

DMPM
Board Meeting
Minutes for February 4, 2025

PLACE: Administrative Building-Victory Room

TIME: 12:10 PM

ATTENDEES: Rick Poland, Jeff Cooley, Jerry Griese, Jennifer Leveque, and Janeal Kohler.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Commissioner Cooley motioned to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2024, board meeting. Commissioner Poland seconded. All in favor. No discussion. Motion passed.

STAFF REPORT: Three of the programs/properties are running adequately, financially speaking. Glenhaven, Orchard Knoll, Gateway Village, and Forest Village have excessive vacancy losses. At the start of the year, it appeared that the issue with vacancy losses had been fixed. However, more recent reports show that the problem persists. Janeal would like to do some analysis of the financials to find the underlying causes of the losses.

One driver has been an increase in wages, for contracted services, which were intended to help resolve the vacancies. General admin and maintenance costs are within budget; the costs related to turning vacant units and maintaining property needs are much higher than expected. Another driver was short staffing during the year. One property manager was on leave for three months. Two other program staff went on consecutive maternity leave. A vacant property manager position was filled, but the person wasn't filling units. That position is open again, and recruiting has been stagnant.

The property management director and the property managers understand that unit turns are high priority. If necessary, property manager positions will be backfilled if the existing staff cannot keep up with unit turns. The key will be to find a balance between getting units ready for occupancy, daily administrative tasks, and staying on top of eligibility determinations for families at the top of the waiting list.

Orchard Knoll has a high turnover rate by design (two-year transitional housing). Since April of 2024, 27 people have moved out and 31 have moved in. It takes a constant effort to keep units filled. Moreover, eight people within the past two months have been approved for housing but haven't followed through to leasing. They suddenly drop off the radar and the process of approving applicants has to start over again. Janeal believes that the demographics of Orchard Knoll applicants, people who are higher barrier, leads to the lack of following through to leasing. Some may relapse into drug use and decide not to lease in a drug- and alcohol-free program. Many have phones that are constantly without service. Others may be waiting for funding through UCAN because they don't have the income to support Orchard's rent levels; traditional Section 8 vouchers cannot be used on "medical campus". HUD-VASH vouchers are accepted at Orchard Knoll, but referrals of HUD-VASH voucher holders have declined significantly.

A related challenge is happening at Blueridge. The property manager has managed to go from a high vacancy rate at Blue II to 100% occupancy. However, there have been delays with unit turns in Blue I. At the same time, a property inspection by a third-party HUD inspector resulted in significant findings. The inspection was completed using a new inspection standard called NSPIRE. Based on consultations with OHCS, we believe some of the findings were inaccurate. OHCS advised us to submit an appeal for

the inaccuracies to get the inspection score up. The current score would require a reinspection of 100% of the units within a certain number of days. The appeal was filed incorrectly, which appears to be an ongoing issue with the inspections portal, and the time to appeal has expired. This leaves the Blueridge maintenance and administrative staff with the giant responsibility of addressing the existing inspection findings and getting the whole property ready for a 100% reinspection. For example, new regulations on GFCI outlets and smoke detectors must be brought up to code in 100% of the units before the reinspection. Of course, routine maintenance and work orders must still be addressed. This leaves no time for unit turnover.

Other programs are running well. The department as a whole is running well. Orchard Knoll and Glenhaven just had good inspections. There is a push to get vacancies filled and to have a consistent routine with refilling units timely starting in the new fiscal year.

Tax credit properties, like Vine Street, tend to be more lucrative than USDA Rural Development. Rural Development units must be frugally managed. Vine Street specifically has more units than other properties, a mix of bedroom sizes, and some units can accept Section 8 vouchers at fair market rent instead of the rent-controlled maximum. Orchard Knoll, which is also tax credit, has fewer units, much smaller unit sizes, and a much higher turnover rate. It's beneficial that Orchard Knoll and Vine Street are relatively new properties, each about 25 years old. Their routine maintenance and capital needs are lower than other properties.

Finally, UCAN used the Myers Center for a few nights as a warming center because St. Joseph's church was unavailable. The event went very well. The few issues that came up were addressed immediately. UCAN provided trained staff and security personnel. Security kept an eye on the center and walked around the neighborhood to make sure no one was roaming where they shouldn't be. Warming center guests must check in by a certain time and are not permitted to leave the grounds until morning. Some area residents were fearful of having homeless individuals walking down the sidewalks; those concerns were noted. A front unit door in the old admin building was kicked. That was also addressed quickly.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 57 – Renewal of Jennifer Leveque's three-year term as DMPM commissioner. Commissioner Cooley motioned to approve the resolution; commissioner Poland seconded. Motion passed.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 12:23 PM