the resident council's rights in this matter to be sovereign entities and control what goes on in their respective buildings, he read a written recommendation that the PHA staff have come up with, that basically proposes that the PC talk about this. If the recommendation is accepted, the community rooms would be open during normal business hours. They would open in the morning and be closed at the end of the day.

The recommendation from PHA staff is that if there is an active resident volunteer who is able to open and close community rooms, the space would be accessible to residents Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If there is no resident volunteer to do this, the opening and closing would be done by PHA staff. For those hi-rises that lack a lock-up volunteer, the hours would be Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To ensure that residents will have access to vending machines, the machines would be relocated to accessible locations; i.e., hi-rise lobby or other areas. The recommendation was crafted by PHA staff members Kim Nguyen of Resident Services and Tara Johnson, Management Representative. At the proper time during this meeting they will discuss this further during their reports to the Presidents Council. The intent of this recommendation is to find common ground that we can all come together on.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

*Melissa Pappas*, PC/RPC Treasurer, Seal, gave a rundown of income and expenses for the month of October. The cleared balance is fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred sixty-five dollars and fifty-two cents (\$57,865.52). The ending balance is eighty-six thousand, seven hundred ninety-seven dollars and forty-six cents (\$86,797.46). The report will be filed for audit.

### **PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Brent Feller, Construction Program Manager / Maintenance Contracts, gave an update of where they stand with projects that are either in the works or are scheduled to be done where hi-rises are concerned:.

1. The contractor for the plumbing replacement at Front Hi-Rise will begin setting up on December 1st. Resident moves will be starting on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. Resident Services will be reaching out to Front residents to get them prepared to begin moving out of units.
2. The design for the Hamline kitchen is currently being worked on. They hope to begin construction on that next year.
3. The Cleveland elevator project is in progress and going smoothly.
4. There will be a contractor on-site at Ravoux to replace the air-conditioning unit in the community room.
5. The community room roof at Edgerton is nearing completion, along with work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
6. The replacement of the Wabasha entrance door is scheduled for November 30<sup>th</sup>.
7. They're working on getting a schedule from the contractor for the Exchange rear entry door replacement, and are working on a community door there as well.
8. There is currently a contractor on-site working on the painting and replacement of the wall covering at Wilson located on the main floor.

Mike Silvan, Assistant Maintenance Director, reminded everyone that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, their operations have been moved back to the Covid protocol, as it was earlier this year. Presently they're concentrating on emergency Work Orders and things of an immediate nature inside the buildings.

## **PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT** *(continued)*

Everything else will be on hold, but please inform residents that if Maintenance needs to enter buildings, residents should follow the Covid-19 protocols that are in place for everyone's protection. The pest control and life safety inspections are going to continue at least through Christmas, to ensure all of the equipment for life safety is in good working order.

The Work Order lines remain open for residents to call into if they need something done. Their hours remain the same, but keep in mind they will be closed for Thanksgiving and the day after, as well as for Christmas and New Year's Day. On those days it will go to an on-call person. Maintenance then took questions.

## **PHA MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Tara Johnson, Resident Services Senior Manager, stated that before dealing with the community room issue there are a couple of things first. Most may be aware that inspections have been suspended for the safety of everyone because of the current severity of the Covid-19 pandemic. All residents will be notified when they will resume.

Starting this week, there will be weekly wellness announcements when assistant managers are present. These announcements will come over the intercom systems in the buildings. They will be reminders about staying safe during the pandemic, along with any changes in the Governor's orders.

Tara reminded everyone that Union Gospel Mission will be coming to the hi-rises to distribute Thanksgiving meals this coming Thursday, and volunteers will be delivering them door-to-door. There will be no congregating dining in any of the community rooms. She went on to open the floor up for questions..

The community room hours were then opened for discussion. She would like to work as a team on this issue, in an attempt to make it as consistent throughout the hi-rises as possible. Please refer to Jon Gutzmann's previous remarks above regarding community rooms and recommendations that were proposed by PHA staff regarding this. Each hi-rise Representative was then given time to ask questions and/or offer input and express any suggestions or concerns. The hours community rooms would be open – as stated in the PHA staff recommendation – will be decided very soon and buildings will be notified.

Kim Nguyen, Resident Services Director, entered the conversation to elaborate on a couple of concerns that were raised regarding safety protocols. She stated she prefers that the resident council or residents not get involved in policing other residents who are not adhering to said protocols; i.e., wearing masks, social distancing, etc. If you discover anyone who's not adhering to the Governor's order, write down the date and time and give it to the building manager, who can then review camera footage and address the issue with the individuals involved.

After many questions and much discussion, John Cardoza, Cleveland, made a Motion that the Presidents Council vote to accept the PHA staff recommendations that community rooms remain open during business hours. The Motion was seconded by Yasmine Aminou, Central and the Motion carried.

## **SAFETY & SECURITY REPORT**

With regard to the Governor's Order on the Covid-19 safety protocols, Sgt. Amy Boyer, St. Paul Police Department, ACOP Unit, stated that the guidance from the Chief of Police is that they would use the

## **SAFETY & SECURITY REPORT** *(continued)*

Order the Governor issued as an educational piece. There is a statute that goes along with the Governor's Order that allows for people to be cited for a violation of that Order, which is a misdemeanor. What Sgt. Boyer recommends is, if you have issues with people within your building, she would encourage everyone to reach out to their manager giving the date and time of the violation(s). If the Order is repeatedly violated, the police department would then have the option to step in and determine whether or not it should be referred to the State Attorney's Office for resolution. Infractions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If you're unclear what the Governor's Order states, the Minnesota Department of Health has a Covid-19 hotline number which is **651-201-3920**. It's open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. You can also reach out to the ACOP phone number listed below, as well. If you need further information regarding ACOP, or have any questions regarding policing activities, contact Sgt. Boyer at **651-558-2305**, or email her at [Amy.Boyer@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Amy.Boyer@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

### **OLD BUSINESS**

No Old Business.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator spoke about the following:

1. Recruiting for the open position on the PC's Board. Youa asked if there were any Representatives who would like to nominate themselves for this position. Jason Bruce, Exchange, volunteered for it. Yasmine Aminou, Central, made a Motion that Jason Bruce, Exchange, become a PC Board member. John Cardoza, Cleveland, seconded and the Motion carried. Youa Thao then proceeded to swear Jason Bruce into the Board position.
2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) renewal. This morning Melissa Pappas, Seal, and Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator, signed the new MOU, effective November 23<sup>rd</sup> and it will be in effect for a period of one year. This MOU clearly states the responsibilities of the Presidents Council, resident councils and also the PHA. The MOU is the same as it was last year. It's also time for all sixteen hi-rise councils to renew their MOU's. Due to the pandemic this is how the renewals can take place:
  - If your resident council is meeting in person, along with the building manager, it can be signed at that time by the manager and one board officer.
  - If your resident council is meeting through Zoom, Youa will send a copy of the MOU to the manager to have them and one board officer sign it. The MOU will be sent back to Youa and she will give a copy to the council. If anybody else would like a copy, Youa will provide it.

A Motion was made by Angela Graves, Hamline, to accept the updated MOU. Yasmine Aminou, Central, seconded and the Motion carried.

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REPORT**

John Cardoza, Cleveland, Commissioner, gave a report on their on their last meeting. The contract for salt (magnesium chloride) was approved and the PHA was able to get it for thirteen percent less than last year.

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REPORT** *(continued)*

They also voted to recognize the PHA staff for all of the help they've given during the pandemic. In addition, there will be a special board meeting December 9<sup>th</sup>, so two reports will be given next month.

### **SECTION 3 UPDATE**

Beth Pacunas, Section 3 Projects Coordinator/Youth Literacy, addressed the direction they're headed in during the increase of Covid-19, where it pertains to employment. She said to expect some changes again in the backwards direction during this upsurge of the virus. She is there to assist residents in securing any education, training or possible employment. She stated they are having significant hiring in warehousing and drivers; i.e., Amazon, FedEx, UPS, etc. due to the Christmas season approaching.

If you or someone you know is trying to find a job, obtain job skills, education, employment counseling; or if they just need more information on Section 3, they can contact Beth Pacunas at: **651-228-3204**, or email her at [elizabeth.pacunas@stpha.org](mailto:elizabeth.pacunas@stpha.org). She also now has a PHA phone number which is **651-252-5799** if you need assistance in the areas mentioned above. She will do the best she can to provide it. Also, keep an eye out for flyers and posters in your hi-rises as well. She then answered any questions.

### **RESIDENT INITIATIVES REPORT**

Alicia Huckleby, Resident Initiatives Director, wanted to once again commend everyone for making the time and effort getting educated on how to do council meetings via Zoom. She also thanked everyone for their passing vote on the hourly recommendations from PHA staff, where the community rooms are concerned. She then asked if there were any questions.

### **HIP REPORT**

Betsy Christensen, *Health Improvement Programs* (HIP) coordinator, stated she's very excited about her full time position with the PHA and is eager to work with everyone. She said she will follow up with people in charge of delivering boxes of food, to see if they can restart deliveries. In terms of other food, there are nine PHA sites who have partnered with the Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM), who have been doing food drops each month. If there are any sites who feel that residents of your building need any food, please let Betsy know, or reach out to your HSC person or assistant manager and they can all work on that. She doesn't know what the TCMM's capacity is to expand, but she's willing to work with them. For the sites that do have the TCMM, she is hoping this month to re-launch the market bus at a few pilot sites and then be able to expand. However, due to the severity of Covid-19, TCMM had to halt their reopening, so that won't happen before the end of the year. For the four sites chosen to be pilot sites, you will be added back into the monthly rotation for December.

The PC has the Allina Health Charitable Fund which still has some money left in the Grant, which can be used for stress reduction as well as the *Bounce Back* program. Two ideas that have come up at past discussions related to *Bounce Back*, is promoting health through happiness, or trying to promote kindness, gratitude and resiliency, to make everyone can feel better. It will also make a positive impact on the community. One idea for the *Bounce Back* funds was to purchase thank you cards that could be made available at each hi-rise, which would allow a resident to write a note to somebody they would like to thank.

## **HIP REPORT** *(continued)*

The second idea was to use the rest of the left over funds to order some make-at-home art kits that could be distributed to residents in the building to help keep peoples' spirits up.

In closing, Betsy has been listening to the Governor and reading press conferences regarding Covid-19, and she wanted to remind everyone that all of us are the front line workers for those health care workers that are caring for the people who are sick. Also, be vigilant in wearing your masks, washing your hands frequently and maintaining social distancing. She then opened the floor for questions.

## **CLOSING**

Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator, wanted to remind the hi-rise resident councils, that haven't done so yet, that when the Secretary does the Minutes, it should be as detailed as possible, not just vague statements such as "the manager gave his/her report" – provide the details of that report and be as detailed as possible with the Minutes in general.

Throughout the sixteen resident council meetings, there are different meeting structures. Some are choosing to meet in person and others are employing hybrid meetings. The choice is up to individual councils. Some of the concerns that officers have brought to her this month, is that because of social distancing, sometimes it's hard to hear what is being said. She said she is willing to provide councils with Bluetooth speakers that can be paired with any device, so that everyone in the room can hear the proceedings. Reach out to Youa if that's something you would like to use and she'll work with you on that. John Cardoza, Cleveland, also offered to educate any council that is having difficulty using Zoom. Questions were then answered.

The next update was on QuickBooks. Youa wants everyone to be aware that she has informed the QuickBook peers that they have the option, starting in November, of doing audits every other month. The Treasurers should still continue to do their regular job, but they should have all of the Treasurer documents completed, so that if the QuickBook peer comes every other month, they will have everything ready for them. Also, have good communication with your QuickBook peer to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

No further Presidents Council business was discussed or conducted, and the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Submitted by:



Bob Knutson  
PC/RPC Secretary

## **MEETING REMINDERS:**

### **Next Presidents Council Zoom Meeting:**

Monday, December 28, 10:00 a.m. – Noon.

**Zoom Executive Committee Meeting:** Friday, December 18 @ 11:00 a.m.

**Zoom Computer Team Meeting:** Thursday, December 24 @ 1:30 p.m.