

**Caldwell Housing Authority  
November 15, 2011 Regular Meeting  
Minutes**

Board Members Present:

Patricia Benedict, Jim Blacker, Phares Book, Sid Freeman, Beronica Salazar, and Estella Zamora,

Staff Present: Mike Dittenber, Cheri Hess, Hector Sanchez, Brenda Boles

Guest Present:

Location: Golden Palace

In Order of business:

**1. Roll call and call to order**

Patricia called the meeting to order at 12:06pm.

**2. Review of the August and September minutes**

Patricia asked if everyone had an opportunity to read the October minutes. Patricia thanked Mike for getting the minutes out early. Beronica made motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Sid and approved by the Board.

**3. Treasurer / Financial Report**

Sid deferred the Treasurer / Financial report to Cheri who provided income and expense reports explaining CHA had a net income during the month of September of -\$890.

Cheri reported that current expenses are \$5,000 under budget with an anticipated bank balance of \$52,000. Sid moved to accept the financials, seconded by Phares, and approved by the Board

**4. Director's Report**

Estella asked if she could be notified when the Policy Committee meets. She had some recommendations.

**5. Old Business**

Occupancy Rules: Mike suggested the occupancy rules may be too strict, thereby prohibiting otherwise eligible tenants from receiving housing. He explained that much of CHA's success in cleaning the place up over the last couple of years can be attributed to the strict occupancy rules. He indicated he was not necessarily in favor of the change, but thought it might be appropriate to increase tenancy. Sid said the Housing Authority should not be more lenient with the occupancy rules, that the Board put a lot of work into developing these standards. Beronica asked if the initial concern was "safety" or "risk" when the policy was developed. Mike said both, but primarily to make sure an applicant's behavior had really changed and the best way to gauge that was how long it has been since their last criminal activity. Estella asked if CHA provided different consideration for adults and minors. Jim asked if CHA did background checks on

everyone. Mike indicated CHA conducts background checks of everyone 18 years of age or older; if a juvenile was arrested for drug paraphernalia, CHA would never know. Phares asked if denial based on criminal record was discrimination. Mike said there are 8 protected classes by law, and criminal activity is not a protected class. Estella said some consideration should be given to the severity of the drug charge. Beronica said it boils down to individual culture—a person caught with a marijuana joint just means “he got caught that time” and he might be using it frequently. Mike indicated all drug use, include marijuana is illegal in Idaho. There is no such thing as medical marijuana. Jim asked if people are being turned away because of simple possession charges. Mike indicated applicants are turned away for drug or paraphernalia charges.

Mike also indicated an applicant can appeal their denial. Mike said Beronica had participated in one of the appeal processes and the family, subsequent to their appeal, received housing. Sid suggested we keep the occupancy criteria the same and allow people appeal and provide an explanation to their circumstances. Phares said 10% of the population has been in prison for a crime and asked: Where do these people live? Mike said there are some people with recent criminal background that live at CHA, but Mike always consults with their probation officer before making an exception.

Patricia wanted to make sure there was an appropriate notice on the rejection letter. Mike agreed to provide everyone with a copy.

**Tenant Charges:** Mike explained that CHA charges tenants for different behaviors. These charges are different from rents, late fees, and repair costs. Mike indicated the charges are for parking on the grass, tampering with utilities, leaving outside water running, climbing on the roof and other nuisance activities. Mike said he would like the Board to approve the fee schedule for those activities. Mike indicated the best way to address these issues is to “hurt them in the pocket book.” Estella asked if this information is in the videos. Mike said the information is in the video, but the charges are not. Estella said the charges need to be posted. Mike provided a brief explanation of the challenges with the video and indicated the video was back at BSU for editing. Phares suggested downloading the videos to our website. Sid suggested having the Spanish videos playing on Mondays and Wednesdays and English videos on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mike said that a combination of all the recommendations might be best. Jim said things are much better at CHA because of the rules and regulations we have. Phares said these are charges that would be imposed rather than getting law enforcement involved.

**Resolution:** Authorizing the Housing Authority to impose tenant charges (as presented) and add clarifying language to the current occupancy standards. Motion by Sid, seconded by Phares, and approved by the Board.

Patricia wanted to make sure all our advertisements are on Craig’s List. Beronica said CHA should also be providing application information to case workers from Health and Welfare.

## **6. New Business**

Mike asked the Board to consider a one-time 2.5% cost of living adjustment in January of 2102 and a one-time 1.5% cost of living adjustment in 2013. Mike explained the cost and benefits of doing a cost of living adjustment. Sid indicated the full Board should be

present during these discussions and expressed concern that this was not presented with the budget in September. Mike reminded the Board that he did not propose pay raises as part of the budget, but would bring a recommendation to the Board in the coming months. Both Patricia and Beronica recalled Mike telling the Board during the budget discussion that he would bring a recommendation to the Board at a later date. Mike said he was not trying to deceive anyone, but just didn't have a plan for addressing salaries during the budget process. He said he put much thought and consideration into the matter and spoke with Patricia once he formulated a plan he thought would work. He indicated he will always look out for the best interest of the employees, and a cost of living adjustment was what is needed. Phares said he was generally supportive of the concept of recognizing the hard work of employees but thought it appropriate to wait for the full Board. Mike explained one-time cost would be absorbed in CHA's 2012 costs. Sid commented that CHA staff is doing a good job but wanted to make sure it can be absorbed in the budget. Beronica said she is amazed about the amount of work that is being done with the little staff we have. Patricia said there is nothing to vote on and asked that the issue be placed on the December agenda.

Mike discussed the storage remodel costs. He said it cost \$37,658 for approximately 2,400 square feet. Of the \$37,658, \$15,000 was reimbursed by the Church, and \$10,000 was reimbursed by unobligated reserves. CHA was on the hook for \$12,658, which will be recovered (at the current rent rate) by 2015.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.