

MINUTES FOR HOUSING COMMISSION MEETING

APPROVED
by Housing Commission on 07/22/2025

DATE: Tuesday, April 1, 2025
TIME: 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Housing and Community Development Department
350 West 6th Street; Dubuque, IA 52001

Chairperson Rick Merfeld called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. following staff assurance of compliance with Iowa Open Meeting Law.

Commissioners Present: Rick Baumhover Renee Kehoe (*arrived at 4:14 p.m.*)
Cathy Dickens Rick Merfeld
Amy Eudaley Julietta Scott (*left at 4:45 p.m.*)
Ross Janes

Commissioners Absent: *None*

Staff Present: Gina Hodgson Ben Pothoff
Tonya England Hollie Ohnesorge (*arrived at 5:02 p.m.*)

Public Present: *None*

Certification of Minutes – January 28, 2025 Housing Commission Meeting

Commissioner Amy Eudaley moved to approve the Minutes for the January 28, 2025 Housing Commission Meeting. Commissioner Cathy Dickens seconded. Six (6) in favor. Zero (0) not in favor. Zero (0) abstained. Motion passed.

Correspondence/Public Input

There was no correspondence nor public input.

Old Business

- a) Adopt PHA Conflict of Interest Policy – tabled until July meeting

Gina Hodgson, Assisted Housing Supervisor, reported there are still no updates on the PHA Conflict of Interest Policy.

New Business

- a) Tenant Accountability Q&A – Ben Pothoff

Ben Pothoff, Deputy Code Official, answered a variety of questions. He provided the following information:

- Tenant/Landlord responsibility is guided by the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC). Landlords must provide a unit that is fit for occupancy and free from pest infestation.
- Once tenants take possession of the unit, the tenants are responsible for maintaining the space they control in a clean, safe and sanitary condition.
- Tenants are responsible for the replacement of light bulbs and batteries in smoke detectors. As the moved is made to permanently sealed batteries in smoke detectors, the responsibility of smoke detectors will shift to the landlordss.
- Landlords can enforce what is listed on the lease for the respective unit.
- Sanitary conditions that are health hazards may be enforced by inspection staff.
- The requirments for appliances depends on adequate space for storage and cooking and the type of unit.
- If the landlord is not meeting obligations, the tenant is asked to notify the landlord and give the landlord a chance to resolve the issue prior to contacting the office. With Assisted Housing complaints, they are obligated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to respond to all complaints; sometimes, the

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response may be in the form of a follow-up to make sure there was closure on the issue.

- Stoppage of leaks is a landlord's responsibility unless the landlord is able to prove it was caused by the tenant.
- Utilities are verified if tenant is responsible for the payment of the respective utility or if there is a complaint.
- The software used by residents and landlords to report concerns to the City is being replaced with Catalysis. Pothoff indicated he will have someone to present information on the new system at a later Housing Commission Meeting.

b) PHA 5-Year Plan (FY 2025-2029) Presentation

i. Public Hearing to be held at 4/7/25 City Council Meeting

Commissioner Merfeld informed the commissioners that the City Council will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, April 7, 2025 for the PHA 5-Year Plan. Hodgson continued the discussion on the PHA 5-Year Plan with a presentation.

She explained the process behind submitting the PHA 5-Year Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development—which includes the following:

- Holding a meeting with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) and receiving recommendations
- Placing the draft of the Plan (which includes Minutes from the RAB Meeting) on the City's website for the public to review
- Presenting the information to the Housing Commission and obtaining a recommendation for City Council
- Receiving an adoption of the Plan from City Council during a Public Hearing

The 5-Year Plan, which has a broad scope, is updated every five (5) years. The Annual Plan is more specific and provides an update on how the Department is doing on meeting the goals and objectives stated in the PHA 5-Year Plan on a yearly basis.

Hodgson shared the mission statement for the Housing & Community Development Department. She also explained of the goals and objectives; some of the highlights included the following:

- Increasing homeownership program participation through coaching via the Next Level Savings Program; obtaining tenant and homeownership education programs; and issuing two (2) additional vouchers for homeownership
- Supporting childcare initiatives in the community in filling the need for childcare for parents working on third shift jobs
- De-concentrating areas of poverty by closing the gaps in public transportation, reviewing Voucher Payment Standards (VPS) and updating so tenants may move to zip codes 52002 and 52003; updating landlord education video, meeting monthly with the Landlord Association

In the Progress Report section, Hodgson explained over the past 5 years the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) for building inspection compliance was adopted; the voucher payment standard increased to 120% of Fair Market Rent (FMR), Assisted Housing implemented a new software for rental assistance, the Office of Shared Prosperity was created through work in the communities, documents were translated into Spanish and Marshallese, and the Department was awarded an USDA Grant to increase food access.

Hodgson also reviewed the goals for the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Fair Housing.

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Commissioner Amy Eudaley moved to recommend for City Council to approve/adopt the PHA 5-Year Plan. Commissioner Rick Baumhover seconded. Six (6) in favor. Zero (0) not in favor. Zero (0) abstained. Motion passed.

c) Recommendation for Removal from Housing Commission - David Wall

Hodgson reported David Wall applied for a position on the Housing Commission. City Council approved for Mr. Wall to be a Housing Commissioner; he did not sign the Oath of Office. Also, Mr. Wall did not respond to multiple requests from staff. Hodgson went on to explain the process for removing an individual from the Housing Commission once the person is appointed to the Housing Commission.

Commissioner Baumhover moved to recommend the removal of David Wall from the Housing Commission to City Council. Commissioner Eudaley seconded. Six (6) in favor. Zero (0) not in favor. Zero (0) abstained. Motion passed.

Reports

a) Community Development Advisory Commission Report

Commissioner Renee Kehoe did not provide a report on the last meeting for the Community Development Advisory Commission.

b) Assisted Housing Waiting List Statistical Summary

Hodgson explained there were over 1,000 participants on the housing assistance programs when HUD took away the reserve funding. Currently, there are between 970 and 980 vouchers that need to be maintained.

The waiting list for the Housing Choice Vouchers will remain closed for the remainder of the year. Staff will be pulling from fifteen (15) to twenty (20) applicants from the waiting list each month. At this time, only ten (10) of the twelve (12) HUD – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD – VASH) vouchers are currently being utilized; staff are working with the Department of Veteran Affairs to determine why no referrals have been received.

c) Housing Choice Voucher Participant Statistical Summary

Hodgson reported seventeen (17) vouchers for the Project Based Voucher program are being utilized; there are no vouchers currently available for the program.

Information Sharing

- a) The Housing Trust Fund has exhausted all of their 2022-23 funding. They are beginning to utilize funds for 2023-24. There are plans to build an accessible house.
- b) Continuing resolution has been passed to provide funding through the end of the year for the Housing Choice Voucher.
- c) The next meeting Housing Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 22, 2025.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Renee Kehoe moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cathy Dickens seconded. Motion passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Minutes taken by:


Tonya England
Recording Secretary

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Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina H.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gina Hodgson
Assisted Housing Supervisor