



**Asheville Housing Authority
Commission Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2021**

I. Work Session

The Board of Commissioners held a closed work session.

II. Regular Meeting - Call to Order

Chair Cassandra Wells called the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at **6:13 pm on Wednesday, March 24, 2021** at the Central Office, 165 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville, NC 28801. The meeting was facilitated via a Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19. Housing Authority staff were on-site to ensure participation by any interested member of the public. Teresa Jenkins conducted the roll call. The following Commissioners were present: Chair Cassandra Wells, Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering, Member Tilman Jackson, Member Amy Kemp, and Member Gene Bell.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Gene Bell made a motion, seconded by **Tilman Jackson**, to approve the minutes from the last meeting. The Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of **January 27, 2021**.

BOARD MEMBERS

VOTE

Ms. Cassandra Wells	Aye
Ms. Jennifer Pickering	Aye
Ms. Amy Kem	Aye
Mr. Tilman Jackson	Aye
Mr. Gene Bell	Aye

IV. Approval of the Closed Session Minutes

Amy Kemp made a motion, seconded by **Gene Bell**, to approve the closed session minutes. The Commissioners unanimously approved the closed work session minutes of **January 27, 2021**.

BOARD MEMBERS

VOTE

Ms. Cassandra Wells	Aye
Ms. Jennifer Pickering	Aye
Ms. Amy Kem	Aye
Mr. Tilman Jackson	Aye
Mr. Gene Bell	Aye

V. Bills and Communications

- a) David Nash introduced Sarah Cain and Melissa Hedt with the Asheville City School system. Sarah Cain and Melissa Hedt shared a presentation on the realignment and expansion efforts for the Preschool Program. The overall goal is increases equity and remove barriers to education within our community. They are planning to expand the Preschool Program to have classrooms in the Lonnie Burton Center, and possibly a few classrooms located within the Pisgah View Head Start building.
- b) David Nash presented an update on the Maple Crest at Lee Walker Heights Apartments. He shared some pictures of the property. The first building has opened as of the beginning of the month. Residents are beginning to move in and get settled, including some returning residents from the old Lee Walker Heights.

VI. Report of the Secretary

a) Asheville Housing Properties

Noele Tackett reported the monthly Asheville Housing Properties occupancy report submitted with the board packet. She reported that we ended the month with 109 vacancies, and 95% occupied. There were 14 units that were on rehab/hold status, 85 units being prepared for leasing, 10 ready for leasing, and 27 move-ins. The total vacancy days were 1505 with an average turn around per unit of 56 days. All properties were over the average turn around days this month due to COVID, which caused delays in getting materials to turn units, such as cabinets and appliances; as well as transferring residents taking some extra time to get moved, and new applicants not following through when contacted. Noele reported that they are working on getting Altamont ready in April and preparing files for Maple Crest. Cassandra Wells inquired about why applicants weren't signing leases. Noele explained that this is partly due to COVID and individuals moving out-of-state.

b) Asheville Housing Vouchers

Brandy Woodard reported the monthly Asheville Housing Vouchers report as submitted with the board packet. There is a total of 3262 vouchers, 3249 available to lease, 2858 leased, 391 available, and 132 assigned/looking. There were 8 mobility moves, 26 move-ins, 12 move-outs, 257 inspections, and 191 re-exams. Cassandra Wells asked about the red "x" notations on the report, and Brandy explained that HCVP staff is working to get leased up, however anytime there is a transfer it does not count as a new lease up. Tilman Jackson inquired about the inspection process. Brandy explained that the goal of the inspection is to ensure a unit is safe and sanitary. The doors, windows, electricity, and plumbing and essential safety requirements are checked. PBV units owned by HACA are inspected by a contractor and a HACA employee conducts the annual inspections for private landlord rentals.

c) Family Self-Sufficiency

Karolina Hopkins reported the monthly Family Self-Sufficiency report as submitted with the board packet. She reported that we have 250 participants in the program and 160 of them are earning escrow accounts. There was 1 new FSS participant enrolled in the month of February and no new escrow accounts. There are currently 24 homeownership applicants, and a total of 70 current homeowners.

Resident services staff helped with the startup new PODS at the Edington Center for Deaverview students. They hired 2 residents (one that's also currently in FSS) to help out with that PODS.

d) **Financial Report**

Tom Good reported the financial report as submitted with the board report. He reported that expenses are over budget, largely because utility bills are running higher than normal. Central Asheville and Southside maintenance expenses are a little over budget compared to other properties, however overall the financials still look good. HCVP is being affected by continuing lease-up challenges, which affect administrative fees, but with lease-up at Maple Crest and ongoing private landlord incentives, that is expected to balance out in the next few months. For Central Management, Woodfin has incurred excessive maintenance expenses, which will ultimately be charged to capital outlay and to strategic reserve funds appropriated by the Board for the major exterior safety project there. Overall, HACA financials are in good standing.

e) **Coronavirus Update & PODS**

Tara Irby reported on the Coronavirus response update. Staff continue to be diligent with our preparation, prevention, and protection efforts. We are working with WNCCHS to offer COVID vaccinations to staff and residents. Over 200 vaccinations have been administered. She acknowledged board member, Gene Bell and wife, Pat Bell for their efforts to ensure that COVID vaccinations were administered within the community at the Edington Center. We continue our current COVID protocols and continue to conduct outreach to residents, including meal deliveries. We have seen a decline in self-reported cases; only 2 self-reports in all developments within the past month. We anticipate fully reopening all offices the first week of May, with careful instruction to visitors and residents to follow the 3 W's.

Shaunda Sandford reported on the PODS, that almost all of the students chose to remain remote in the PODS, except for 5 who chose to go back to school. Since partnering with Chosen, Professors from UNCA and the YWCA have reached out regarding curriculum for the kids for the summer. They are planning field trips to support the curriculum. Shaunda is working on securing funding sources for the trips. She acknowledged the members of Chosen for their work with the PODS.

f) **Residents Council Report**

Crystal Reid reported for the Residents Council, which has been doing a lot of work to prepare the properties for Spring and Summer. Southside residents have been dealing with rainwater issues, and the Residents Council members have been working with all properties and Managers to address trash and get the properties cleaned up. Needles continue to be an issue in the developments. The trash service is pretty much 7 days a week; they take Wednesdays off due to the city trash trucks running. Crystal is working with Managers to assist with identifying areas on the properties that need improvements. Social gatherings are beginning to be of concern; the properties may need to send out communication to residents about social gatherings as we prepare for the summer. The Residents Council is working on hosting an Easter event for all residents.

Ben Williamson from Green Opportunities presented on the revisioning and revamping of GO's programs and services. GO is looking to implement a hybrid trades academy, which will provide cycles of construction training. GO Core will focus on providing training for "green" jobs, which was modeled from other training programs. GO has partnered with other non-profit organizations to offer workforce development training to the community. GO is also working on a new board recruitment cycle to get new appointments for the board.

g) Edington Center Report

Shuvonda Harper reported on the Edington Center. The PODS continue to be busy. The Deaverview kids are at the Edington Center and have been assisting in the garden with Chloe. They will work in the garden this summer. This coming Sunday, will be a continuation of the Sunday Brunch Series: Pizza, Pie, and Ice Cream. The HOP will bring the ice cream and host a job fair to connect kids in the community with jobs. The PODS did a wonderful Black History artwork display for the hallway, and they also painted posters which can be seen in the windows.

VII. New Business

- 1) Authorization to continue paying double time for emergency after-hours calls after March 31, 2021, including paying minimum of 5 hours at double time per week for the week that maintenance staff are on call.**

David Nash explained that this was part of the COVID response initiatives implemented last year. This was also a key concern that came up during the listening sessions that David conducted with maintenance staff. This will impact maintenance staff that have on-call duty. During some weeks they may not receive a call, but they are still required to be accessible, which impacts their work-life balance. HACA would like to extend this benefit for staff. Cassandra Wells inquired if we are following up with residents that have emergency work orders to ensure that the work is getting completed satisfactorily. Sheri Guyton reported that there are some measurements in place to ensure that work is getting completed; for instance, the answering service completes a work order and a report is passed along to the Directors for monitoring. Robert Hooper reported that follow up calls are being made in a representative sample of work orders.

Amy Kemp made a motion, seconded by **Gene Bell** to authorize continuing to pay double time for emergency after-hours calls after March 31, 2021, including a minimum of 5 hours at double time per week for the week that maintenance staff are on call.

The Board voted as follows:

BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Cassandra Wells
Ms. Jennifer Pickering
Ms. Amy Kemp
Mr. Tilman Jackson
Mr. Gene Bell

VOTE

Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye

2) Approval of revised landlord incentives, to be funded through unrestricted net position funds and grant funding as available.

Brandy Woodard reported that since July there have been 32 new landlords that have partnered with the HCV Program, adding an additional 68 new units. This is expected to narrow some, which why we are proposing this new incentive policy. Shuvonda Harper asked about a process to monitor landlords and follow-up with residents about their properties. Brandy reported that we have an employee that completes inspections, and they keep the lines of communication open in order to address concerns or fix issues. Brandy also reported that the Landlord Outreach Coordinator conducts orientation with residents and provides them with information regarding locating a place to use vouchers, and the HACA website provides information.

Amy Kemp made a motion, seconded by **Gene Bell** to approve the revised landlord incentives, to be funded through unrestricted net position funds and grant funding is available.

The Board voted as follows:

<u>BOARD MEMBERS</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Ms. Cassandra Wells	Aye
Ms. Jennifer Pickering	Aye
Ms. Amy Kemp	Aye
Mr. Tilman Jackson	Nay
Mr. Gene Bell	Aye

3) Authorization to negotiate a lease or use agreement with the Asheville City Schools to provide full-day preschool classes in Asheville Housing preschool classrooms and prioritized for Asheville Housing residents, beginning with the 2021-22 school year.

This is related to the presentation that was given during the meeting. David Nash expressed concerns received from some community members regarding a perceived conflict of interest regarding voting on this agenda item due to their affiliation with an Asheville City Schools board member or work with system. He suggested that Cassandra Wells and Tilman Jackson abstain from voting on this item to avoid the appearance of a conflict.

Gene Bell made a motion, seconded by **Amy Kemp** to authorize the negotiation of a lease or use agreement with the Asheville City Schools to provide full-day preschool classes in Asheville Housing preschool classrooms and prioritized for Asheville Housing residents, beginning with the 2021-22 school year.

The Board voted as follows:

<u>BOARD MEMBERS</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Ms. Cassandra Wells	Abstain
Ms. Jennifer Pickering	Aye
Ms. Amy Kemp	Aye

Mr. Tilman Jackson
Mr. Gene Bell

Abstain
Aye

4) Review of current applicants for the Board of Commissioners (no formal action required).

David Nash explained that there is an opening on the Board of Commissioners coming up. Some applications for this seat on the board have already been received, and the City plans to advertise the vacancy in late April. Cassandra Wells is completing her two full terms on the Board effective June 11, and the replacement for that position will need to be a resident. Shuvonda Harper is the only resident currently on the list of applicants. Jennifer Pickering inquired if Shuvonda could fill the seat while working for the Housing Authority. David stated that HUD rules are more flexible for the resident board member, so it would not be a conflict. Additionally, other applicants may come forward in the next few weeks.

VIII. Unfinished Business

None.


IX. Public Comment

Crystal Reid shared public comments with the board. She inquired about the COVID process for the PODS because members of the community were concerned about the length of the time that Montford Center closed versus Edington Center to handle positive COVID cases. Shaunda Sandford reported that the centers are managed by different entities, which is why there was a difference in the COVID protocols. The Montford Center is managed by Asheville Parks & Recreation while the Edington Center POD is managed by the Asheville City Schools and they are able to do contact tracing. As far as the Edington Center building overall, the Housing Authority is following the CDC guidelines and providing personal protective equipment, sanitizer, and conducting temperature checks. She also asked about the Board's future vision for the Edington Center, which is still under discussion by the Board.

X. Adjournment

The board meeting ended at 8:13 pm. The next meeting will be held at 6:00 pm on April 28, 2021 at Asheville Housing Authority Central Office, 165 S. French Broad Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801.


Cassandra Wells, Chair

ATTEST:

David Nash, Secretary