

**Asheville Housing Authority  
Commission Meeting Minutes  
July 28, 2021**

**I. Work Session**

The work session was held at the Central Office starting at 5:05 pm. The following Commissioners were present: Chair Gene Bell, Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering, Member Roy Harris and Member Reginald Robinson. Member Amy Kemp was present by phone.

David Nash opened the work session by reviewing the agenda items. Gene Bell has requested that the public comment period be moved to the beginning of the board meeting, but still allow for public comment at the end and all members were in agreement.

David Nash advised members that April Brown, Asheville Chamber of Commerce and Sekou Coleman, Asheville Writers in the Schools and Community, had presentations for the Board. Jennifer Pickering is in favor of contracting with Asheville Writers in the Schools and Community and asked what that process would look like. David Nash explained that we would need to go through our contracting process.

David Nash updated members on the Edington Center. He explained that Up Front Sports and Partners Unlimited have agreed to share office space. We still need to meet with GO on renewing their lease for a reduced space, and Shaunda Jackson is working with Asheville Writers in the Schools on their lease. Jennifer Pickering and Roy Harris asked for clarification on job descriptions and responsibilities for HACA staff assigned to the Edginton Center. David Nash explained that Shaunda, in her Board-assigned leadership role at the center, is planning to meet with Shuvonda when she returns from vacation and will make a recommendation about those responsibilities.

David Nash discussed agenda item #1, Approval of Resolution No. 2021-2, accepting MTW designation and authorizing the Executive Director to sign and submit to HUD the Moving to Work Amendment to Annual Contribution Contract(s). David Nash explained that it will take approximately 9-12 months to implement this program, once we get started.

David Nash discussed agenda item #2, Appointment of Tara Irby, Chief Operating Officer, as Assistant Secretary of the Board of Commissioners. David Nash explained that this appointment will allow Tara Irby to sit in his place, as necessary. Jennifer Pickering inquired about the hiring process for the Chief Operating Officer. David Nash shared details about the hiring panel and explained that the selection of the top candidate was unanimous.

Jennifer Pickering inquired about the status from City Council to appoint two additional Board members. David Nash explained that it is his understanding that we will be adding

two more seats and the Mayor will reappoint Tilman Jackson and review all applicants to make the decision on the second new applicant.

David Nash discussed the need to set a date for review of HACA's 5 Year Annual Plan. He suggested several dates for the retreat and Saturday, September 11 works best for all members. David Nash explained the importance of taking Asheville City's goals and 2036 vision into consideration with our planning process and goals. Jennifer Pickering suggested that we hire a facilitator to conduct this meeting, and David Nash agreed to do that. Gene and Jennifer will reach out to the community and identify a recommended facilitator.

Work Session ended at 6:01 pm.

## **II. Regular Meeting - Call to order**

Chair Gene Bell called the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at **6:06 pm on Wednesday, July 28, 2021** at the **Central Office, 165 South French Broad Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801**. Noele Tackett conducted the roll call. The following Commissioners were present: Chair Gene Bell, Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering, Member Amy Kemp, Member Roy Harris, and Member Reginald Robinson.

## **III. Approval of minutes from last meeting**

Roy Harris made a motion, seconded by Reginald Robinson, to approve the minutes. The Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of June 23, 2021.

## **IV. Public Comment**

Chair Gene Bell opened the floor for public comment before meeting; there were no comments.

## **V. Bills and Communications**

April Brown with Asheville Chamber of Commerce presented their Inclusive Hiring Partners Program and explained that their goal is to continue to recruit new businesses and employers for the area. They have training programs for entrepreneurship development as well as workforce development for the community. So far they have 19 participating employers with over 300 jobs open and ready to be filled. They are hosting a career fair to introduce employers to the community in several public housing communities over the next couple of months, beginning with PVA on July 29, 2021.

We had a slide-show presentation from Sekou Coleman with Asheville Writers in the Schools and Community proposing a HACA newsletter for our communities. Official proposal will be submitted to HACA by October 2021. Staff and Board members are all in favor of a HACA newsletter. David Nash explained that we will review all proposals submitted during the RFP process in alignment with our procurement contract process.

**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 they ended the month at 96% occupancy. There were 81 vacancies of which 8 in rehab due to fire damage, 66 being prepared for leasing and 7 ready to lease. The unit turn-around continues to be higher than normal with material and appliance shortages making those turn times longer; Safety transfers also delay turn times.

**b) Asheville Housing Vouchers**

Brandy Woodard reported the monthly Asheville Housing Vouchers report as submitted with the board packet. There are a total of 3367 vouchers, 2823 available to lease, 2937 leased, 19 available, and 147 assigned/looking. There were 7 mobility moves, 41 move-ins, 25 move-outs, 206 inspections and 198 re-exams.

**c) Family Self-Sufficiency**

Karolina Hopkins presented the monthly Family Self-Sufficiency report submitted with the board packet. They have 250 participants, 152 established escrow accounts with over 782,000 in account balances and 71 homeowners. Karolina presented a handout about the upcoming Community Cookout and Career Fair events.

**d) Financial Report**

Board agreed to review the attached financial report and report back to David Nash with any questions by Monday, August 2, 2021.

**e) Residents Council Report**

No report this month

**f) Edington Center Report**

No report this month

**g) Property Management Report**

No report this month.

**VII. New Business**

- 1. Approval of Resolution No. 2021-2, accepting MTW designation and authorizing the Executive Director to sign and submit to HUD the Moving to Work Amendment to Annual Contribution Contract(s).**

David Nash explained that the discussion about this started several years ago. Several meetings were held with residents within our communities to explain MTW and how it will benefit them to go to work without penalty. Resident comments over many years have made clear that the Housing Authority taking 30% of their gross pay (about 45% of their net pay) when they get a job is a major deterrent for them to look for work. The long-term consequences of this rent and income cliff is apparent in the large number of

working age residents who do not work, as well as divided families with breadwinners who have to live elsewhere to avoid impacting the family's rent. The current rent structure is a structural impediment to equity, and from a both a racial equity and reparations perspective, moving forward with a new rent structure is one of the most significant things we can do. The rent structure allowed by HUD in this MTW expansion study may not be perfect either, but joining MTW now will give the agency long-term flexibility to find the right balance and support our residents in reuniting their families and pursuing their dreams and aspirations.

David is asking for the Board's approval so that we can begin the 9-12 month implementation process. David confirmed that HACA will grandfather current FSS participants in with no changes, and create a new MTW-FSS program that will work for all residents.

**Reginald Robinson** made a motion, seconded by **Roy Harris** to approve Resolution No. 2021-2, accepting MTW designation and authorizing the Executive Director to sign and submit to HUD the Moving to Work Amendment to Annual Contribution Contact(s).

The Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE

NAY

Mr. Gene Bell  
Ms. Jennifer Pickering  
Ms. Amy Kemp  
Mr. Reginald Robinson  
Mr. Roy Harris

**2. Appointment of Tara Irby, Chief Operating Officer, as Assistant Secretary of the Board of Commissioners.**

**Jennifer Pickering** made a motion, seconded by **Roy Harris** to approve the appointment of Tara Irby, Chief Operating Officer, as Assistant Secretary of the Board of Commissioners.

The Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE

NAY

Mr. Gene Bell  
Ms. Jennifer Pickering  
Ms. Amy Kemp  
Mr. Roy Harris  
Mr. Reginald Robinson

**VIII. Unfinished Business**

None.

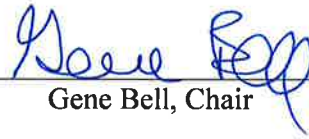
**IX. Public Comment**

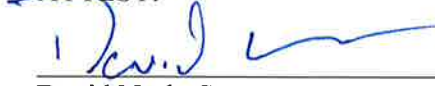
None.

Chair Gene Bell thanked staff for stepping up and supporting David Nash during this difficult time, while he focuses on his health and healing. Gene Bell and the Board are available to support staff.

**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm. The next meeting will be held at the Central Office, 165 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville, NC 28801 on Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 6 pm.

  
Gene Bell, Chair

ATTEST:  
  
David Nash, Secretary