

**MINUTES OF THE
SCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSIONERS
OF THE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA
HELD ON THE 28th DAY OF JANUARY, 2025**

The Commissioners of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth, Minnesota, met in a Scheduled Regular Meeting at 3:48 P.M. on the 28th day of January 2025.

Chair Cich called the meeting to order and on roll call, the following members were found to be present: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico. Commissioners Awal and Glumac were absent. The Chair declared a quorum present.

Also present were Jill A. Keppers, Executive Director; staff members Anna Carlson, Jacob Morgan, Rachel Downs, Brandon Engblom, Sarah Pierce, Lenelle Hrabik, Caleb Anderson, Rob Johnson, Jill Erickson, and Traci Nindorf; Tom Church, City of Duluth/HRA Senior Housing Developer; and community member/Duluth resident Andrea Hanek.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS TO BE HEARD

None.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA:

The following items were introduced by Chair Cich:

MINUTES OF THE RESCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 19, 2024

**APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING OCTOBER,
NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER 2024**

RESOLUTION NO. 4593-24

**RESOLUTION APPROVING 2025 UPDATED DATA PRACTICES POLICY FOR DATA
SUBJECT DATA REQUESTS AND DATA PRACTICES POLICY FOR PUBLIC DATA
REQUESTS**

RESOLUTION 4594-25

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DIRECT SALE OF 720 N 7TH AVE E, DULUTH, MN,
55805 TO BRANDY FLECKY BY THE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

Commissioner Meyer moved that the foregoing items be approved as introduced.
Commissioner Joeckel seconded the motion.

Roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico

Nays: None

Chair Cich declared the motion carried and said items approved as introduced and read.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

RESOLUTION APPROVING MUTUAL OF OMAHA AS THE CARRIER FOR LIFE INSURANCE AND VOLUNTARY BENEFITS FOR THE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA

This resolution approves the switch from Hartford and SunLife to Mutual of Omaha as the Authority's Basic Life Insurance and Voluntary Benefit Plan provider. The Authority had Wheeler and Associates take our plan out to the market and they received five quotes back and one non-response. They recommended switching from Hartford and SunLife to Mutual of Omaha as the rates were lower and the coverage was better, thus saving the Authority and employees money. This change will only impact life insurance, long-term disability, and the voluntary (or employee paid) benefits. Switching will save money for both the employees and the Authority and there will be no lapse in coverage as open enrollment is in February with the plan year beginning March 1, 2025.

There being no discussion, the following resolution was introduced by Chair Cich:

RESOLUTION NO. 4595-25 APPROVING MUTUAL OF OMAHA AS THE CARRIER FOR LIFE INSURANCE AND VOLUNTARY BENEFITS FOR THE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA

Commissioner Joeckel moved that the foregoing items be approved as introduced.
Commissioner Talarico seconded the motion.

Roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico

Nays: None

Chair Cich declared the motion carried and said item approved as introduced and read.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS TO THE MINNESOTA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY FOR PUBLICLY OWNED HOUSING PROGRAM FUNDING FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AT NORTH POINTE APARTMENTS

This resolution authorizes submission of an application for funding through Minnesota Housing's Publicly Owned Housing Program. This is the "cash" round and focuses on repositioned properties, so North Pointe Apartments is eligible. Because of this, the Authority's projects will focus on needs at Tri-Towers and King Manor.

A question was asked regarding how the federal funding freeze affected this, and Executive Director Keppers explained this is state money so it shouldn't be affected. HUD does have to approve the release of the money though.

After answering Commissioners questions, the following resolution was introduced by Chair Cich:

**RESOLUTION NO. 4596-25
AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS TO THE MINNESOTA HOUSING
FINANCE AGENCY FOR PUBLICLY OWNED HOUSING PROGRAM FUNDING FOR
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS AT NORTH POINTE APARTMENTS**

Commissioner Nephew moved that the foregoing resolution be approved as introduced.
Commissioner Talarico seconded the motion.

Roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico

Nays: None

Chair Cich declared the motion carried and said item approved as introduced and read.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS POLICY FOR THE
HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

This resolution approves a policy for the continuity of operations for the Authority. Since the prior Deputy Director retired, a decision has been made to not hire a replacement at this time. This allows the Authority to determine what its business needs are as it examines its existing workforce. Without a Deputy Director, there was no longer an obvious choice as to who would step in as acting Executive Director if the Authority suffered an abrupt loss of its existing Executive Director. This policy would give the Board peace of mind that an acting Executive Director would be named, according to this policy, giving the Board time to appoint an Interim Executive Director and begin their search for a new Executive Director.

After discussion surrounding who and when would step in as acting Executive Director, the following resolution was introduced by Chair Cich:

**RESOLUTION NO. 4597-25
APPROVING THE CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS POLICY FOR THE HOUSING AND
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

Commissioner Joeckel moved that the foregoing items be approved as introduced.

Commissioner Talarico seconded the motion.

Roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico

Nays: None

Chair Cich declared the motion carried and said item approved as introduced and read.

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK FOR THE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA

This resolution approves an employee handbook. Over the years, the Authority has had multiple employment policies that have been created and this handbook consolidates all of those policies, as well as adding new policies that are needed to comply with human resources law that has changed over the past few years. This will be helpful for both new employees and existing employees as both an orientation and reference tool. In addition to what was in the packet, there will be supplemental HR forms added to the handbook as appendices.

Chair Cich commended the execution of the employee handbook.

There being no discussion, the following resolution was introduced by Chair Cich:

**RESOLUTION NO. 4598-25
APPROVING THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK FOR THE HOUSING AND
REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DULUTH, MINNESOTA**

Commissioner Meyer moved that the foregoing items be approved as introduced.
Commissioner Nephew seconded the motion.

Roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico

Nays: None

Chair Cich declared the motion carried and said item approved as introduced and read.

COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Board members received monthly reports and correspondence prior to the meeting. The Executive Director had nothing else to add and there was no discussion.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

BUSINESS BY COMMISSIONERS

None.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director submitted a written report along with the following additions at the time of the meeting:

President Trump issued an executive order freezing federal grants. I believe that Housing Assistance Payments will be funded, but I will not know that until the money hits our account. I would like a motion and a second from this board for approval to use Authority unrestricted general funds to pay for landlord housing assistance payments if that money is not disbursed by HUD to the Authority for the month of February. The amount is substantial – approximately \$900,000 to landlords and another \$450,000 if we pay ourselves. It was discussed that the Board would most likely need to call a special meeting to discuss longer term plans if this order affects the Authority further into the future.

Commissioner Meyer moved that the Executive Director had authority to use the Authority's unrestricted general fund money should the money not be distributed by HUD to the Authority for February HAP Payments.

Commissioner Joeckel seconded the motion.

Roll was called with the following results:

Ayes: Commissioners Cich, Joeckel, Meyer, Nephew, and Talarico

Nays: None

Chair Cich declared the motion carried and approved as requested by Executive Director Keppers.

Another update from the Executive Director was in regards to the Security RFP. She let the Board know that a contract will be coming to the Board soon. There is an option to use a higher level security guard and these higher trained guards would carry mace, batons, and handcuffs. It is more expensive, but not excessively so. If this is something the Board is interested in, we could bring that forward in the next month or so. The Board had a discussion surrounding this information as well as reiterating what the tenant survey showed (majority of residents who completed the survey indicated they needed a security guard with more clout).

The Executive Director also informed the Board that the Authority will be hiring a consultant to review the security at Tri-Towers and Midtowne and provide the Authority with a report and recommendations. Hopefully, this will be complete before the February meeting.

REPORT OF LEGAL COUNSEL: MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

In addition to his written report, Legal Counsel let the Board know he is also tracking the federal updates and will continue to do so.

Legal Counsel also informed the Board of changes that are happening with the court referee, his ongoing work with the Salvation Army in regards to working with them and applying for rental assistance on tenants' behalf, and discussed the handout he provided the Board regarding remote meetings.

No Closed Session was needed.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Cich declared the meeting adjourned at 4:26 P.M.

Roberta Cich
Chair

ATTEST:

Timothy C. May
Secretary

Next Scheduled Regular Meeting – February 25, 2025.