

**MEETING MINUTES**

**St. Charles County Commission on Housing Assistance**

**Tuesday, May 29, 2018, 9:30 am**

St. Charles County Council Conference Room

100 North Third Street

St. Charles, MO 63301

**Attending Commission members:**

Jennifer George, Chairperson; Michael Hurlbert; David Todd; and Hope Woodson.

**Absent Commission members:**

June Tiller

**Others attending:**

Dianna Clair, Northeast Community Action Corporation (NECAC); and Robert Myers, St. Charles County

**Meeting Call to Order.**

The meeting was called to order by Jennifer George at 9:30 AM with members in attendance noted above. Jennifer George asked staff to contact June Tiller about attendance at future meetings.

**Approval of January 17, 2018 meeting minutes.**

David Todd asked that the meeting minutes reflect that he attended the January 17 meeting and made a motion for approval of the minutes as corrected. Mike Hurlbert seconded the motion. Upon a vote the motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Community Development Department staff will insure that meeting packets are posted on the County's website a week in advance of meetings.

**Public Comments.**

The meeting was opened for public comment. There was no public comment.

**Discussion.**

Note: future meeting agendas will separate action items from discussion items.

Housing Assistance Program Administrative Plan Changes. Dianna Clair asked the Commission to consider making four amendments to the Housing Assistance Program's Administrative Plan, as provided in writing to Commission members and outlined below. All of these are required by HUD. Following discussion a motion was made and seconded to recommend that the County

Executive approve these changes to the Administrative Plan. Upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously. Robert Myers will follow up with the County Executive to review and potentially adopt these changes.

- **Chapter 3 – Part II: Basic Eligibility Criteria – F. – Special Programs. Veterans Assisted Supportive Housing (VASH).** VASH Vouchers will not be issued based on the Housing Authority’s waiting list. Instead, referrals for eligible homeless veterans are provided by the Veterans Administration. The Housing Authority will administer the VASH program in accordance with VASH rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) VASH, which may differ from the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- **Chapter 6 – Part III Calculating Family Share and SCCHAP Subsidy – C. – Applying Payment Standards [24 CFR 982.505].** Currently, when HUD notifies the Housing Authority of any decrease in the payment standard schedule used to calculate each family’s subsidy, then the family would receive notice, up to a year in advance, of the payment decrease. Under the new policy, the Housing Authority would instead continue to use the existing higher payment standard for the family’s subsidy calculation for as long as the family continues to receive voucher assistance in that dwelling unit.
- **Chapter 8 – Part III Rent Reasonableness [24 CFR 982.507] SCCHAP and HUD Initiated Rent Reasonableness Determinations.** HUD requires that the County’s Housing Assistance Program determine whether rents are reasonable after the Fair Market Rent goes into effect. Currently, the trigger for determining rent reasonableness would be any 5% decrease in the Fair Market Rent, but the new standard would be a decrease of 10% or more. Either HUD or the Housing Program can still require determinations at other times.
- **Chapter 16 – Part II: Setting Program Standards and Schedules – B. Updating Payment Standards.** Once HUD posts the Fair Market Rents schedule, the County’s Housing Program will have three months to update and implement the new schedule. Currently, the Program does not have this deadline.

VASH Vouchers/Funding. St. Charles County’s Housing Assistance Program was awarded five Veterans Assisted Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, providing about \$25,675 in rental assistance, and increasing the number of vouchers managed under the County’s Program from 715 to 720. The County was fortunate because only 25 VASH vouchers were available statewide. The Housing Authority will administer the VASH program in accordance with VASH rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) VASH Program, which may differ from the Housing Choice Voucher Program. For instance the Veteran’s Administration refers homeless veterans after performing their own background checks with their own criteria.

NIS NCIA Local Pre-Audit (FBI). On May 23, a representative with the FBI's CGIS Audit Unit visited St. Charles County to review privacy and security procedures for the County's background checks for our Housing Choice Voucher Program. No significant shortcomings in the County's procedures were identified at that meeting, and in coming weeks the County expects a written report on the audit.

Changes in Background Checks. For several months now, Dianna Clair has not been using the fingerprint matching identification system and instead has been using an online identification system, based on names and social security numbers, which is already being successfully used by the 11-county Lincoln County Public Housing Authority.

Jennifer George commented that at the May 23 meeting, the Missouri Highway Patrol security auditor also attending suggested an alternative process that might reduce the processing time for fingerprint identification. If the County would decide to use that process again, Sargent Streck should use the County Housing Authority's ORI number and criminal background checks should be sent by the Missouri Highway Patrol directly to NECAC.

"Mainstream" housing vouchers. Dianna Clair reported that HUD has released a notice of funding availability for a \$100 million rental assistance voucher program for non-elderly adults with disabilities. Applications are due July 18, and applicants are expected to show cooperative efforts involving the continuum of care beyond just submitting letters of support. Dianna anticipates applying for funding and will need the County Executive to sign the funding application and a memorandum of understanding between the County and participating not-for-profit housing agencies in the County. Robert Myers will assist Dianna Clair with obtaining the necessary County signatures.

Additionally, Dianna Clair anticipates applying for Family Unification vouchers. Applications are due July 24. The County would need to partner with the continuum of care and a children's welfare agency.

Homeless Preference. The Commission reviewed a February 1, 2018 memorandum provided in their packets with detailed information on the idea of setting aside a specified number of housing choice vouchers for homeless residents of St. Charles County. HUD regulations allow only one waiting list but allow preferences to be made for those on the list who are homeless. Doing so presents practical difficulties for St. Charles County because its waiting list is typically opened every year or two as more dwelling units become available. Following discussion, Jennifer George suggested that the Commission wait on taking any action about a homeless preference.

Updates. Short updates were provided on the following topics.

- County website links on comprehensive housing assistance information.
- Final Housing Authority Examination Report
- Future meetings will take place in the Police Department Briefing Room (in O'Fallon).

**Adjournment.**

With no other business before the Commission, David Todd made and Michael Hurlbert seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.