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## **Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Meeting and Agenda**

Notice is hereby given that the Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will hold a Board Meeting on **Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 5:30 PM**, in the Council Chambers located at 25 High Street, Caribou Maine.

- 1. Election of Board Chairperson and Co-Chairperson for 2024**
- 2. Call Meeting to Order and Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
  - a. September 21, 2023
- 4. Reports by Staff**
  - a. FY 2023 Year End Report
  - b. Director's Report
- 5. Unfinished Business**
  - a. By-Laws (tabled)
- 6. New Business**
  - a. Adopt HOTMA Policy Supplement
  - b. Schedule Public Hearing for 2024 Administration Plan
  - c. Schedule Public Hearing for Action Plan
- 7. Public Comment/Discussion**
- 8. Next Meeting**
- 9. Adjournment**



March 19, 2024

23-02

### **Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners**

The Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners had a meeting on Thursday, September 21, 2023, at 5:30 PM in the Council Chambers.

#### **Agenda #1: Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting started at 5:30 PM.

Members present were JR Belanger, Phil McDonough, Mary Kate Barbosa, Gail Michaud, and Dan Bagley.

Heather Bartlett and Mark Goughan were absent and excused.

The Department Manager and Staff present were Lisa Plourde, Housing Director, and Penny Thompson, City Manager.

#### **Agenda #2: Special Presentation**

Nothing

#### **Agenda #3: Public Comment**

Nothing

#### **Agenda #4: Approval of Minutes**

M. Barbosa motioned to accept June 15, 2023, and August 3, 2023; minutes as presented.

P. McDonough made a motion to correct to June 15, 2023, minutes, replacing Jay Kam's name with Phil McDonough. Vote unanimously to accept minutes as amended.

#### **Agenda #5: Public Hearing and Possible Action Items**

Nothing

#### **Agenda #6: Reports by Staff**

L. Plourde went over the Housing Director's Summer Report.

## **Agenda #7: New Business**

### **a. Review/Revise, Accept 2024 Proposed Budget**

L. Plourde went over the Department 24 (Housing) proposed budget. The largest proposed increase in this department is in the salary line for the part-time position. Starting pay for a part-time position, per the City of Caribou is between \$17 to \$19 per hour.

L. Plourde went over Department 96, the FSS Grant, proposed budget.

M. Barbosa motioned to accept the proposed 2024 budget as presented. Seconded by P. McDonough. Vote unanimous.

## **Agenda #8: Old Business**

By-laws tabled until further notice:

L Plourde stated that per the Maine State Statue, Board members are to follow the term limits for board members; and will be needed to update in the By-Laws.

## **Agenda #9: Discussion of Commissioners**

D. Bagley spoke about the land-bank initiative, with a set percentage of housing units dedicated to the housing program.

## **Agenda #10: Next Meeting**

Thursday, December 7, 2023

## **Agenda #11: Adjournment**

P. McDonough made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by M. Barbosa.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Lisa Plourde, Secretary  
Housing Director

# HIGHLIGHTS OF HOTMA

The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA) delivers important benefits to tenants/ participants and reduces administrative burdens for public housing authorities (PHAs).

## KEY CHANGES:

### 1. Definitions –

#### a. Amendments to Current Definitions

- i. Annual Income

#### b. New Definitions

- i. Non-recurring
- ii. Day Laborer
- iii. Seasonal Worker
- iv. Independent Contractor

### 2. Household Income

#### a. Codifies additional income.

##### i. Excludes

- 1) Amounts received from Medicaid or other state/local programs meant to keep a family member with a disability living at home.
- 2) Amounts received from Veteran's aid and attendant care.
- 3) In-kind donations of food only

#### b. Calculating Income at Annual Reexamination -

- i. Use income from the preceding 12-month period, instead of the current and/or upcoming 12 months.
  - 1) Taking into consideration any interims since the last annual.

#### c. Fewer Interim Reexaminations – creates a 10% adjusted income increase/decrease threshold for conducting interim reexaminations.

- i. Family Benefit - increases in earned income are not processed until the next annual reexamination, allowing families to keep more of their earnings before receiving a rent increase.
- ii. PHA Benefit – should lead to fewer interim reexaminations & doesn't have to be conducted within the last three months of the certification period

#### **d. Streamlined Verifications**

- i. **HUD 9886-A, Privacy Act/Authorization Act** – Adults only need to sign the form once instead of annually.
  - 1) If the family denies signing the form, the PHA will terminate assistance.
- ii. **Use of Income Determination From Other Sources** – PHAs may use income determination made under other federal benefit programs for reexamination.
- iii. **Review of Enterprise Income Verification (EIV)** - not required at interim reexaminations – PHAs no longer required to use EIV to verify family employment and income during interim reexaminations.

### **3. Mandatory Deductions**

#### **a. Increases Standard Deduction for Elderly/Disabled Households**

- i. Increases the standard deduction for families with a Head, Co-Head, or Spouse who is elderly or a person with a disability.
- ii. Raises the current deduction of \$400 to \$525 per family (adjusted annually for inflation).

#### **b. Increases Standard Deduction for Households with Dependents**

- i. Increased the standard deduction for families with a dependent (child 17 years and younger) or an “Other” adult with a disability.
- ii. Raises the current deduction of \$480 per dependent to? (adjusted annually for inflation).

### **4. Asset**

#### **a. Codifies types of assets**

- i. **Necessary Property** – essential items to the family for maintenance, use, and occupancy of the premises, or are necessary for employment, education, or health/wellness.
  - a. Always excluded.
  - b. Car for commuting or medical devices
- ii. **Non-Necessary Real Property** – not essential items
  - a. Excluded unless they total more than \$50,000.
  - b. Checking, Savings, CD, Money Market, Trusts, etc.
  - c. Camper, boat, snowmobile, ATV/UTV, motorcycle, coins, jewelry, any vehicle that is not used every day (family of 1 has 2 vehicles)

#### **b. Limitations**

- i. Imposes a \$100,000 asset limit for eligibility and continued assistance.
- ii. Families are ineligible for assistance if they own real property suitable for occupancy.
  - a. PHAs may delay enforcement/termination up to six months if the family is over the asset threshold at the time of annual reexamination.

**c. Higher Threshold for Imputing Asset Income**

- i. Raises the imputed asset threshold from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

**d. Self-Certification of Assets**

- i. Permits PHAs to accept self-certification of net family assets if estimated to be equal to \$50,000 (adjusted for inflation annually) or less.
- ii. PHA must verify every 3 years.

**e. Exclusion of Retirement and Educational Saving Accounts**

**5. Allowances**

**a. Threshold for Claiming Medical/Disability Expenses**

- i. Increased the allowance for unreimbursed health and medical care expenses from 3% to 10%, phased in over two years.

**6. Earned Income Disallowance** – eliminated as of 1/1/2024, no new participating families.

**7. Financial Hardships**

**a. Medical/Disability** - eligible to households who already qualified for medical/disability deductions.

**b. Childcare** – for families who are unable to pay rent once they are no longer eligible for the childcare deduction.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF NSPIRE

Effective October 1, 2024, all rental units assisted by Voucher funds will be inspected using the NSPIRE (National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate) standards. NSPIRE is the new health & safety inspection model for housing owned, insured, or subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

HUD has made this transition to establish consistency ensuring all units which received HUD assistance are inspected utilizing the same standards. In the past, there were two different standards applied depending on the type of assistance, UPCS (Uniform Physical Condition Standards) and HQS (Housing Quality Standards).

## KEY CHANGES FROM HQS TO NSPIRE:

### 1. Emphasis Changes

- a. Greater emphasis on health, safety & functional defects.
- b. Less emphasis on condition & appearance defects and non-health & safety items

### 2. Scoring Types

- a. **Life Threatening** – high risk of death, severe illness, or injury.
  - i. 24-hour repair
- b. **Severe** – high risk of permanent disability or serious injury or illness.
  - i. 24-hour repair
- c. **Moderate** - moderate risk of a medical event that may have long-lasting health effects.
- d. **Low** – critical to habitability but does not present health or safety risk.

### 3. Three Inspectable Areas:

- a. **Unit** – interior component of an individual dwelling (i.e., electrical systems, HVAC, water heater, stairs, floors, windows, bathroom, kitchen)
- b. **Inside** – common areas and building systems (i.e. laundry area, stairs, basements, mechanical rooms, interior hallways)
- c. **Outside** – building site, playground, parking lot, driveways, fencing,

### 4. Unit

#### a. Eleven Affirmative Requirements

- i. Must have hot & cold running water in bathrooms and the kitchen, including adequate source of safe drinking water in bathrooms and kitchen.
  - 1.) PHA does not test water for drinking status.
- ii. Must have its own bathroom “or sanitary facility” in proper working condition and used in privacy.
- iii. At least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, in the following locations:
  - 1.) On each level of a unit

- 2.) In each bedroom
- 3.) Within 21 feet of any door to a bedroom
- 4.) On the living side of a door that separates the living area from a smoke detector outside of a bedroom.
- ii. Must have a living room
- iii. Must have a kitchen
- iv. Must be at least one bedroom or “living/sleeping room” for each two people
- v. Must have two working outlets or one working outlet and a permanent light in all habitable rooms
- vi. Any outlet within 6’ of any water source must be “ground-fault circuit interrupter” protected.
- vii. Must have a carbon monoxide detector.
- viii. Must have a guardrail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop of 30” or more.
- ix. Must have permanently mounted light fixtures in any kitchen and bathroom.

## **5. Inside Areas**

### **a. Six Affirmative Requirements**

- i. At least one battery-operated or hard-wired smoke detector, in proper working condition, on each level of a property.
- x. Must have a carbon monoxide detector.
- xi. Any outlet within 6’ of any water source must be “ground-fault circuit interrupter” protected.
- xii. Must have a guardrail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop of 30” or more.
- xiii. Must have permanently mounted light fixtures in any kitchen and bathroom.
- xiv. May not have an unvented space heater that burns gas, oil, or kerosene.

## **6. Outside Areas**

### **a. Six Affirmative Requirements**

- i. Any outlet within 6’ of any water source must be “ground-fault circuit interrupter” protected.
- ii. Must have a guardrail when there is an elevated walking surface with a drop-off of 30” or more.

## **7. State and Local Codes**

- a. NSPIRE does not supersede state and local housing codes. Compliance with State or local codes does not determine whether a unit passes HUD standards.

## 6. New or updated Inspection Items

- a. Address & Signage
- b. Bathtub & Shower – discoloration 50% or more
  - i. Can use privacy curtain.
- c. Cabinet & Storage – 50% or more drawers/shelves missing/damaged/inoperable.
- d. Call for Aid – (if present) pull cord length; blocked/doesn't function.
- e. Carbon Monoxide – immediate vicinity of sleeping area when there is a gas furnace, hot water tank, cooking stove, or attached garage.
- f. Ceiling
- g. Chimney
- h. Clothes Dryer Exhaust
- i. Cooking Appliance
- j. Door – Entry - diameter of the hole that penetrates through; split/crack that penetrates; delamination/separation of the surface.
- k. Door – Fire Labeled – surface rust percentage of
- l. Door – General – passage door missing/broken.
- m. Drain
- n. Egress
- o. Electrical – Conduct, Outlet & Switch – three-prong outlet not properly wired or grounded
- p. Electrical – GFCI or AFCI Outlet or Breaker
- q. Electrical – Service Panel – not accessible
- r. Elevator
- s. Exit Sign
- t. Fence & Gate- hole/broken/missing.
- u. Fire Escape – If present
- v. Fire Extinguisher – if present
- w. Flammable & Combustible Item
- x. Floor – percentage of substrate exposed,
- y. Food Preparation Area – exposed substrate percentage; cannot be sanitized.
- z. Foundation – length & width of crack; spalling/flaking/chipping; water infiltration
- aa. Garage Door – the size of a hole that penetrates through.
- bb. Grab Bar
- cc. Guardrail – 30” above grade; no less than 30” high

dd. Handrail – 4 or more risers; ramp 6” high or 72” or greater in projection; withstand 200 lbs. ; between 28” and 42” in height.

ee. HVAC – gas flue uninterrupted upward flow (1/4” per foot of constant rise); no duct tape

ff. Infestation

- i. Cockroach – one lives in two more units/rooms during the daytime
- ii. Bedbugs – evidence of in two or more units/rooms during daytime
- iii. Mice – evidence of sticky traps, droppings, chewed holes, and urine trails in two or more units/rooms during the daytime.
- iv. Rats
- v. Other – wasps/wasps’ nest; bee/beehives; squirrels/squirrel nest; birds; bats

gg. Leak – Gas or Oil

hh. Leak – Sewage

ii. Leak – Water

jj. Lighting – Exterior - globes

kk. Lighting – Interior - globes

ll. Litter –

- i. 10 or more small items within 10’x10’ (newspapers, food wrappers, pieces of food)
- ii. Any number of large items discarded in an area not designed for garbage (furniture, appliances)

mm. Mold-Like Substance

- i. Cumulative patches, more than 4 square inches, less than 1 square foot in room
- ii. Cumulative patches, more than 1 square foot and less than 9 square feet in room
- iii. Cumulative patches, more than 9 square feet in room

nn. Parking Lots

- i. Pothole 4” deep and 3 square feet or greater
- ii. 3” of water accumulation and 5% or more is unusable

oo. Lead-Based Paint

pp. Private Roads & Driveways

- i. Blocked/impassable.
- ii. Pothole 4” deep and 1 square foot or greater

qq. Refrigerator

rr. Retaining Wall – leaning; verge of collapse

ss. Roof Assembly – gutter component missing/damaged; ponding water; substrate exposed; hole; damaged.

- tt. Sharp Edges
- uu. Sidewalk, Walkway & Ramp – blocked/impassable; overgrown vegetation
- vv. Sink
- ww. Site Drainage – erosion
- xx. Smoke Alarm
  - i. 12/29/2024 – Sealed batteries will be required.
  - ii. Alarm in each bedroom AND outside each bedroom, 21’ feet, AND each level
- yy. Sprinkler Assembly
- zz. Steps & Stairs – nosing is greater than 1” in depth or 4 “ wide damaged/broken.
- aaa. Structural System
- bbb. Toilet – can use a curtain for privacy.
- ccc. Trash Chute
- ddd. Trip Hazard –  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” or greater vertical difference OR 2” or greater horizontal separation
- eee. Ventilation – restricted airflow
- fff. Wall – Exterior – Peeling paint 10 square feet or more, built after 1978; missing sections/covering
- ggg. Wall – Interior – 2” or greater in diameter OR accumulation of holes in any one wall greater than 6” x 6”
- hhh. Water Heater
- iii. Window – cannot be held open with a stick.