

MINUTES JANUARY 21, 2025

GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION

The regular meeting of the Grand Rapids Housing Commission was held on January 21, 2025 in the Bobbie Butler Community Center at Creston Plaza, 1080 Creston Plaza Drive NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan. The President called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Absent: None

The President declared a quorum present.

Also attending: Executive Director Lindsey Reames, Policy and Program Planning and Implementation Manager Jose Capeles, Director of Resident Services Felicia Clay, Human Resource Manager Mia Gutridge, Finance Manager Kris Endres, and Mike Wolthuis.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Zylstra, supported by Commissioner Bernier, moved to approve the Minutes of the regular meeting of December 17, 2024.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

RESOLUTIONS & MOTIONS:

1. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving the financial statements for period ending December 31, 2024.

24-59 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

**Resolution to Approve Financial Dashboard Reports that reflect the
Operating Statement of Income and Expenditures**

WHEREAS, the Operating Statement of Income and Expenditures for the period ended December 31, 2024 has been prepared for and reviewed by Executive Staff at the Grand Rapids Housing Commission; and

WHEREAS, this information has been prepared for the Housing Commission Board in a financial dashboard format; and

WHEREAS, the Housing Commission staff and Board, in its review, has determined that the expenditures are appropriate for the efficient and economical operation of the Housing Commission for the purpose of serving low income families.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION, that the Operating Statement of Income and Expenditures as represented in the dashboards for the period ended December 31, 2024 are in all respects approved.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Alexander, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

2. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving trash removal contracts.

24-60 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

**Resolution to Award Contract for
Refuse Collection Services**

WHEREAS, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) has requested bids for refuse collection services for nine properties; and

WHEREAS, bids were received from three (3) contractors by the deadline of December 4th, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, the following is a summary of proposal submissions:

Property Building			
	Arrow Waste	Republic Services	Waste Management
Adams Park Apts	\$1,089.00	\$311.76	\$705.60
Campau Commons	\$3,523.00	\$2,182.32	\$2,367.46
Hope Community	\$798.00	\$559.68	\$475.00
Leonard Terrace	\$942.00	\$415.68	\$5,638.80
Mt. Mercy	\$1,091.00	\$623.52	\$712.59
Ransom Tower	\$1,340.00	\$450.33	\$795.07
Sheldon Apts	\$601.00	\$277.12	\$401.54
Creston Plaza	\$2,784.00	\$1,972.00	\$1,992.10
Antoine Court	\$1,075.00	\$727.44	\$911.30

WHEREAS, Republic Services (highlighted in yellow) is recommended as the most responsible and responsive for Adams Park (\$311.76); Campau Commons (\$2,182.32); Hope Community (\$559.68); Leonard Terrace (\$415.68); Mt. Mercy (\$623.52); Ransom Tower (\$450.33); Sheldon (\$277.12); Creston Plaza (\$1,972.00); and Antoine Court (\$911.30); and

WHEREAS, other services are on an “as authorized” basis and will be paid at the proposal hourly rate amounts.

WHEREAS, the contract will be for a period of one year beginning February 1, 2025. An option year may be executed with an increase not to exceed CPI if agreed by both parties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION that the Executive Director is hereby authorized to execute a contract for refuse services for Adams Park (\$311.76); Campau Commons

(\$2,182.32); Hope Community (\$559.68); Leonard Terrace (\$415.68); Mt. Mercy (\$623.52); Ransom Tower (\$450.33); Sheldon (\$277.12); Creston Plaza (\$1,972.00); and Antoine Court (\$911.30). Other services may be agreed to at rates provided by bidders in their proposals. Contracts will be executed for one year with an option year at an increase not to exceed CPI.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Zylstra, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

3. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving purchase of Emphasys Elite software modules.

24-61 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

**Resolution for the Purchase and Implementation of Emphasys Elite Software Modules
and Hosting Services**

WHEREAS, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) is committed to strengthening operational efficiency, ensuring compliance with policies, and supporting the organization's mission to provide quality affordable housing and related services to the community; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC recognizes the critical importance of implementing systems and tools that enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in its operations; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC is committed to ensuring compliance with its procurement policies and procedures to maintain transparency, accountability, and efficiency in its operations; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC recognizes the importance of implementing a robust Procurement Module within the Emphasys Elite Software suite to streamline procurement processes, ensure adherence to established policies, and improve operational oversight; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC has identified the need for the Insight Analytics Module to enhance data-driven decision-making by providing real-time metrics and insights into critical operational areas, including occupancy rates, utilization levels, and work order completion performance; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC has determined that transitioning the Elite Software to a hosted environment managed by Emphasys will reduce long-term costs associated with maintaining on-premise equipment, place software maintenance and updates in the hands of Emphasys experts, and ensure timely application of patches and support services; and

WHEREAS, the proposed costs for these initiatives are as follows with an option of renewal for subscription services for up to 5 years:

- Hosting Services: \$105,620.00 (\$93,900 Subscription, up to \$11,720 Implementation)
- Procurement Module: \$52,439.00 (\$29,799 Subscription, up to \$22,640 Implementation)
- Insight Analytics Module: \$40,281.00 (\$27,681 Subscription, up to \$12,600 Implementation)

and the GRHC has determined it prudent to include a 10% contingency overhead for unforeseen expenses, bringing the total authorized budget to an amount not to exceed **\$220,500.00**.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION:

1. **Approval of Purchase:** The Board hereby approves the purchase and implementation of the Procurement Module, Insight Analytics Module, and Hosting Services for the Emphasys Elite Software as detailed above.
2. **Budget Authorization:** The Board authorizes the allocation of funds for this initiative, not to exceed **\$220,500.00**, inclusive of a 10% contingency for unforeseen expenses.
3. **Execution of Agreements:** The Executive Director, or their designee, is authorized to negotiate, finalize, and execute all necessary contracts and agreements with Emphasys,

subject to review and approval by legal counsel, to facilitate the purchase and implementation of these modules and hosting services.

4. **Implementation Oversight:** The Executive Director, or their assignee, is directed to oversee the implementation of the modules and transition to hosted services, ensuring that the process aligns with organizational goals.
5. **Compliance and Reporting:** The GRHC staff shall maintain detailed records of the procurement and implementation process, ensuring compliance with all applicable policies and providing comprehensive reporting to the Board to document outcomes and value realization.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Alexander, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

4. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving modifications to the leave policy to comply with ESTA.

24-62 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

Resolution to Approve Revised Leave Policies to Comply with the Michigan Earned Sick Time Act

WHEREAS, Michigan law has changed under the Michigan Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA), the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) must modify leave policies to comply with the requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC, after consultation with our HR consultant and labor attorney, is recommending modifying our policy effective February 1, 2025, to offer two different paid time off options to meet the needs of staff and be compliant with law; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC will:

- rename Paid Time Off (PTO) to ***Vacation*** time leaving the hours earned consistent with the current policy
- create a new paid ***Sick*** time leave category where employees accrue one hour of leave for every thirty (30) hours worked (approximately 72 hours or 9 days) that is compliant with the requirements of the law; and

WHEREAS, effective February 1, 2025, no new time will be added to the catastrophic leave account, but employees who have accrued carryover time in this bank may use it until it is gone in accordance with the current policy; and

WHEREAS, upon approval these new policies will be inserted into the Employee Handbook; and

WHEREAS, the Employment Contract with the Executive Director to comply with the new ESTA and be consistent with the revised Employee Handbook is amended as follows:

- Section 11. Paid Time Off (PTO) will now be Vacation Time with no other modifications to accruals and add 72 hours of Sick Time leave annually.
- Section 14. Catastrophic Leave Account is modified to be consistent with the updated agency policy with no new time added to the bank and carryover time in the bank available for use until it is gone. The language in this section is also modified to be consistent with the updated policy for payment for all unused catastrophic leave as outlined in the Employee Handbook

- Section 15. Fringe Benefits (C). Bereavement Leave is modified to be consistent with the updated GRHC policy in the Employee Handbook.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION:**

1. The Revised Time Off Policies (attached) be adopted; and
2. The Executive Director shall ensure proper training, distribution and implementation of the updated Employee Handbook to all GRHC employees; and
3. The Executive Director is authorized to make minor, non-substantive revisions or modifications to these policies and the Employee Handbook as needed in the future, provided such changes do not negatively impact the rights, benefits or terms of employment for GRHC staff; and
4. The new Employee Handbook replaces and supersedes all prior personnel policy manuals and employer-employee handbooks previously issued by the GRHC; and
5. The Employee Agreement with the Executive Director be amended as outlined.

Commissioner Miles, supported by Commissioner Alexander, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

5. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving award of GPNA contract.

24-63 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

Resolution to Approve Selection of Green Physical Needs Assessment

(GPNA) Firm and Authorization to Award Contract

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2024 Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) staff published a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide Green Physical Needs Assessment Services with a submission deadline for receipt of responses by Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. (EST); and,

WHEREAS, two (2) firms submitted responses to the RFP on or before the submission deadline, said firms being Bureau Veritas Technical Assessments, LLC (Bureau Veritas or BV) and The Nelrod Company (Nelrod); and,

WHEREAS, an Evaluation Committee comprised of three (3) GRHC employees has reviewed, evaluated and scored both submitted responses and hereby publishes the following results:

<u>Submission From</u>	<u>Evaluation Score 1</u>	<u>Evaluation Score 2</u>	<u>Evaluation Score 3</u>	<u>Averaged Score</u>	<u>Fee Amount</u>	<u>RFP Ranking Position</u>
Bureau Veritas	100	100	100	100	\$46,650.00	1
Nelrod	98	95	96	96.3	\$52,899.00	2

; and,

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the submitted proposal coming from Bureau Veritas is the highest ranked and has the lowest fee amount.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION that the Executive Director is authorized to award a contract to Bureau Veritas Technical Assessments, LLC for the amount not-to-exceed the submitted fee of \$46,650.00 to perform the scope-of-work described in the Request for Proposals to provide Green Physical Needs Assessment Services.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Alexander, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

6. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving PBV award to Browning Claytor Townhomes.

24-64 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

Resolution Approving Project Based Vouchers for the Browning Claytor Townhomes

WHEREAS, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission ("GRHC"), in accordance with its approved Moving to Work (MTW) flexibilities and waivers, is authorized to award Project-Based Vouchers ("PBVs") to developments in which it has a vested interest; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC is actively pursuing and is in the process of finalizing the purchase of Browning Claytor Townhomes (the "Development"), a residential property consisting of 12 units, as part of its ongoing efforts to expand its portfolio and meet its mission of providing affordable housing options to low-income families; and

WHEREAS, the addition of PBVs to the Development will ensure long-term affordability for all 12 units by providing a deep subsidy to low-income families, thereby aligning with GRHC's strategic goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC's investment in the Development through the application of PBVs will further its commitment to addressing the housing needs of the Grand Rapids community by preserving and enhancing access to quality, affordable housing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION:

1. The Board hereby approves the allocation of Project-Based Vouchers for the Browning Claytor Townhomes upon the completion of its purchase.
2. The GRHC Executive Director or their designee is authorized to execute all necessary documents and take all appropriate actions to facilitate the allocation of PBVs to the

Development in accordance with applicable regulations and GRHC policies.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Zylstra, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

7. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving purchase of mobile security units.

24-65 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

Resolution to Select a Mobile Security Unit to Maintain a Safe

Environment at One or More Sites

WHEREAS, the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) is required to maintain a safe environment for residents living in our owned and managed housing communities; and

WHEREAS, this requirement can be fulfilled with various options including on-site security, roving security and mobile security units, each will have varying budget and operational impacts based on the characteristics of the site; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC is currently participating in a no cost trial of a mobile security unit at Creston Plaza and wishes to explore a longer term option at the expiration of the 30-day trial; and

WHEREAS, the key benefits of a mobile security unit include, but are not limited to the following--powered by solar or methanol fuel, easy installation, location flexibilities, high-quality video evidence, customization options (powering and camera profiles) and designs to meet the individual development needs. The Mobile Security Unit will ensure deterrence, a

reduction in crime, decrease in unauthorized visitors, loitering/trespassing, and foster a safe environment; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC would like to explore mobile security options for each development to determine if the cost is reasonable and services positively impact having a safe community; and

WHEREAS, the Commission solicited quotes ranging from thirteen-hundred (\$1300) to twenty-nine hundred (\$2900) per month, the Commission is seeking approval to finish the process and award one (1) or more contracts not to exceed thirty-eight thousand (\$38,000) per site for the first year with a 5% increase annually, with four (4) one (1) year options if a mobile security unit is determined feasible.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION that after additional due diligence around feasibility and cost, and ensuring compliance with any AI and facial recognition policies, the Executive Director is authorized to select one or more contractor(s) and finalize the terms of the contract not to exceed \$ 38,000 per site for the first year with a 5% increase annually with four (4) one (1) year options.

President Steimle-App requested that the resolution be amended to state that this will be in accordance with current security policies in order to address issues with artificial intelligence.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Alexander, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution as amended.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

8. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving IT Service Contract as emergency procurement.

24-66 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

Resolution to Approve Award of IT Contract Services Under

Emergency Procurement

WHEREAS, the GRHC completed an assessment of the state of its information technology and security infrastructure and systems where multiple recommendations for improved operations were identified;

WHEREAS, a determination was made to transition the information technology and security services in a different direction, and to facilitate this change, interim IT services were necessary immediately; and,

WHEREAS, after consultation with HUD, it was determined the GRHC was authorized to exercise provisions in accordance with Federal procurement requirements and the GRHC procurement policy for a non-competitive award due to emergency circumstances without further HUD approval if under the small purchase threshold of \$250,000.00. It was further agreed that without current and on-going IT and security support, sensitive PII and threats around cyber security were risks that compromised the safe and efficient continuity of operations.

WHEREAS, to address any risks of the safety of information and potential equipment and system failures, immediate third party contract services were necessary; and

WHEREAS, due to the familiarity with the GRHC organization and IT and security structure, the GRHC procured the emergency services from Wolthuis Group on January 6, 2025 to reduce immediate risks, complete urgent needed services and limit the time interim emergency services will remain in effect.

WHEREAS, the Wolthuis Group, based on the GRHC mission, agreed to provide the emergency services at a significantly discounted rate. The emergency contract is anticipated to be completed within 120 days utilizing 1000 hours for a maximum contract amount not to

exceed \$225,000.00. Services will include identifying an optimal IT organizational structure to meet the GRHC needs and assistance with hiring staff.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION that they acknowledge and ratify an approval of the emergency award for IT and security services to Wolthuis Group in a sum not to exceed \$225,000.00.

Commissioner Bernier, supported by Commissioner Alexander, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

9. The President presented the Commission with a copy of the resolution approving request for conflict of interest waiver for Michael Weaver.

24-67 The following resolution was introduced and considered:

Resolution to Approve a Conflict of Interest Waiver to Contract with

Michael Weaver 60 days After Retirement

WHEREAS, the GRHC has a provision in their Conflict of Interest policy that prohibits contracting with a former employer prior to a one-year separation period; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC retirement plan (MERS) requires a 60-day waiting period before a separated employee may re-establish a working relationship; and

WHEREAS, Michael Weaver, who transitioned to part-time employment at the GRHC in May, 2024, plans to fully retire the end of April after more than 20 years with the GRHC; and

WHEREAS, he has focused the last several months on training staff to assume his responsibilities, but the GRHC has determined his expertise on a limited on-going basis would

be advantageous to fulfilling various future needs related to architectural and engineering oversight; and

WHEREAS, the GRHC is requesting the board approve a waiver of the policy provision that requires a one-year separation period for good cause. This waiver is supported by the policy language that states, *“provisions may be waived by the Board upon the finding that the public interest would not be harmed in light of the person’s experience, qualifications, and the responsibility of the position.”*

WHEREAS, a HUD waiver will also be required to permit any contract arrangement with a former employee prior to the one-year waiting period; and

WHEREAS, upon approval of the waiver by both the Board and HUD, the term of the contract will be for up to a twelve (12) month period not to exceed 720 hours at an hourly rate of \$125.00 with a contract value not to exceed \$90,000.00. The Executive Director will authorize work on an as needed basis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION that a waiver of the one-year waiting period for Michael Weaver is approved and upon approval of a waiver by HUD, the Executive Director is authorized to execute a contract not to exceed twelve (12) months for a maximum award amount of \$90,000.00

Commissioner Alexander, supported by Commissioner Zylstra, moved adoption of the foregoing resolution.

Ayes: Alexander, Bernier, Miles, Steimle-App, Zylstra

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

1. The Executive Director presented the Board with a copy of the Vacancy and Voucher dashboard reports for December 2025.
2. The Executive Director presented the Board with a copy of the Personnel Report for January 2025.
3. The Executive Director presented the Board with the upcoming travel and training schedule.
4. The Executive Director updated the Board on the HUD FFY 25 budget. There is no federal budget set yet, but it is likely that funding will be decreased and the GRHC will be able to provide service to fewer participants this year.
5. The Executive Director updated the Board on the HCV shortfall. There are currently upwards of 250 vouchers that are not being used and cannot be issued. Since no administrative fees can be collected for those vouchers it will be a very tight fiscal year.
6. The Executive Director reviewed informed the Board that the Jean McKee Scholarship applications are open now.
7. The Executive Director informed the Board the process for making the Annual Plan has begun. A survey will be distributed on the 5-year plan. There will be a public hearing and a Resident Advisory Board meeting to discuss the plan prior to the March Board of Commissioners meeting.

The President declared the meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Lindsey S. Reames

Executive Director