

# Presidents Council Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2019

## CALL TO ORDER

*Melanie Fox*, Montreal, called the Presidents Council Meeting to order on at 10:00 a.m. Introductions followed.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

*Bob Knutson*, PC/RPC Secretary, Ravoux, stated all Reps had a copy of the May Minutes in their information packets. He also said the Presidents Council Minutes are available on the P.C. website. If anyone finds a discrepancy or error in the Minutes, bring them up during the Secretary's Report at the next meeting. A Motion was made by Yasmine Aminou, Central, to accept the Minutes as they stand. It was seconded by Amy Seaman Montreal, and the Motion carried.

## GUEST SPEAKERS

*Jon Gutzmann*, PHA Executive Director, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year. He said it's his great honor and privilege to work with everyone who is assembled here to fulfill our mission. He also specifically welcomed the new members of the Presidents Council. He's been in this work a long time and has visited many housing authorities across the country, but said that ours is unique. What you do here does not happen at every housing authority. We have resident governance, resident leadership, and sometimes all you get is maybe a pat on the back or a thank you from your colleagues and residents. It's not easy being in a leadership position, but you do it because you care about your community, your building, public housing and your residents. We house 22,000 people in the city of St. Paul; equal to a small town, and the one thing we have in common is we care. We want our residents to succeed. He offered his gratitude for having this opportunity to have this job and to work with all of you. And when you think about the words *gratitude* and *grateful*, this is powerful. He concluded by quoting a St. Paul author named Melody Beattie, who said "*Gratitude makes sense of your past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.*" He then thanked everyone again for all they do.

*Pearl Evans*, MN Voice & We Vote Minnesota Fellows. We Vote Minnesota is a coalition of organizations working toward permanent social, racial and economic justice by increasing civic engagement of voter participation across the state. They are especially focused on under-represented communities so that every Minnesotan's voice is heard and the state reflects the values of its citizens. The work that they do – civic access, training and skill – is to ensure that people form new American majority communities, have the means to address their concerns with public policy. Their primary focus is professional development so that communities can fully engage in our democracy. This year they are focusing their efforts on the St. Paul municipal elections, along with the Census. Since May, the Fellows have hosted several community forums on the East Side of St. Paul and the Rondo Library, and Open Access at Neighborhood House. These forums allow regular people to have a voice. She suggested resident councils have an event that focuses on the Census. If any council would like to host a Census Community Forum, please contact Pearl Evans at **612-404-4964**, or email her at [wpevans4037@yahoo.com](mailto:wpevans4037@yahoo.com) to make arrangements for that.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

*Melissa Pappas*, PC/RPC Treasurer, Seal, gave a rundown of income and expenses for the months of June, July and August 2019. The checkbook register balance for June was eighty-seven thousand, seven hundred eighty dollars and sixty-two cents (\$87,780.62). The ending balance was eighty-four thousand, nine hundred seventy-seven dollars and seventy-four cents (\$84,977.74). The report will be filed for audit.

The checkbook register balance for July was eighty-six thousand, seven hundred seventy two dollars and twenty-nine cents (\$86,772.29). The ending balance was eighty-three thousand, five hundred forty dollars and sixteen cents (\$83,540.16). The report will be filed for audit.

The checkbook register balance for August was eighty-nine thousand, ninety-nine dollars and fifty cents (\$89,099.50). The ending balance was eighty-six thousand, eight hundred ninety-two dollars and thirty-seven cents (\$86,892.37). The report will be filed for audit.

The Treasurer then read -- line for line -- the drafted Presidents Council proposed Stipends and Budget for fiscal year 2019-2020. Discussion was had and any changes were made along the way. John Cardoza, Cleveland, brought up an increased amount under the Budget line item *Volunteer Appreciation Reimbursement*. John Cardoza, Cleveland, also made a Motion that the amount for that line item be increased. The Motion was seconded by Donna Walters, Seal, and the Motion carried. Bill Hughes, Iowa, made a Motion to accept the increase for that line item, which was seconded by Yasmine Aminou, Central, and the Motion carried.

After each line item was read and/or corrected, Bill Hughes, Iowa, made a Motion that the proposed Stipends and Budget be approved as it stands. It was seconded by Violet Brant, Wilson, and the Motion carried.

## **PHA MAINTENANCE REPORT**

*Brent Feller*, Construction Program Manager & Maintenance Contracts, gave a rundown of what was going on. They are currently working on the RAD conversion which will mean they will have some different ways of doing things behind the scenes, but will still be doing building improvements as usual. He gave a rundown of what they have going on now, during the winter and into next year:

1. Domestic water and pressure pump replacement at Hamline and Seal hi-rises, along with hot water and storage tank replacement.
2. Domestic water and pressure pump and storage replacement at Wilson Hi-Rise.
3. Trash compactor replacement at Iowa and Edgerton Hi-Rises.
4. Finished up the electrical replacement at Wilson Hi-Rise.
5. Work at Mt. Airy Hi-Rise, which includes Community Room air handler replacement finishing up. The trash compactor will also be replaced.
6. A new roof was put on at the Valley Hi-Rise maintenance garage. They will also be doing some corridor painting and minor floor replacement as well.
7. Moving into next year, they will be doing a roof replacement project at Exchange Hi-Rise as well as a new trash compactor.
8. Replacing the roof at Central Hi-Rise, along with a domestic water pressure pump replacement.
9. Neil Hi-Rise will receive some fire alarm system improvements.
10. Trash compactor replacement project at Ravoux Hi-Rise.
11. Domestic water and pressure pump replacement at Cleveland Hi-Rise.

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

12. Dunedin will receive a hot water storage tank replacement.
13. They are finishing up the Montreal Hi-Rise plumbing renovation project. In addition trash compactor replacement will take place at Montreal, Cleveland and Dunedin Hi-Rises.
14. Elevator modernization work at Central, Neil, Dunedin and Exchange Hi-Rises.

He also stated that Maintenance will be attending resident council meetings in October and November to explain a little more in-depth what is happening with regards to the above, as well as an update on the RAD conversion and how that affects Maintenance Contracts' Capital Projects, etc. If any residents have concerns or questions about the projects, bring them up at that meeting.

Mike Silvan, Assistant Maintenance Director, went over a few larger scale projects that are going on. As Brent Feller alluded to, they do have the four hi-rises that are getting elevators replaced. That will begin in late November. It will take some time to accomplish this. The Front Hi-Rise elevator is already in the process of being replaced and should be up and running within the next month or so They're also putting in some LED lighting outside, replacing the old lights. There will be five buildings that will be getting the whirlpool bath tubs. Edgerton, Exchange, Front, Wabasha and Central Hi-Rises will have the tubs installed by the end of January. The heat is also on in all buildings now.

## **PHA MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Charisse Brown, Assistant Resident Services Senior Manager, reiterated that the plumbing renovation has been completed at Montreal Hi-Rise, and the next building slated for plumbing renovation will be Front Hi-Rise They are looking for thirty-six current residents there to relocate to another hi-rise so they can have units available to use as hotel rooms during this renovation. The renovation will begin in 2020.

She said they are looking at some possible staff changes in the near future to help with customer service, to make sure residents' needs are being addressed at their hi-rises.

She spoke about the RAD lease signings and stated they will be doing them as a town hall meeting in your Community Room and do the signings by floors. Flyers will go to each apartment advising when they should come down to get that done. Interpreters will be available and the process will take about three hours. She opened the floor for questions.

She again emphasized the need for residents to get rental insurance. The PHA is not responsible for damage that is caused by the resident and will not reimburse for those personal items damaged or destroyed. Home insurance is very inexpensive and your Human Services Coordinator can refer you to places that provide it.

## **SAFETY & SECURITY REPORT**

Sgt. Amy Boyer, St. Paul Police Department, ACOP unit, is replacing Sgt. Grundhauser. She will be giving the Safety & Security Report at P.C. meetings going forward. She passed out her business card and gave us some information on her background and what she will be doing.

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

She will be attempting to meet as many people as possible and also attend council meetings to be introduced to residents. She's very happy to be here, and stated if you're having an event at your hi-rise and your Officer-In-Residence (OIR) is unable to attend, please let her know and either she will attend or have someone on her team attend. She also advised that winter will be here soon and all residents should be vigilant about non-residents coming into their buildings for shelter. Do not confront the person, but instead dial 911 and let the police handle it. She also warned residents against mail and phone scams they may receive. At no time will any agency ask for your Social Security number or any other personal information over the phone. If this occurs, just hang up! If you need to get in contact with Sgt. Boyer, her phone number is **651-558-2305**, or you can email her at [Amy.Boyer@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Amy.Boyer@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

## **NEW BUSINESS**

*Julia Hupperts*, Resident Council Coordinator, stated that before she started talking about Executive Board elections, she wanted to remind everyone that there is an OIR in each of your hi-rises and OIR's do attend resident council meetings. Make it a plan to connect with your OIR before your council meeting to confirm that they'll be there. If they're unable to attend that month's meeting, contact Sgt. Boyer at the number or email above to ensure the police department is represented at your council meeting to give a security report. You can also ask your manager to contact the OIR to make sure he/she will be there.

Just a reminder: After you've all signed your leases, there will be a *new Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) that will be signed between your resident council and the PHA. The MOU is currently being put together and is being looked at by lawyers to make sure everything is benefitting the resident councils and the PHA.

**Executive Board Elections.** Julia Hupperts explained what would be expected of anyone who wishes to become a member of the Executive Board of the Presidents Council. She also laid out the duties that the job would involve. She has received three qualified applications. The people who applied were Ron Sexton, Exchange, Donna Walters, Seal and Yasmine Aminou, Central. Five people are needed on the Board so Julia asked for volunteers from the Presidents Council. Amy Seamen, Montreal stepped up as did Bill Hughes, Iowa, to complete a five-member Board. Julia Hupperts asked if there was anyone else who desired becoming an Executive Board member and as there wasn't, the five members who agreed to be on the Board were elected by acclamation and were sworn in.

Any Executive Board member may also fill the jobs of Secretary or Treasurer if they so desire. If they don't want to take on either job, then two people will be appointed. Ron Sexton, Exchange, made a Motion that Melissa Pappas be temporarily appointed as Treasurer, and Bob Knutson be temporarily appointed as Secretary, until next month. Patricia Pack, Valley, seconded and the Motion carried.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

## **RESIDENT INITIATIVES REPORT**

*Alicia Huckleby*, Resident Initiatives Director, congratulated all of the new P.C. members and our new P.C. Board.

## **RESIDENT INITIATIVES REPORT** (continued)

She described what Resident Initiatives was all about for those new to the Presidents Council and new to the Board. Resident Initiatives was started back in 2013 to be responsible for maintaining the agency's relationships with all outside community organizations that come on-site to provide services or resources to residents; i.e., Metro State, the Wilder Twin Cities Mobile Market, etc., or to schedule someone from one of these agencies to come to your council meetings to give information or to add referrals for various things. They do all of this in partnership with the P.C., as well as with your counterparts at the family sites city wide. They want to make sure that they're listening to you in terms of what you're interested in, what you need, what you're hearing, and what you're hearing from your fellow residents and what they need. The P.C. is then updated monthly from the different partnerships they're involved with.

Alicia wanted to make everyone aware of two new updates, the first being our new PHA Green Initiatives Technician, Natalie Mikkelson, who will be involved with recycling, gardening coordination, water conservation, etc. The other thing she wants you to be aware of, which just happened last week, is the PHA received a phone call from Episcopal Homes, in partnership with the YMCA on University Avenue. They wanted to know if the PHA would be willing to write a letter of support for a grant application that the YMCA was going to make to induce the Minnesota Department of Transportation to help fund a circulating bus, which would run along parts of University Avenue. It would be stopping primarily at all of the Episcopal Home sites, but also Common Bond, Skyline Tower and Hamline Hi-Rise. If the grant is approved it would provide Hamline residents access to stores along University Avenue. At this time, chances are looking good that they will get that funding.

In closing, she talked about *service in mentorship*. Last year we talked together about the fact that once you assume leadership positions with the P.C. and your hi-rises, you are saying to your fellow residents and your neighbors that you are willing to take on this additional service position for them; and take on the additional responsibility to become a leader and a mentor for their building. It requires working effectively together and sharing responsibilities, all the while setting aside your own individual issues in that process. Look for opportunities to work more collaboratively with each other.

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REPORT**

*John Cardoza*, Commissioner, Cleveland, gave an update for June, July and August of what the Board of Commissioners have been discussing at their meetings. More detailed information on these meetings can be found on the P.C. website.

## **GREEN INITIATIVES REPORT**

Natalie Mikkelson, PHA Green Initiatives Technician, stated that a couple of the programs she will be helping out with in the hi-rises are gardening and recycling. She and Ann Tranvik, Public Health Department nurse, have been working together to put together a *Garden Resources Booklet* for your gardeners. This booklet contains resources that residents may call; i.e. Ramsey County Master Gardeners, public garden plots for rent, etc. For next year's planting season, they also have organizations who are willing to help out with those projects. She passed out the booklet entitled *Saint Paul PHA Garden Resources*, along with a booklet entitled *Hi-Rise Recycling Program*. If you have any questions or need further information on gardening and recycling, contact Natalie Mikkelson at **651-298-5222**, or email her at [Natalie.Mikkelson@stpha.org](mailto:Natalie.Mikkelson@stpha.org).

## **SHIP GRANT UPDATE**

Betsy Christensen, SHIP Coordinator. Betsy Christensen stated the SHIP acronym stands for **Statewide Health Improvement Partnership**. It's a partnership the PHA has with Ramsey County Public Health, to improve the health of our communities. This work takes place across the state of Minnesota, based on what the community's needs are. She handed out a flyer called PHA Wellness Highlights 2018-2019 from last year. It's a good snapshot of the work they are doing that focuses around food and nutrition, opportunities to get out and be active, tobacco reduction to help people quit smoking, etc. She stated that November 1<sup>st</sup> will mark the fifth year of their five-year grant. She also handed out a flyer containing P.C. updates. Coming up on October 10<sup>th</sup>, Wabasha and Exchange Hi-Rises will be going to Crosby Farm Park. And coming up this weekend, Iowa Wilson and Dunedin will be going to Hidden Falls Park for National Public Lands Day. She also stated they are working with CUB pharmacies to come out to selected hi-rises to administer flu shots.

Ann Tranvik, Ramsey County Public Health nurse, stated they've been working with the SHIP Grant and public housing since 2012 and it's been an incredible opportunity. Today she is specifically focusing on tobacco cessation. A year ago on July 30<sup>th</sup>, the PHA went smoke-free nationwide and the programs to help people quit smoking have gone very well. They will continue to offer support when they are asked, and one of the things done last year was to provide *Cessation Stations* at the hi-rises. Central, Dunedin, Edgerton, Neill, Valley, Wabasha and Wilson have not had a *Cessation Station* visit their hi-rise. She passed out a sign-up form for those hi-rises who have not had this, so they can sign up for one that will take place in the next couple of months.

For those who are smoking, but trying to cut back, there is a *Mini-Quit Mondays*, which offers Mini-Quit challenges; the next one being on October 14<sup>th</sup> called Walk It Off, which asks smokers to replace at least one cigarette break with a walk or healthy activity. You can sign-up for Mini-Quit Mondays online.

## **SECTION 3 UPDATE**

Beth Pacunas, Section 3 Projects Coordinator/Youth Literacy: Her job as Section 3 Coordinator is to organize partnerships and find people jobs, field training, and education that will lead to employment; anything that will help people get skills for work. She stated they have recently partnered with the Science Museum of Minnesota and they had 114 people pass through their Science Fair. There will be another Science Fair hosted at Wilson Hi-Rise on Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. It will run from 1-3 p.m. and flyers will be posted. Everyone is welcome. Any questions regarding the Science Museum Vouchers will be answered after the meeting.

Tonight they will be starting their fourth *Small Business Development Programming* through African Economic Development Solutions and so far they have ten residents who have enrolled. This is designed to help people get an idea of how to start their own small business, both with the development of the program, and to look at the financial aspects and things like that. She has a poster that will be given to hi-rise managers to hang up which contains information that will give people the opportunity to brush up on their workplace skills. The program will be held for six weeks at McDonough Housing. Possible transportation can be provided.

They also offer scholarships up to \$200.00 for people who have either gone through the Small Business Program or have taken a course in the recertification exam, or business licenses. Those posters will go out within the next month or two.

## **SECTION 3 UPDATE** (continued)

They also have a partnership with an organization called *Micro Grants*, which helps with auto repair, trying to get into the work force, scholarships, etc. This is an application process but they've had three residents go through the grant process successfully. Watch for flyers going up in the next few months regarding *Micro Grants* partnering with an organization called *Diversion Solutions*, which can help you work out how you can pay outstanding driving fees; i.e., parking tickets, etc. that have prohibited you from getting your license, to help you work out a plan to help pay those fees and continue to drive at the same time. If you pay and get through the program successfully, *Micro Grants* will pay the last 25% of the fee for this. It's another way to help people get to work, training or to school. If you or someone you know is trying to find a job, obtain job skills or education, call Beth Pacunas. She can be reached at: **651-228-3204**.

## **CLOSING**

*Julia Hupperts*, Resident Council Coordinator, called everyone's attention to a flyer in their packets regarding the Community Sharing Circle. This is a group of residents who meet on a monthly basis. They meet at the various hi-rises and share activities that are going on at their hi-rise and possible activities in the neighborhood that residents can also attend. She encourages people to attend these meetings. The meetings rotate between hi-rises. She also mentioned that all of the financial documents, minutes and bank statements from every hi-rise have been submitted for the past year. She mentioned a debit card at one hi-rise that was scammed with an unauthorized payment that was not initiated through the resident council. Be vigilant regarding payments made with council debit cards. She then thanked everyone for attending the first meeting of the year.

No further Presidents Council business was discussed or conducted, and the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Submitted by:



Bob Knutson, PC/RPC Secretary  
peetiebird2@gmail.com

## **Meeting Reminders:**

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

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

**Executive Committee:** October 18 @ 11:00 a.m. - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

**Community Sharing:** October 4 @ 10:00 a.m. at Montreal Hi-Rise.

**Computer Team:** October 17 @ 1:30 p.m. - Board Room. Guest: Aaron Smothers