

ST. CLOUD HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
EMERGENCY MEETING

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

An Emergency Meeting was held by teleconference for the St. Cloud HRA Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. Chair Nancy Gohman called the meeting to order from the St. Cloud HRA Boardroom at 5:00 p.m. All other Commissioners connected via call-in and responded by name and comment throughout the meeting.

1. Roll call was taken and the following Commissioners were present: All- Abdi Daisane, Seal Dwyer, Nancy Gohman, George Hontos, Jeff Goerger and Mike Conway. Absent: None. [The board has one vacancy.]
2. Update on Operations – Executive Director Louise Reis said she wanted to call the meeting to inform the Board of the current operations the Agency is following under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Hontos asked if outside guidance was used to set the plan or if it was done internally. Ms. Reis responded conversations have taken place between housing authorities and using HUD guidance on how to proceed. She said agencies are using what will work for them, as each are a little different; the main goal is to keep the structure as close to business as usual.

Commissioner Hontos asked if there is a State statute that was followed or anything that needs to be voted on by the Board or ratified. Ms. Reis said under HUD's direction procedural changes have been made; not policy changes so up until this meeting nothing has needed Board approval. She said the policies remain the same, with exception to the HQS inspections that will need Board approval (later in the agenda) as it will be a policy change.

Commissioner Dwyer asked if interviews were being conducted via a type of online communication face-to-face. Ms. Reis responded currently everything is being done through the mail and by phone.

Chair Gohman asked overall what the response has been to the changes. Ms. Reis responded residents and clients have been very accommodating and understanding. She said the lobby has been closed, however, a dropbox has been placed in the outer lobby with forms, etc., for drop-off of information, rent, and paperwork as needed.

3. Approve Telework Policy – Ms. Reis said in concurrence with other agencies and under HUD guidelines, Policy 03-06 was established and needs Board approval. She said the policy will allow, as possible, staff the capability of working from home. Ms. Reis said a rotating schedule has been set so a minimal amount of staff will be in the office at one time.

Commissioner Goerger said he felt the policy made perfect sense under the current health crisis. Commissioner Conway asked how the technology and connectivity were being handled. Finance Director Karen Rizer responded some staff are using their personal home equipment utilizing VPN/RDC and some are using agency laptops connecting the same. Ms. Reis said the same is true for phone usage; some personal and some agency owned. She said all precautions are being taken to protect confidential personal information.

Commissioner Daisane said he thought it all looked good, except for under 2<sup>nd</sup> page, last paragraph it reads *Date Security* and it was most likely intended to read *Data Security*. Ms. Reis responded he was correct and the change would be made prior to adding to policy manuals.

Commissioner Hontos moved for approval of Policy 03-06; Commissioner Dwyer seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Amend Office Closing – Commissioner Dwyer moved for approval of Policy 06.09; Commissioner Conway seconded the motion. Ms. Reis stated the changes to the policy include staff working via telework; and, if unable to work as scheduled, leave must be taken, paid or unpaid, in accordance with applicable policies. She said the policy also adds that if there is an office closing staff will be notified by email and not by local radio networks as currently stated. All Commissioners voted in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Approve Admin Plan – HQS Language Change – Commissioner Dwyer moved for approval; Commissioner Hontos seconded the motion. Ms. Reis stated the proposed changes to the plan are the underlined and the main change is to go from annual inspections to bi-annual inspections. She explained if there are issues or complaints that need to be addressed the HRA inspector would have the option of allowing alternative methods to show the repairs have been completed using pictures or video conferencing. Ms. Reis said the possibility of self-certification is also being reviewed as an option and staff should hear in the next thirty days if it has been approved.

Commissioner Dwyer stated whatever is decided to be used for video conferencing it has to ensure confidentiality. [Ms. Dwyer needed to exit the teleconference]

Chair Gohman asked how the pictures showing corrections would work and if they would be satisfactory to HUD. Ms. Lygre responded if there are less than five items needing repair and none of them are life threatening, the landlord and tenant would both need to sign off on the repairs when completed. She said if they cannot agree, then the HRA inspector would go back out. Ms. Lygre said this has been deemed acceptable. Commissioners Daisane, Gohman, Hontos, Goerger and Conway voted in favor of the changes; Commissioner Dwyer was not present. The motion carried.

6. Families First Corona Virus Response Act – Ms. Rizer briefly went over the Act to which she added it continues to be updated. She said the latest notice of March 24, 2020 put this bill into effect on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ms. Rizer said the two primary parts of the bill are the Emergency Paid Sick Leave and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave. She said as of now, both programs are to expire on December 31, 2020.

Ms. Rizer said any staff member who feels the possibility of COVID-19 are to self-quarantine for 14 days; this includes being around someone who could possibly have the virus or yourself having symptoms. Chair Gohman asked if they will need to be tested. Ms. Rizer responded, no. She said she would bring a formal policy to the April meeting for ratification.

Ms. Reis stated if there are any other crucial changes she would notify the Board through email. She also said she would be working from home on Wednesday's and Monday's. Ms. Reis announced the bus tour scheduled for the April Board meeting would be postponed until a later date.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Secretary, George Hontos

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Chair, Nancy Gohman