

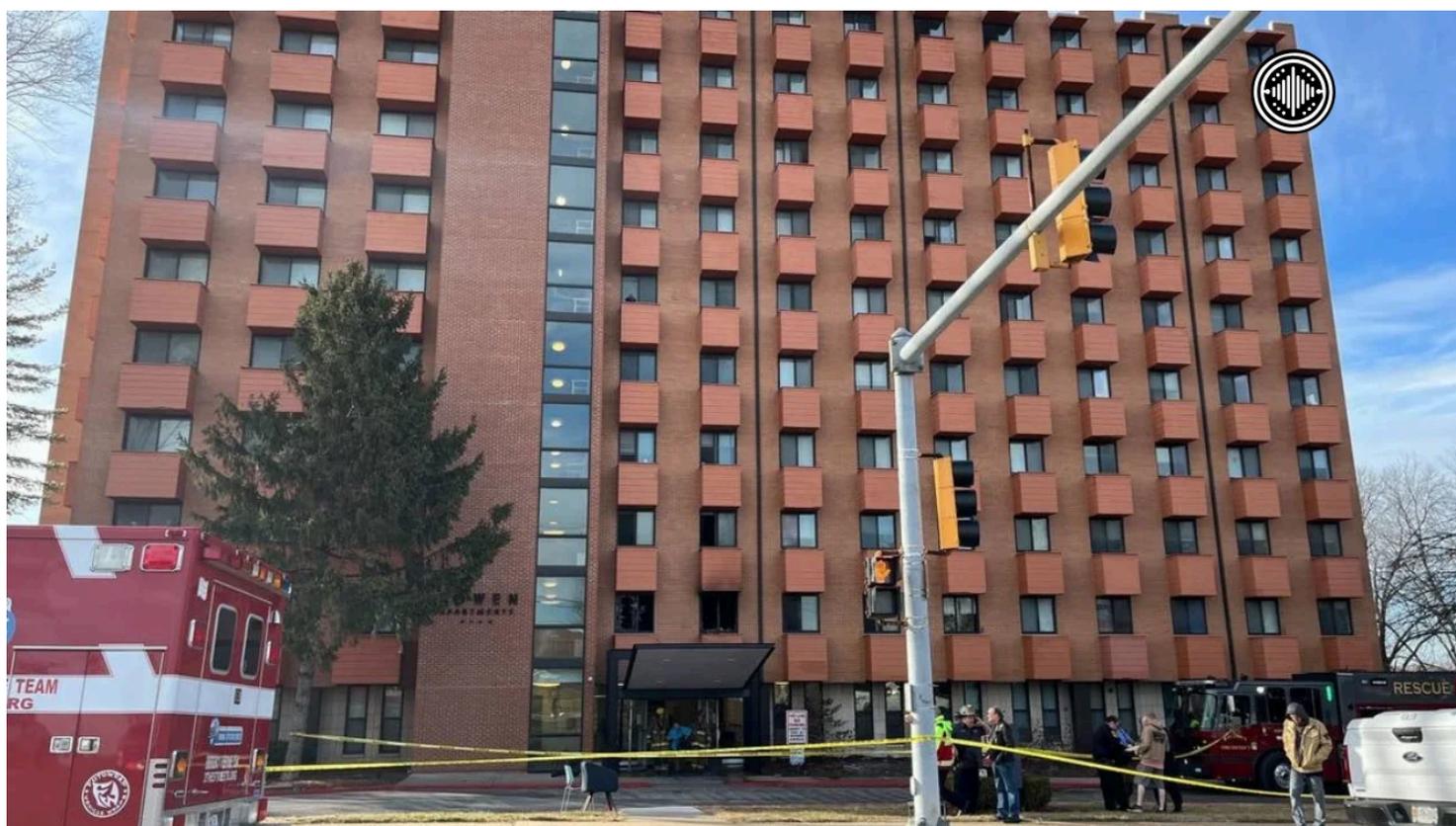
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Raytown Seniors Unite Over Heat, Rent Hikes at Bowen Tower

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At Bowen Tower Apartments in Raytown, a community largely made up of senior citizens and people with disabilities is standing together to demand better treatment and safer living conditions. More than half of Bowen Tower’s residents have joined a tenant union, supported by KC Tenants, an advocacy group that helps renters organize for their rights. This union is making a clear statement to property management: the living conditions at Bowen Tower are unacceptable, and urgent changes are needed.

Among the most pressing concerns are frequent outages of essential services like heating, air conditioning, hot water, and elevator access. For seniors and people with disabilities, these issues are not just inconveniences; they pose real health risks. One resident, Shelley Bell, who is battling bone cancer, shared how unbearable it was during a recent heat wave to live in an apartment with no air conditioning. “This past week we did not have air conditioning and both elevators were broken, so I had to walk up and down six flights of stairs to go grocery shopping,” she said. For someone with her health challenges, such conditions are exhausting and dangerous.

Other residents face their hardships. Tina McDonald cares for her father, who has Alzheimer’s disease, while living in an apartment that constantly floods and leaks water from the bathroom floor. On top of these unsafe conditions, she says her rent has been increased by \$193 this year alone. These steep rent hikes are a major source of stress for many tenants, especially when combined with ongoing maintenance problems.

The landlord, Charles Hill of Alta/CGHS Real Estate Investments, is accused by KC Tenants of raising rents by more than 15% while the building’s conditions have deteriorated. Tenants feel these increases are unjustified given the lack of basic repairs and services.

The tenant union’s demands are straightforward: they want repairs to the plumbing, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; functional elevators; a rent cap to prevent unfair increases; recognition of their union; and protections against eviction.

Despite these efforts to organize peacefully, residents say management has responded with hostility. Reports include management calling the police on tenants during protests, sending letters banning union meetings on the property, and threatening eviction. These actions have only intensified the tenants’ resolve to fight for their rights and dignity.

Bowen Tower’s situation is a stark reminder of the challenges many vulnerable renters face, especially seniors and people with disabilities, when landlords fail to maintain safe, livable housing. The residents’ union represents a powerful example of how community organizing can give a voice to those often overlooked.

As the summer heat continues and repairs remain incomplete, the Bowen Tower tenants’ fight is far from over. Their determination to live in safe, affordable, and respectful housing speaks to a broader need for accountability and fairness in housing management everywhere.

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