



**HOUSING AUTHORITY
Minutes – November 1, 2023
Planning Department Conference Room
2nd Floor Rock County Courthouse
51 S Main St, Janesville, WI 53545
And Via ZOOM**

Call to Order: Chair Schulz called the meeting of the Housing Authority of Rock County to order at 9:07 AM on Wednesday, November 1, 2023.

Members present in person: Chair Supervisor Kathy Schulz, Billy Bob Grahm, and Supervisor Bill Wilson

Members present via ZOOM: Katie Udell

Rock County Staff present: Richard Bostwick (County Board Chair), Ilana Eisenberg (Office Coordinator) and Andrew Baker (Planning Director)

Others Present: Badri Belur

Adopt Agenda: Supervisor Wilson made a motion to approve. Mr. Grahm seconded the motion.
ADOPTED

Approval of Minutes from Meeting Held September 6, 2023: Supervisor Wilson made a motion to approve. Mr. Grahm seconded the motion. ADOPTED

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements:

County Board Chair Bostwick introduced Badri Belur to the Housing Authority Committee. He currently resides in Janesville, has for one year, and works in Stoughton. He is looking to join part of a Rock County Committee and a position opened on the Housing Authority Committee with the departure of Ms. Ponkauskas, due to her term ending.

Summary Recommended 2024 County Budget Relate to Housing:

Josh Smith (County Administrator) incorporated \$4.5 million in ARPA funds for housing within Rock County into the budget for 2024. This would ensure that there are funds to create affordable housing, which was one of the items identified in the ongoing strategic planning process. Supervisor Wilson

suggested that Supervisors will be looking to allocate some of these funds for other projects, such as childcare necessities, so it will be important to voice support. This could allow for more housing to be easily created in Beloit, as there are already plans for housing developments to undergo construction. There is a great lack of housing in the City of Beloit. There were questions about where exactly the money would go as well as the framework that would be created to ensure that all monies are put to good use. That process will be determined if the funding is approved. It is a possibility to programs that would match dollars in place to compensate or make a difference with programs that are currently existing. Supervisor Stevens has been involved with an old school building in Beloit that is being repurposed with the objective of creating transition housing which includes a daycare. There is also standing support for Community Actions new shelter. This is proposed to be in Elkhorn. This will be of benefit with more units, upping the amount from 12, currently, to 30 units. There was also discussion about rental rates being raised astronomically. It was proposed how to put a cap on apartment rental rates, as many landlords just raise the rates instead of evicting the tenant. The Housing Authority Committee consensus is that there is enthusiastic support for the proposed 2024 budget plan. It is satisfying to know that an array of groups throughout the county will be helped.

Information Related to Barriers to Obtain Housing Related Assistance:

There are barriers that make it hard for citizens to obtain housing vouchers because of past issues, whether it be a criminal history on the record or other provisions that might impede a positive outcome. Janesville staff confirmed, though, that those residents with past addiction related concerns that have gone through a recovery process would possibly have certain restrictions waived that would otherwise be included in a Section 8 application process. Even after receiving a positive recommendation from program administrators, there is difficulty in finding a landlord that will accept voucher holders with criminal records. Also, currently, the waitlist is closed in many communities to the numerous amounts of applicants already waiting for vouchers to be available. The cities that currently are part of a voucher program are Beloit, Janesville, and Evansville.

It was asked that staff look into the third party vendor that administers the Section 8 program outside of the communities that do it themselves. Supervisor Wilson provided statistics and data that were provided through the GAP Report for March 2023.

Suggestions for Future Meeting Topics:

The Housing Authority Committee was interested in obtaining more information about the organization out of LaCrosse that administers the Section 8 program in the state.

Adjournment:

Mr. Grahn made the motion to adjourn at 9:55 AM. Supervisor Wilson seconded the motion.
ADOPTED

Next meeting: 12/06/2023 at 9:00AM

Respectfully submitted,
Ilana Eisenberg, Office Coordinator