

Presidents Council Zoom Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Jason Bruce, Exchange, called the Presidents Council Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and took a roll call of his-rise Representatives present, along with PHA staff members.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Aado Perandi, PC/RPC Secretary, Wabasha, stated you can always find a copy of the Minutes posted 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. Richard Scaglione, Neill, made a Motion to accept last month's Minutes as they stand. James Mueller., Dunedin, seconded and the Motion carried.

GUEST SPEAKER

Missy Staples Thompson, Board Chair, PHA Board of Commissioners, thanks Leonard Thomas, who is a new commissioner representing residents. The Board of Commissioners is delighted to have him on board. Missy Staples reported the Jon Gutzman, Executive Director, PHA has been with the PHA for thirty-six years and will be retiring later this spring. The board has selected Gans, Gans & Associates, a consulting firm, to help put together a process for selecting a new Executive Director for PHA. Part of the selection process is to make sure that the voices of residents are taken into account.

Simone Gans Barefield, Chief Executive Officer, Gans, Gans & Associates (GGA) gave an overview of themselves and the process they will go through to help select a new Executive Director. They are a thirty-six year old executive recruitment firm that works with about ninety-eight public housing authorities across the country including the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The process includes, talking with folks to get a real good understanding of the agency to find out: what are its "good, bad and ugly", what is important to the agency moving forward and what is important to residents about the new executive director. She then opened the floor for input and questions.

Simone Barefield can be reached by email at simone@gansgans.com

Jonathan Hardy, Program Manager, Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) gave an overview of Navigating Conflict Restoratively. DRC is a non-profit established in 1982. The mission is dedicated to restoring communities by promoting the constructive resolution of conflict through open communication and shared decision-making.

Restorative conflict resolution is taking personal accountability to heal and move forward with everyone having a voice. One should listen to what others say, not how they say it. **Guidelines** that should be followed include: respect yourself, talking piece and others; speak with authenticity and from your heart; listen with your heart; speak with respect; listen with respect; stay in the space (physical and mental); and honor confidentiality.

Conflict is a clashing disagreement. **Personal disputes, work related conflicts** and **ideological clashes** are different types of conflicts.

The **front brain** plays a role in moderating and expressing emotions. It can regulate impulsive reactions and control behavior. The **back brain** processes emotional responses, including anger, which can trigger physiological reactions and rapid emotional responses such as: increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, decreased IQ, muscles tightening up, digestion issues such as stomach ulcers, voice getting louder, boosts in adrenaline, increased breathing, reproductive shutdown, and liver shutdown.

Jonathan described the various **personality communication styles** with the feelings one has when one's strength is overused as follows: **Controllers** tend to get angry; **Pleasers** tend to get anxious; **Comforters** tend to get weary; and those who feel **superior** tend to feel depressed. It is important to understand your communication style as well as others so that when you are in a place where you are facing a disagreement, you will have a better understanding as to why.

Trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. Examples and effects of trauma are as follows:

Examples: abuse, violence, accidents, natural disasters

Effects: anxiety, depression, flashbacks, hypervigilance

Underlying traumas are the emotional wounds from past distressing experiences that continue to affect thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the present. Types and examples of underlying traumas include the following:

Physical & Mental Health: chronic pain, disabilities, hunger, tiredness, mental diagnosis, injuries, stress and sleep deprivation

Personal Trauma: historical/generational trauma, homelife (children, spouse, extended family), taking care of a loved one, divorce, financial hardships, loss of a loved one, broken relationships

Trauma of Renting: appliances, water damage, pest issues, electrical issues, moving, rent increase, maintenance, furnace repairs, HVAC, smoke detectors, privacy, curfews, noise ordinance, family

Trauma of Hi-Rise Culture: management/staff turnover, leasing documents, parking, pets, children, access to maintenance/landlords, understanding tenant rights, COVID-19 rules, fees

Communication Tools help you to communicate your message better, by staying focused, listening actively, responding to criticism with empathy, taking responsibility, using "I" statements, finding alternatives and compromises, and pausing—take a break and discuss conflict later, once calm.

Restorative Tools help you move forward by showing that you are paying attention, showing that you are listening and by deferring judgment.

Remember that if you need help, reach out to Youa or to DRC. Also, make sure to use front brain thinking, recognize the traumas, understand personality styles, and realistically use communication/restorative tools. He then took questions.

Jonathan Hardy can be reached at jonathan@drc-mn.org

Beth Pacunas, introduced the following guest speaker, Rick Thomas, from Twin Cities Rise.

Rick Thomas, Empowerment Institute Trainer, Twin Cities Rise gave an overview of the training and workshops available at Twin Cities Rise. Twin Cities Rise is based in North Minneapolis. Personal Empowerment training gives program participants the skills to control their states of mind, regulate their emotions and manage inter-

personal relationships. These core competencies are useful for success on the job and in everyday life. Twin Cities Rise also has training available for a variety of professions including customer service, facilities maintenance specialist and diesel technician. Employment services are also available. He then took questions.

Rick Thomas can be reached by email at rthomas@twincitiesrise.org

TREASURER'S REPORT

Melissa Pappas, PC/RPC Treasurer, Seal, gave a rundown of income and expenses for December.

For December the cleared balance is one hundred thirty thousand, seven hundred fifty-nine dollars and fifty-four cents (\$130,759.54). The ending balance is one hundred thirty thousand, five hundred seventy-four dollars and fifty-four cents (\$130,574.54). The report will be filed for audit. Melissa then took questions.

PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT

Brent Feller, Construction Program Manager / Maintenance Contracts gave an update. Maintenance staff is busy budgeting, planning, and getting out contract and bid documents.

Valley hi-rise Resident Services office expansion work will take about two more weeks of work to finish; Front hi-rise corridors are being painted, they are currently on the eleventh floor, started on the top floor and working going down; Front elevator work is going on this week; Valley electrical project should be wrapping up next week, there should not be any other electrical shutdowns needed; Seal corridor painting will start on the top floor and work going down and planning on starting today; Seal emergency generator project is waiting on materials before work can begin; Edgerton elevator modernization work is looking at a mid-March start date; Montreal elevator is having issues, parts have been ordered, expected to be repaired in about a week; boiler issues at Ravoux, no heat overnight, should be taken care of; Central boiler issues, intermittent heat issues, should be under control, working on diagnosing and fixing the problem; Iowa pipe break in one of the twelfth floor units; Hamline and Wilson heat issues from last month have been fixed.

Brent.Feller@stpha.org

PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT *(continued)*

Mike Silvan, Assistant Maintenance Director had a few things to say during these winter months.

1. Please call in a work order for any AC covers that have not yet been properly installed.
2. For normal maintenance requests, between 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, please call in a work order at 651-298-4413.
3. The electrical should be installed in about a week at Edgerton and Montreal for the lobby TVs.
4. Please do not let unauthorized non-residents into the building or follow you into the building.

Maintenance then took questions from the hi-rise representatives.

Michael.Silvan@stpha.org

PHA MANAGEMENT REPORT

Mela Krick, Resident Services Senior Manager, reported that PHA maintenance and PHA IT will be installing a couple of the communications boards at two of the hi-rises soon. Be on the lookout for posted notifications. This coming fiscal year, Mela and Charise Brown, Senior Manager will be conducting health and safety inspections. This will be in addition to the normal housekeeping inspection. This coming February, PHA staff will be attending training regarding new Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. This would be the Housing Opportunities through Modernization Act (HOTMA) training.

Mela Krick then took questions.

Mela.Krick@stpha.org or 651-292-6183

SAFETY & SECURITY REPORT

Sgt. Darryl Boerger, St. Paul Police Department, ACOP Unit reported that non-emergency issues should be reported by calling ACOP or the non-emergency number as shown below. For emergencies it is best to call 911. If there are any concerns or issues with your Officer in Residence (OIR) please contact Sgt. Boerger as shown below. Exchange hi-rise will be having a new OIR moving in soon. Central will be getting a new OIR, but the previous OIR has caused delays in his move out. There is a potential OIR moving into Neill, pending approvals. Mela and Sgt. Boerger are working on the homeless issues at Valley hi-rise. There will be some additional overtime work put in for patrolling.

The cellphone number for the Community Liaison Officers is 651-755-3525 that is answered M-F from 6:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. After hours, the ACOP number is 651-558-2305.

As always, do not let unauthorized non-residents into the buildings. If appropriate call the non-emergency number at 651-291-1111 or the emergency number at 911. He then took questions.

darryl.boerger@ci.stpaul.mn.us or 651-331-0510

OLD BUSINESS

1. Residents Council Guide Update. The PC went over the recommended updates to the Residents Council Guide at our November meeting. The changes have been posted for over 30 days. The council is coming back to approve of the changes.

Yasmine Aminou, Central made a motion to approve of the recommended changes to the Residents Council Guide. James Mueller, Dunedin, seconded and the Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Newsletter. The PC is now recruiting for a Newsletter team. All are encouraged to join the Newsletter team to help draft and put together the winter Newsletter. Please send us your Christmas photos to include in our winter edition. All photos that have residents or people in them will need release forms. Our recruitment will close on February 5, 2024. If you want to join, please send an email to Youa. If you want to send the Newsletter team stories, poems, or picture, please email them to: insider@stphapresidentscouncil.org
2. Vending Fair. The vending fair will be held on February 14, 2024 at 2:00 pm over Zoom. The PC will invite vendors to come and present at this fair. If residents or officers have questions about the vending

contract or vendor selection process, they should attend this fair. A flier will be sent out to the hi-rises soon. Anyone that wishes to join should use this Zoom information to connect:
Meeting ID: 897 4506 9316 Passcode: 685742

3. Officer Recognition. The PC is recruiting for an Officer Recognition committee. The recruitment will close on February 5, 2024. If you want to join, please send an email to Youa.
4. Mileage Rate Update. The new mileage rate will be 67 cents per mile. This will be effective January of 2024. All Treasurers should keep a copy of this new mileage rate in their Treasurer binder.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REPORT

Leonard Thomas, Seal, Commissioner reported that during the Mission Moment, the Rental Office shared a success story of a 40-year-old tenant who filed for public housing after recovering from a stroke. After an eligibility interview in September, he became a PHA resident. The Human Services Coordinator highlighted the resident's effective independent living, which was supported by the team. The resident's sister conveyed his pleasure at being closer to his children in St. Paul. Natalie Mikkelson underlined that such stories serve as compelling reminders of the significance of staff efforts.

The board approves deferring the implementation dates of all HOTMA (*the Housing Opportunities through Modernization Act of 2016*), related policy changes in all PHA programs until January 1, 2025.

The Board also approved awarding a contract to Manor Electric for the replacement of the emergency generator at Seal Hi-Rise. The contract, valued at \$195,500, was the lowest responsible bid as per the December 5, 2023, tabulation of bids. The replacement is necessary due to the original generator's age (1976) and increasing repair difficulties due to parts unavailability. The project involves replacing the diesel generator with a new natural gas generator, modifying electrical systems, installing a new transfer switch, and disposing of the existing generator in compliance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulations. Funding for the project comes from Ramsey County 2022 Inclusive Housing Solicitation.

RESIDENT INITIATIVES REPORT

Alicia Huckleby, Resident Initiatives Director & Human Services Director was not available so that there was no report.

Alicia.Huckleby@stpha.org

SECTION 3 UPDATE

Beth Pacunas, Section 3 Projects Coordinator/Youth Literacy, updated us on education and training, etc. Beth works with the Resident Initiatives (RI) department and Section 3 unemployment is part of that. Beth is now also the Resident Initiatives Program Coordinator. Beth has moved into a broader position, but she is still working to provide resources and training at the PHA for employment, job skills training, education, micro-grants, and scholarships, anything that will move residents forward toward employment or careers.

Beth highly encourages us to look into the training provided by Twin Cities Rise, not only for the employment side of it, but also the communications side of it. Twin Cities Rise can also supply workshops to the resident councils or to the resident council and residents. There are \$200 dollar scholarships available for people needing certification after completing a course.

If we have any questions regarding employment, education or training please contact Beth, as shown below. Beth then took questions.

Elizabeth.Pacunas@stpha.org or 651-298-4929

HIP REPORT

Betsy Christensen, *Health Improvement Programs* (HIP) Coordinator, had a few updates. Betsy reported that she coordinates various health and wellness initiatives.

Upcoming winter programming:

- Friends & Co - in the coming months Friends & Co will start to deliver postcards and fliers to the hi-rises to promote their programs to the community
- Wilder Foundation will be offering free wellness classes. They have the capacity to offer the following classes: Tai Chi, Walk with Ease, Living Well with Chronic Pain, and Living Well with Chronic Conditions. If there is a group of people (like 5 - 8 people) at your hi-rise interested in one of these classes, please let Betsy know.
- PHA will be partnering with University of Minnesota Extension and Ramsey County Master Gardeners again this year for classes at the hi-rises. The first class will be beginning next week.
- Allina Health will be offering Stroke awareness presentations and they are available for resident council meetings.

If there are any questions about any of the above programming, please contact Betsy. She then took questions.

Betsy can be reached by email at betsy.christensen@stpha.org or by phone at 651-298-4030.

CLOSING

Youa Thao, Resident Council Coordinator reminded us that when we receive the first part of our PHA/RPC funds, we should not hold on to it, but deposit it as soon as possible.

No further Presidents Council business was discussed or conducted, and the meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Youa.thao@stpha.org or 651-228-3205

Submitted by:

Aado Perandi
PC/RPC Secretary

MEETING REMINDERS:

(Meeting through Zoom)

Next Presidents Council Meeting:

Monday, February 26, 10:00 a.m. – Noon.

Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, February 15 @ 11:00 a.m.

Computer Team Meeting: Thursday, February 22 @ 1:00 p.m.