

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM STATISTICS

ACTIVITY	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009	10/2009
Applications	67	62	58	62
Walk-in/Appointments	245	251	218	259

WAIT LIST	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009	10/2009
Section 8 Vouchers *	791/714	810/732	701/630	701/627	750/669
Parkview Knoll	54	57	54	54	59
Blue Mountain Estates	45	46	43	42	46
Scattered Sites	46	47	32	30	28
Schoolhouse Manor	35	37	33	31	33
Monterey House	5	4	5	5	5
Francis Murphy Apartments	66	71	68	69	64
Springfield Manor	49	52	48	47	53

* 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.

Vouchers	6/2009	7/2009	8/2009	9/2009	10/2009	YTD Proj
Available	498	498	498	498	498	4,980
Utilized	495	497	495	496	488	4,954
Occupancy	99.40%	99.80%	99.40%	99.60%	97.99%	99.48%

PUBLIC HOUSING	8/2009	9/2009	10/2009	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move in	Move Out
PVK	28	27	28	0	100%	1	0
BME	28	27	27	1	96%	0	0
Scattered	22	22	24	0	92%	1	0

RENTAL PARTNERSHIP	8/2009	9/2009	10/2009	Vacancy	Occupancy	Move In	Move Out
SHM	32	32	31	1	97%	0	1
Monterey	24	24	24	0	100%	0	0
Francis Murphy	120	119	119	1	99%	0	0
Springfield Manor	36	36	36	0	100%	0	0

I. Reports

- A. FY2009 Audit - The 2.5 day site visit portion of this year's audit engagement was completed shortly after noon on September 30th. The audit staff complemented us on our documentation. Our Section 8 staff were particularly gratified to learn that the Auditors had been unable to find anything wrong with any of our records - even after they had us pull another 20 records beyond the initial 30 they had randomly selected!
- B. Education Subcommittee - The Education Subcommittee met on Thursday October 22. The Committee recommended the addition of three items to the Strategic Plan: Generation of an Annual Agency Report; Attend municipal town meetings annually; and Executive Director Transition. Staff will send reminder notices of all HAWC meetings on the Monday preceding the meeting. Publicity for FSS graduates and Strategic Planning "next steps" were also discussed. The Subcommittee meets next on Thursday, December 4, at 8:00 a.m.
- C. Housing Subcommittee - The Housing Subcommittee met with County Administrator, Greg Murray, on Thursday, November 5. Committee members reviewed the Lease/Purchase program outline and clarified several issues for Mr. Murray. County staff will try to arrange for a formal presentation to the County Commissioners, early in December. Tim Henry from Centra Bank also participated in the discussion.
- D. Property signs - (A.) The new sign for Springfield Manor will be installed November 16. (B.) The Town of Boonsboro is working with us to determine where we can install a property sign. By zoning regulation, signs must be five feet away from the property line. However, our property line is not along the sidewalk, but 15-20 feet inland! As a result we have three options: 1) Seek permission to put the sign right on the property line, requiring a Board of Zoning Appeals application, 2) Seek permission from the Town to put the sign on Town property, or 3) Put the sign up on the hill well back from the road and live with it. The Town Zoning Administrator is running option 2 by the Town Manager. (C.) The rear parking lot sign at Monterey House has been approved by the Town of Hancock, and it has been forwarded it on to Washington County for their sign-off.
- E. The Neighborhood Conservation Initiative (NCI) Offers on two qualifying homes have been accepted, and settlement attorney's are preparing for closings that should be held later in November. A property at 17703 Meadowood that appraised for \$160,000, with closing expenses will cost \$153,650. We will invest another \$11,350 in repairs and improvements bringing our total investment to \$165,000. At 17833 Red Oak Drive, we will spend \$146,215 on acquisition of a property that appraised for \$150,000, and then add \$20,000 in repairs and improvements for a total investment of \$166,215.

The repairs at Meadowood fall in the category of upkeep and will not add to the valuation. Typical of foreclosed properties we have seen, appliances were removed, as were various electrical and plumbing fixtures. Other repair items include painting, handrails, chain link fence, wrapping window elements with aluminum, replacing the water heater and an allowance for miscellaneous items.

- F. Web site updates - Teddi Garrison has taken over web site maintenance and has over a dozen tasks on her web-to-do list already behind her. Most notable is the updating of the site map which had not been touched since the site opened in its new format over a year ago. Thank you, Teddi!
- G. Property tours - At our most recent staff meeting, several staff asked for a tour of nearby scattered and elderly properties. We decided to arrange such a tour the next time we have a scattered site vacancy so our tour can include the inside of a family unit. Commissioners will be invited to join the 4-5 staff that expressed interest for this tour opportunity.
- H. Smoking in units we own - At the November staff meeting we will tackle how and to what degree to implement no-smoking rules in Authority properties. We have been assembling a wealth of information on the topic, that will enable us to examine impacts on health, budget and the "rights" of current smoker-tenants and non-smoker-tenants. It is hoped that the work products from this discussion at the staff level will enable the Housing Authority Commissioners to adopt smoking related policy language in the near future.

II. Action items

- A. Utility Allowances - Staff recommend adoption of resolution 2009-21 as follows:

WHEREAS, *the Housing Authority is required to annually revise the Section 8 Utility Allowances and the Public Housing Utility Allowances when there is a change of over 10%; and*

WHEREAS *staff have obtained updated utility rate information for all utility categories in October and November, 2009;*

WHEREAS *the cost of electric service has gone up 22% in the past year, while the rates for other fuels have changed in the 3-4% range;*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED *that a new schedule be adopted for use in the rental assistance and the Public Housing programs for all re-certifications and new admissions on or after January 1, 2010, based on actual current utility rate information.*

If none of the allowances had changed by more than 10%, a new allowance would not be required. However since we have to collect data on all of the rates, it has been our practice to bring them all current at this time of the year. The electric charges showed the most marked change, with an increase of about \$30 per month in the heating cost. One factor increasing the electric rate this year is decision to remove the (lower than County-average) City of Hagerstown electric rate from our average rate calculation, since no County

rentals use the City-provided electric service. At the same time, oil heat dropped about \$30 per month. Natural gas declined by \$5.00 and bottled gas dropped \$50.00!*** Water rates tended to stay the same, while sewer charges increased a modest \$1-2.00 in several service areas.

- B. Charges for tenant damages - As reported in last month's Management Report, wall and floor surfaces get damaged by our tenants from time to time. Our tenant handbooks say that we will re-paint walls "after 5-10 years or as needed," but if we have to do wall repairs we pass the entire cost of repainting the affected wall to the tenant, even if the wall damage happens 4.5 years after initial move-in.

We have not established a useful life for carpet, but if we were to agree that ten years seemed a reasonable figure, under present practice, we would charge the entire cost of carpet replacement to the tenant for a stain that showed up in year nine. When carpet has been well cared and seems to have a useful life of several more years when the tenant moves in, we could even face a decision, under present policies, to charge for carpet replacement because of a stain on carpet that is 11 or 12 years old.

If you apply the Authority's value of fairness to this discussion, we should amend our damage policies. The Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County prorates charges on items that depreciate, like paint and carpet, but charges 100% for non-depreciable items like wall or door damage. To move this discussion along, staff prepared resolution 2009-17 for the Board's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of Washington County desires its policies to be fair to tenants while clearly communicating the rights and responsibilities of management; and

WHEREAS floor coverings, blinds and painted surfaces need to be replaced on a routine basis to uphold the marketability of rental units we manage;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that staff should modify the tenant handbooks to establish a remaining useful life for elements subject to tenant damage, and communicate to tenants that damage to such elements will be charged to them based on the remaining useful life.

** Increase and decreases vary by unit size. The numbers quoted here represent the costs for utilities in a 2-bedroom detached home.