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March 30, 2022
23-01

Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

The Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners had a meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 5:30 PM in the Council Chambers.

Agenda #1: Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

Member Present: JR Belanger, Phil McDonough, Mary Kate Barbosa, Gail Michaud, Heather Bartlett,

Absent Members: Dan Bagley and Mark Goughan.

Department Manager and Staff present were Lisa Plourde, Housing Director; Sue Ouellette, FSS/Homeownership Coordinator; Penny Thompson, City Manager; and Michael Hulsey, Fee Accountant (via Zoom)

Agenda #2: Election of Board Chairperson and Co-Chairperson for 2023

M, Barbosa made a motion to elect J. Belanger as Chairperson. Seconded by P. McDonough. Vote unanimous.

G. Michaud made a motion to elect P. McDonough as Co-Chair. Seconded by M. Barbosa. Vote unanimous.

Agenda #3: Special Presentation

a. 2023 Year End Financials, Michael Hulsey, Fee Accountant

Michael Hulsey presented Caribou Housing Authority's 2022-year end financials.

- Balance Sheet - Overall, CHA's current ratio is 2.5 ratio of assets vs liability. If CHA had public Housing, HUD would be considered a very high performer.
- Income Statement – CHA added \$52,303 to total revenue, ending the year with a balance of \$172,552 in administration funding.
- M. Hulsey stated that CHA has money to add a staff person and recommends it.

- In summary, CHA has a “very good year, very healthy and very well run” per M. Hulsey

M. Hulsey mentioned that CHA is looking at changing software from Housing Pro to PHA-Web which is more efficient overall.

J. Belanger inquired about change in software.

L. Plourde gave a brief recap of the cons of current software, Housing Pro and QuickBooks. The majority of PHAs in Maine have already swapped or are currently looking at swapping to PHA-Web. Cost of Housing Pro/QuickBooks is approximately \$16,000 per year for 2 licenses, whereas PHA-Web would be about \$1,500 per year for 3 licenses.

S. Ouellette spoke about how PHA-Web is not set up to allocate monthly interest for her FSS participants, nor has a tracking system. Per Bangor PHA, they allocate interest yearly, not monthly; and is not overall crazy about the software but is making it work. She also mentioned that she doesn't know if PHA-Web has all of the letters and reports that she is currently using.

L. Plourde mentioned that most of the the other software companies are owned by MRI that uses QuickBooks, which will not work in the future. Software has not been renewed yet for 2023; so now is the time to look at it. Spoke about the issues of logging into Amazon Workspaces, having to reboot software/desktops and QuickBooks doesn't calculate everything that is required by HUD. Currently, L Plourde has an email out to PHA-Web asking questions that S. Ouellette has, and the possibility of getting access to the software to “play” with it.

P. McDonough inquired about keeping Housing Pro for the FSS piece and changing to PHA-Web for everything else.

J. Belanger inquired about lease ups at 86% at year end, is this due to staffing or the lack of housing. By adding a staff person, would it help to increase the lease up rate.

L. Plourde mentioned that it's a combination of both. Applicants pulled off the waiting list, not all respond; and also lack of housing. She cannot guarantee that by adding a staff person would increase the leasing up, but help can be used in landlord recruiting, assisting families in finding units.

G. Michaud stated that she believes that adding another staff person, at least a part-time person, would be beneficial. There have been times when G. Michaud has come in with Sue has been helping families find a unit, when Lisa is assisting other people or out on the road for inspections. Overall, the part-time person could assist Lisa with the simpler stuff; also bringing in the person to start training with the possibility of moving up in a year or two.

P. McDonough motioned to accept the 2022 year and financial as presented. Seconded by M. Barbosa.

Vote unanimously.

b. Update of Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Sue Ouellette

Sue Ouellette, FSS Coordinator gave an overview of what the Family Self-Sufficiency Program is. Explaining how the goals and escrow account work. She also gave statistics on the total number participants and number of graduates since the beginning of the program in 1993.

Agenda #4: Public Comment

None.

Agenda #5: Approval of Minutes

M. Barbosa motioned to accept the October 21, 2022; minutes as presented. Seconded by G. Michaud.

Vote unanimously.

Agenda #6: Public Hearing and Possible Action Items

None

Agenda #7: Reports by Staff

a. Directors Report

L. Plourde gave the Director's report of things happening in the voucher programs.

a. FY 2023 Budget for Housing & FSS

L. Plourde reviewed the proposed FY 2023 budget for Housing & FSS. The budget has already been submitted to the City Manager and presented to the City Council.

Agenda #8: New Business

a. Discussion and Possible Regarding 2023 Board Members Calendar

Discussion between J. Belanger and P. McDonough, all members were notified back in February and again within the last week; therefore, any member absent from the meeting will be considered absent. There is no "excused" or "unexcused."

J. Belanger, the only exception is in an emergency.

M. Barbosa requested that a calendar invitation be sent out to all members of the scheduled meetings.

Members agreed to leave December as "to be determined". M. Barbosa mentioned, seconded.

by P. McDonough. Vote unanimously.

b. Amend Housing Authority Bylaws (Due October 2023)

L. Plourde is currently looking for municipal housing authority bylaws to compare to.

If the Board meets in June to review the bylaws, a public hearing can be held in September; with plenty of time to submit to the Council for October.

Agenda #9: Old Business

None

Agenda #10: Discussion of Commissioners

None

Agenda #11: Next Meeting

June 15, 2023

Agenda #13: Adjournment

K. Barbosa motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by P. McDonough.
Vote unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Lisa Plourde,
Secretary / Housing Director