

PFLUGERVILLE

Pflugerville school district to provide more affordable housing for teachers, staff



Fernanda Figueroa
Austin American-Statesman

Published 12:06 p.m. CT June 30, 2023

The Pflugerville school district approved two measures to bring lower-cost housing to district employees as officials try to retain staff who are having affordability issues.

During its Thursday meeting, the school district unanimously approved an agreement with the Texas Workforce Housing Foundation for it to provide affordable rent prices to district staff through certain apartment complexes in the area.

The board also approved a \$2 million contract with Pinnacle/Woodbury Development to help the district develop its own housing for teachers as part of a 2022 bond election. The contract passed, 6-1, with Trustee Vernagene Mott being the lone no vote.

As the cost of living continues to rise in the area, many Pflugerville teachers are struggling to keep up. Some are working second jobs or moving out of the district to be able to afford their homes, officials say.

More: RRISD employees to have affordable workforce housing beginning in August

The state foundation, which also has a housing agreement with the Round Rock school district, will establish an initial \$1 million affordability fund and an annual contribution of \$50,000 for each property moving forward to be used to provide discounted rent prices to district staff at the apartment complexes, to be picked at a later date. The fund can be used by district personnel for rental payments, to cover moving expenses, security deposits or for downpayment assistance if they choose to move out.

If more apartment complexes are added to the agreement, the foundation will provide the same payments. The district will have to approve any complexes that are added to the agreement, said Adam Harden, a foundation representative.

Harden for the foundation said some units are reserved for families making no more than 30% of the area median income and others for those making no more than 60%.

Rent for a one-bedroom apartment starts at \$1,295 and at \$1,829 for a two-bedroom unit. But rent for district staff would start at \$621 for a one-bedroom unit and \$744 for a two-bedroom apartment for an employee making no more than 30% of the are mean income, or \$36,690.

Staff making no more than 60% of the area income, or \$73,380, would pay rent at \$1,242 for a one-bedroom, saving \$53 per month, and \$1,489 for a two-bedroom apartment, saving \$340 per month.

Harden said the foundation would be responsible for operating, financing, maintaining, repairing and rehabilitating the housing units.

"It's a lot of pros and no cons," Mott said.

In 2022, voters approved a proposition that would allow the district to use \$43.92 million to build its own teacher housing. With the approval of the contract, Pinnacle/Woodbury will be in charge of design, construction and property management.

The project is expected to bring between 100-200 units available only to teachers. Officials said it could take between two and four years to complete the housing development.

"We want to do build something special," said Superintendent Doug Killian. "We don't just want to build something that everybody builds."