



Asheville Housing Authority Commission Meeting Minutes June 23, 2021

I. Work Session

The work session was held in the Asheville Housing Authority-Board Room, facilitated by a Zoom virtual meeting starting at 5:09 pm. The following Commissioners were present: Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering, Member Amy Kemp, Member Roy Harris, Member Gene Bell, and Member Reginald Robinson.

David Nash began the work session by reviewing the agenda items. He explained the initial agenda item, and explained that the Board of Commissioners needed to elect a new Chair. Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering expressed that she did not wish to be the Chair of the Board during previous elections.

David Nash discussed agenda item #2; approval of amendment to Resolution No. 2021-1. David explained that this resolution was approved last month. This resolution is in regards to an area on Waters Street that is overgrown and becomes wetlands due to natural ground water and rain, which causes flooding and needs to be restored as a manufactured wetland. The grant from the state will help to repair this area. RiverLink has met with the residents. They are recommending to maximize success that the Housing Authority fund \$100k of the project. David recommends that these funds be taken out of the reserves budget in order to fund the project. Member Roy Harris asked if he should abstain from the vote since he is a member on the Board for RiverLink and David agreed that he should. Roy provided an update and overview of the work currently being conducted by RiverLink.

David Nash shared the demographic and statistics for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) residents as previously requested by the Board of Commissioners and explained the conversion process for going from public housing to RAD properties.

David introduced the new members Reggie Robinson and Roy Harris and they each provided a short summary of their backgrounds. Mr. Robinson is a lifelong resident of Asheville and a resident for the last 11 years of Hillcrest Apartments. He works for Asheville City Schools as a coach and serves as a referee for several travel sports leagues. Mr. Harris has lived in Asheville for several decades including a career with Meritor. Since retiring he has served as a community activist in the Southside Community, has attended a number of Housing Authority Board meetings over the last two years, and has served on the boards of several of HACA-affiliated nonprofit organizations over the last year.

Jennifer Pickering requested a formal process during the general meeting to elect Member Gene Bell as the Board Chair at least temporarily. Jennifer requested that the staff share

their input and thoughts on the Board of Commissioners and how they wanted the Board to be involved. Member Gene Bell recognized former Member Tilman Jackson for his service and dedication to the Board of Commissioners.

Member Amy Kemp asked about the Residents Council. David Nash explained that the Residents Council is a separate entity and not governed the Housing Authority Board. Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering mentioned that the board received an anonymous email regarding the Residents Council and Member Amy Kemp inquired about how the Residents Council tied into the budget. Shaunda Sandford shared that there are HUD regulations that govern the Residents Council. Member Reggie Robinson asked for more information regarding the guidelines, and Shaunda Sandford said there are polices related to the Residents Council and they are supposed to have their own Bylaws.

Work Session ended at 6:01 pm.

II. Regular Meeting - Call to Order

Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering called the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at **6:02 pm on Wednesday, June 23, 2021** at the Central Office, 165 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville, NC 28801. The meeting was facilitated by a Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19. Teresa Jenkins conducted the roll call. The following Commissioners were present: Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering, Member Amy Kemp, Member Reggie Robinson, Member Roy Harris and Member Gene Bell.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering asked for someone to share the highlights from the previous meeting minutes and David Nash shared two main items from the minutes.

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

BOARD MEMBERS

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

VOTE

Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye

IV. Bills and Communications

David Nash acknowledged the new members of the HACA Board of Commissioners; Reggie Robinson and Roy Harris. David formally introduced both members during the work session.

V. 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 13 units that were on rehab/hold status, 69 units being prepared for leasing, 5 ready for leasing, and 34 move-ins. The total vacancy days was 1057 with an average turn around per unit of 31 days. Additionally, she reported that there were 87 vacancies across all properties. These vacancies were due to several reasons such as; transfers, delays in cabinetry, and applicant issues. The number of unit turnaround days has improved and gone down. There were 4 units put back online at Altamont following fire damage. However, Hillcrest has 2 units temporarily down due to fire damage. Noele did a brief explanation of the Asheville Housing & Related Properties Occupancy report for the newer board members.

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, 2925 leased, 43 available, and 135 assigned/looking. There were 14 mobility move, 36 move-ins, 22 move-outs, 295 inspections, and 193 re-exams. Brandy reported that since the new landlord incentive program began they have added 44 new landlords and 79 new units.

Member Amy Kemp inquired if the Affordable Housing Commission was helping with housing voucher efforts. Brandy shared that she feels as if they are helping some through discussions on locating better housing opportunities and homeownership.

c) Family Self-Sufficiency

Karolina Hopkins reported the monthly Family Self-Sufficiency report as presented during the meeting. They had 5 new FSS participants. There was 1 new escrow account. There were 6 participants that graduated from the program. Shaunda Sandford reported on Homeownership. There are 3 participants that are ready to close on new homes, but they are waiting for closing dates.

d) Financial Report

Tom Good reported the financial reports as submitted with the board report. He reviewed the financial report format for the newer board members. He reported that tenant services for the RAD properties is slightly under budget, however maintenance expenses have continued the same trend as previous months. The overall operating expenses for the RAD properties are in good standing. The budget for other non-RAD HACA properties is in overall good standing. The HCVP continues to do well financially. A COVID related expense line item was added to HCVP to cover landlord expenses, which was previously omitted from the budget. COCC and Edington Center look good financially; no major changes. Overall, total net revenue is in good shape.

Shaniqua Simuel questioned about funding availability from a budget standpoint and how funding can be used for residents. David Nash and Brandy Woodard shared that

reserves are being used for the landlord incentives and open up more opportunities for HCVP residents. Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering encouraged Shaniqua to work with the HCVP program to gain guidance on available resources for residents.

Member Amy Kemp asked about higher variances. She also requested a balance sheet for 2020 year-end by next meeting. She feels the balance sheet will assist with strategic planning.

e) **Coronavirus Update & PODS**

Tara Irby reported on the Coronavirus response update. She reported no COVID cases were reported for June. She reported that we continue to encourage precautions, as well as encourage participation in testing and vaccination clinics. The Southside Kitchen is slowly phasing out their emergency COVID services while being sensitive to those still needing meals. Site Managers are coordinating with Buncombe County to help residents with payment assistance in an effort to re-coop unpaid rent and get resident accounts in good standing. There is another vaccination clinic in the planning stages for July 16th. Shuvonda Harper reported that this event would be from 5 pm to 8 pm. This event will host a vaccination clinic and fish fry. HACA will be partnering with Ingles and Land of Sky to host this event. Vaccinations for youth 12 years old and older will be available; both the Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccinations will be available.

Shaunda Sandford reported on the Chosen PODS. She shared a slideshow presentation of how the PODS finished off the school year. There were approximately 35 kids at the Edington Center during the school year, and now there are approximately 40 kids at Edington Center for Summer Camp. Since the school year has ended, they have been focusing on staff training and development. Read 2 Succeed and Carolina Day have both facilitated trainings for the staff. During the summer, they are looking forward to taking the kids on various field trips such as hiking, swimming, and zoo. Nikita Lindsey shared her personal appreciation for the PODS and encouraged staff to continue working together for the kids.

Member Roy Harris asked about expanding the PODS. Shaunda Sandford explained that having the space to expand is a challenge, as well as funding in order to hire additional staff.

f) **Residents Council Report**

Crystal Reid provided an overview of the Residents Council and its purpose, as well as the services provided by the Residents Council; including programs that are providing kids ages 11-16 with social trauma training and education, empower youth, and promote community environmental cleanliness and safety through the grounds crew. She expressed her gratitude toward the Housing Authority for their support of the Residents Council.

Member Reggie Robinson inquired about how someone could get involved in the Residents Council. Crystal shared information about the Resident Council groups at each of the developments. Reggie also inquired about what they needed from the Board in order to grow and be successful. Crystal shared that she felt it was important for the Board Members to participate in community engagement, so that residents were familiar with their faces. Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering encouraged board members to commit to a specific roaming path to be more present in the communities.

Elaine Edwards asked about emergency funding, and voiced concerns about how residents at Bartlett Apartments would have access since there was no longer an Assistant Manager at that location. David Nash reported that all site managers are working with residents to access emergency funding sources, and shared that the Housing Authority is in the process of getting that position filled.

g) Edington Center Report

Shuvonda Harper reported that they held a COVID vaccination clinic on June 5th, 2021. On June 17th, Edington Center hosted a watch party for the reparations information sharing truth-telling series, which approximately 25 people attended. Shuvonda announced that there is a garden party scheduled for this upcoming Sunday from 4 pm until 8 pm in recognition of the LGBTQ community; this will be a potluck. Also, Southside Rising will host an event this Saturday in Walton Street Park. This event will begin around 7 pm. Participants can watch a movie, kids can enjoy bounce houses, as well as hotdogs and hamburgers. They have been working to get feedback from the community regarding events that they would like to see hosted at Walton Street and also polling the community to gain feedback regarding the pool area at Walton Street.

Shuvonda Harper also shared that last Friday, the Edington Center hosted the family of Elder John Hayes, and shared what an honor it was to host his family because he was such a profoundly influential member of the Asheville Housing community.

VI. New Business

1) Election of Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

Jennifer Pickering made a motion to elect Gene Bell as the Chair of the Board of Commissioners, seconded by **Roy Harris**. The Commissioners unanimously approved.

BOARD MEMBERS

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

VOTE

Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Abstained

2) Approval of an amendment to Resolution No. 2021-1 (approved last month), to add a financial commitment of \$100,000 from Asheville Housing reserve funding for the Southside Community Stormwater Project.

Amy Kemp made a motion to approve an amendment to Resolution No. 2021-1 (approved last month), to add a financial commitment of \$100,000 from Asheville Housing reserve funding for the Southside Community Stormwater Project; seconded by **Gene Bell**. The Commissioners approved the amendment.

BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Jennifer Pickering

Ms. Amy Kemp

Mr. Reggie Robinson

Mr. Roy Harris

Mr. Gene Bell

VOTE

Abstained

Aye

Aye

Abstained

Aye

VII. Unfinished Business None.

VIII. Public Comment

India Pearson inquired about the changes occurring at the Edington Center, and requested some communication about the new direction of the Edington Center as it impacts the partners that are housed at the Edington Center. Crystal Reid also inquired about why keys and locks to doors had been changed. David Nash responded that he was unaware regarding the locks and keys situation. Shaunda Sandford responded that she was unaware as well. David Nash did share that he had been meeting with small groups to discuss the mission and vision for the Edington Center going forward. In consultation with the Board they have drafted a mission statement, which once reviewed and approved will be shared with all. Jennifer Pickering requested an emergency board meeting next week to discuss the concerns as they relate to the Edington Center and the changes occurring at that location. The board agreed to meet on June 30th at noon to discuss the Edington Center partnerships and staffing concerns.


IX. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm. The next meeting will be held at 6:00 pm on July 28, 2021 at Asheville Housing Authority Central Office, 165 S. French Broad Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801.



Gene Bell, Chair

ATTEST:



David Nash, Secretary