

SECTION 8 RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Vouchers	2/2007	3/2007	4/2007	5/2007	6/2007
Available	498	498	498	498	498
Utilized	507	509	505	509	516
Occupancy	101.81%	102.21%	101.41%	102.21%	103.61%

ACTIVITY	2/2007	3/2007	4/2007	5/2007
Applications	35	56	39	58
Walk-in/Appointments	128	209	181	132

WAIT LIST	1/2007	2/2007	3/2007	4/2007	5/2007
Section 8 *	423/381	453/407	488/441	381/352	423/394
Parkview Knoll	52	55	56	51	61
Blue Mountain Estates	26	30	34	33	37
Scattered Sites	3	6	4	4	8
Schoolhouse Manor	28	31	32	27	30
Monterey House	8	9	10	6	9
Francis Murphy Apartments	51	50	52	43	46
Springfield Manor	58	60	59	52	59

* Where two numbers are shown, the first is total applications and the second is persons free of debts or criminal records that would bar them from participation.

PUBLIC HOUSING	3/2007	4/2007	5/2007	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move in	Move Out
PVK	27	28	28	0	100%	0	0
BME	28	28	28	0	100%	0	0
Scat	24	24	24	0	100%	0	0

RENTAL PARTNERSHIP	3/2007	4/2007	5/2007	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move In	Move Out
SHM	32	32	32	0	100%	0	0
Monterey	22	24	24	0	100%	0	0
Francis Murphy	119	120	120	0	100%	0	0
Springfield Manor	36	35	36	0	100%	1	0

I. Reports

A. In October, 2006, the State of Maryland’s housing finance agency, the Community Development Administration (CDA), removed the requirement in the Partnership Rental Housing Program that each jurisdiction’s next project had to have an ever increasing local financial contribution. Our own success in leveraging resources to match Partnership funding at the Monterey Project had set a virtually impossible threshold of performance for subsequent projects. Now the qualifying rule is back to donation of land, where it started when the program was first initiated.

B. A recent NAHRO publication provided a series of questions about elderly customers designed to help the agency determine if assisted care might be a viable area for expansion of services. In the course of looking at our statistics, these numbers were generated:

Project	# Units	# Persons	Avg. Age	Avg. Income
Blue Mountain Estates	28	28	75.89	\$12,114
Francis Murphy	120	132	76.58	\$14,954
Monterey House	24	26	69.96	\$11,508
Parkview Knoll	28	30	76.06	\$13,782
Schoolhouse Manor	32	37	70.11	\$15,453
Springfield Manor	36	43	69.02	\$12,162

C. On June 5th Michaels Development Group, appeared before the Board of County Commissioners to seek a letter of support for their application for CDA financing of a bond issue to rehabilitate that project. This was their third appearance on this matter, and with this final presentation they had included a number of physical improvements recommended by the Sheriff’s department. Commissioners Kercheval and Aleshire thanked them for the work they had done. Their request for a letter of County support was approved with two votes in favor and one Commissioner not voting.

D. Leasing numbers reported for the Section 8 program are now in sync with our software, but two troubling trends have emerged: The historic pattern of families dropping off of the program in the spring of the year has not been repeated in 2007, and an unusual number of voucher holders found units in May. We will not be able to issue any more Section 8 assistance for the remainder of this year because we have over utilized the program year-to-date. We will end the calendar year with an occupancy factor of 91% even though our 2007 occupancy factor will be 100%, and we will have to do a flurry of voucher issuing to begin 2008 to get back to the 498 level.

E. Smoking damages - We have determined that legally in Maryland the total of various kinds and varieties of security deposits cannot exceed the statutory limit

of two month's rent. However, smoke residue is a form of damage recognized by the lease. Our attorney has advised us that we can obtain a court judgment based on three bids to abate smoke damage, and it is up to us when and how to collect such a judgment and whether or not to require a resident to move. We are building a list of "extreme" and "moderate" damage units and will bring a recommendation to the Board on whether to grandfather existing tenants. The highest amount we have had to spend to turn a smoker's unit was \$3,200.

- F. A physical inspection of Springfield Manor on May 10th, conducted by a subcontractor for the State of Maryland, went without a hitch. No deficiencies were found.

- G. VAWA lease review - In January 2007 the Congress passed amendments to the Violence Against Women Act that required housing authorities to add language to their leases. While HUD has yet to issue a Notice to implement changes, they asked each public housing agency to consult with their own legal counsel. On reviewing the draft lease to which we had added the VAWA language, our attorney, William C. Wantz, observed that federal statute cannot overrule State law on the matter of leases. In Maryland, unless otherwise stated, a tenancy with two or more persons is held to be a tenancy of the entirety. In lay-person's language, a lease that belongs wholly to each person listed in the lease cannot be divided or broken into pieces (allowing the bifurcation that VAWA calls for when leaseholders abuse one another). Accordingly in our VAWA clause we will use the correct legal terminology to note that the tenancy is not a joint-tenancy for the purposes of the VAWA provisions.

We will use the VAWA lease in new public housing sign-ups and will provide new leases to households with more than one family member at their next annual recertification.

II. Action items

- A. House Keys for Employees - (Item carried over from the May agenda.) One of the recommendations of the County's Taskforce on Workforce Housing from October 2005, was for the County to agree to help its employees qualify for matching funds from the State's downpayment assistance programs. This is one of the recommendations of that Taskforce that the County did enact. The Housing Authority has expressed support of the Workforce Housing recommendations and staff recommend that the Authority demonstrate leadership in this area by committing to provide a \$5,000 match to **first-time-homebuyer** employees who purchase homes through the More House for Less Maryland Mortgage Program. We have three employees at this time that are renters, and we project that no more than one per year will ask for this benefit.

The potential benefit to a participating employee is significant. CDA matches the employer's contribution up to \$5,000, and if the employee purchases a home in a priority funding area, can double the State's contribution, growing the employer's \$5,000 contribution to \$15,000. Depending on which mortgage product the employee seeks, up to \$5,000 can be borrowed for closing costs providing up to a \$20,000 total benefit.

Accordingly the staff recommend adoption of resolution 2007-13 as follows:

WHEREAS, Employer participation in the Maryland “House Keys for Employees” program represents an important partnership to help Maryland’s workforce become homeowners; and

WHEREAS the Housing Authority’s support for the recommendations of the Washington County Task Force on Workforce Housing of October, 2005, would suggest that we follow our own counsel;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that the Authority will agree to participate in the Maryland House Keys 4 Employees Program (HK4E) at the level of one grant of \$5,000 per year (excluding contract employees working for the Department of Social Services **and excluding employees that are not first-time homebuyers**), in the form of a deferred payment loan at 0% interest to the employee that requires proportional repayment if the employee leaves the Authority in the five-year period following loan closing.

- B. Electronic Communications - Policy HAWC-15, entitled Internet Use, does not deal with email, fax, phone and a number of other aspects of electronic communication available to Authority employees. At the recent round of employee orientations to the new health plans being offered as of July 1, 2007, County Information Technology staff circulated an “Acknowledgment of Information Security Responsibility” form. Resolution 2007-14 would add language covering all Authority-provided electronic communication tools to policy 15 and rename it from “Internet Use” to “Electronic Communications” as follows:

WHEREAS, It is the practice of the Housing Authority of Washington County to adopt policies consistent with the policy and practice of the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County; and

WHEREAS the existing Internet Use policy does not deal with many forms of electronic communication now use by staff;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that HAWC-15 be renamed the Electronic Communications policy and changed to include the modifications relative to other electronic communication tools as noted on the Authority web site at <http://www.hawc-link.org/15ElectronicCom.pdf>.

- III. Board Evaluation - The steps for our June meeting in our Board Evaluation exercise will be to set the stage for tackling political and strategic evaluation questions at the July meeting. We will brainstorm answers to the following 7 questions, so please develop your ideas ahead of time to help get the discussion started. (If you know your are going to be absent, please email your contributions to the Chair or to the office.) The questions are as follows:

A. What are our specific expectations of Board members?

B. What do we need to know to function?

Housing Authority of Washington County Commissioner job description:

The seven Commissioners for the Housing Authority of Washington County are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County. Commissioners serve for five year terms and must be residents of Washington County. Housing Authority Commissioners make policy decisions on current and future programs needed to meet the housing needs of lower income citizens of the County, living outside the corporate limits of the City of Hagerstown.

Commissioners are also responsible for keeping governmental agencies, elected officials and the general public informed on the Authority's activities. Housing Authority Commissioners volunteer their time in a spirit of public service. Because Commissioners are not paid, they are credible advocates for the needs of the local community.

The demands of time, efficiency and staff morale make it prudent to delegate operation of the Authority's day-to-day operations to an Executive Director, allowing the Board to focus on leadership and policymaking issues. Just as in private corporations, Commissioners are ultimately responsible for actions and decisions of the executive director and staff, making confidence in staff essential. The Commissioners must receive and review regular reports and information from staff that reflect proper and legal administration of Authority programs and initiatives. To that end the Board of Commissioners meet on the second Thursday of each month at 3:30 p.m. for an hour and a half to two hours. Regular meetings in February, April, June, September and November are held at 12:30 p.m. in the senior centers of the Authority's elderly complexes to maintain close links with residents.

Commissioners are provided with copies of all Authority policies in an organized notebook format as part of the initial and ongoing training effort. Opportunities to meet with the Commissioners of other Maryland Public Housing Authorities are provided each spring and fall by the Maryland Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies of which the Authority is a longtime member.

The Authority uses legal counsel to advise Commissioners on important matters of law. Commissioners are also covered by Directors and Officers liability insurance. Commissioners pool their various talents to best protect the public interest while providing a high level of service to all customers. Housing Authority Commissioners cannot contract with the Authority to sell goods or services, nor can they receive rental assistance payments as landlords.