



## Asheville Housing Authority Commission Meeting Minutes September 22, 2021

### **I. Work Session**

The work session was held in the Central Office Board Room, facilitated by Zoom, and began at 5:04 pm. The following commissioners were present at the Central Office: Gene Bell, Roy Harris, Reginald Robinson, Tilman Jackson and Jennifer Pickering. Amy Kemp was present via Zoom.

**David Nash** opened the work session with discussion on the Board candidates to be interviewed and advised the board that two are ready for their interview via Zoom and the third applicant was unable to attend. The Board decided to interview the two available candidates and reschedule the interview with the third before making their recommendation.

**David Nash** discussed agenda item #1, Approval of the 2021 Operating Cost Adjustment Factor (OCAF) inflation adjustments to the contract rents for the RAD Project Based Voucher properties. David Nash explained that this would be a 2.6% increase in revenue for HACA. The increase will not affect our income-based resident's portion of the rent. David went on to explain that we do have around 40 residents who pay the full contract rent without a housing subsidy and they will see an increase of 2.6% to their rent. This annual increase is important because it allows for HACA to get more federal subsidy for our properties so that we can continue to pay our bills as costs increase over time. This increase effects all of our project-based voucher units with the exception of Maple Crest. Maple Crest is on a different schedule and we will address their increase in January 2022.

**Noele Tackett** discussed agenda item #2, authorization to allow employees to carry over up to 640 hours of PTO effective at the end of 2021 and beyond. Noele explained that there are employees at risk of losing PTO hours under the current policy, which only allows them to carry over 480 PTO hours. Employees have accrued more hours than normal over the last couple of years, partly because of COVID, and the staffing issues that has caused.

**Noele Tackett** discussed agenda item #3, Authorization for the Executive Director to approve a voluntary partial buy-back of regular PTO balances in December at 50% of value (one hour of pay for every two hours of PTO), up to a maximum of \$2,000 per employee. Noele explained that some employees look forward to being able to sell PTO for extra Christmas money and to avoid losing PTO at the end of the year.

**Tilman Jackson** led a discussion on the possibility of renaming Atkinson Street in Hillcrest to memorialize Johnny Hayes. **Gene Bell** requested to add this to the agenda as

item #4 and all board members agreed. Gene went on to explain that the board would initiate the process, but not be able to make it legal without the city's approval process.

**The Work Session ended at 6:02 pm.**

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

Chair Gene Bell called the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at **6:11 pm on Wednesday, September 22, 2021** at the **Central Office, 165 South French Broad Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801**, facilitated by Zoom to allow for remote participation. Noele Tackett conducted the roll call. The following Commissioners were present: Chair Gene Bell, Vice Chair Jennifer Pickering, Member Roy Harris, Member Tilman Jackson and Member Reginald Robinson. Present via Zoom was Member Amy Kemp.

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

Jennifer Pickering made a motion, seconded by Reginald Robinson, to approve the minutes. The Commissioners unanimously approved the minutes of August 25, 2021.

### **Public Comment**

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

## **III. Bills and Communications**

David Nash provided an update on Maple Crest lease up. There are 212 total apartments at Maple Crest and so 144 have been leased. That includes 31 returning residents from the old Lee Walker Heights. To date there are 74 project-based voucher residents and 30 tenant-based voucher participants who have used their tenant-mobility vouchers to move to Maple Crest, so 72% of the current residents at Maple Crest are HACA families.

Roy Harris asked why all previous residents are not returning to Maple Crest, followed by Tilman Jackson who also asked for the reasons residents gave for not wanting to return. David Nash said that he and Tara Irby will pull a report with that information and report to the board next month.

Roy Harris asked when the grand opening of Maple Crest would be. Tara Irby let the board know that the grand opening will likely be in November, but there's not an official date set yet. (Since the meeting, the grand opening has been set for Wednesday, November 17, from 3:30 – 5:30 pm.)

## **IV. 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 at 95% occupancy. There were 93 vacancies of which 8 in rehab due to fire damage, 80 being prepared for leasing and 5 ready to lease. The unit turn-around continues to be higher

than normal with material and appliance shortages making those turn times longer; Transfers, including residents moving back to Maple Crest, can also delay turn times.

Tara Irby gave an update on a plan to quickly turn the vacant units by utilizing Central Maintenance Staff, especially in the developments with the highest number of vacancies.

b) **Asheville Housing Vouchers**

Brandy Woodard reported the monthly Asheville Housing Vouchers report as submitted with the board packet. We have a total of 3367 vouchers, 2882 available to lease, 2945 leased, 61 available, and 118 assigned/looking. There were 12 mobility moves, 30 move-ins, 19 move-outs, 213 inspections and 181 re-exams.

Brandy Woodard presented an update, as requested by the board, regarding barriers HACA faces on landlord participation and voucher holder lease-up. Private landlords reluctance to accept voucher tenants has been, in the past, due to the Asheville area housing market and their ability to collect higher rents than AHA's payment standards allow. We have had some success in bringing in new landlords with our increased payment standards than any other time in the past. Landlord incentives started last year with CARES Act funding have also helped attract prospective landlords. From the voucher holder perspective: Two of the most widespread barriers in locating units with their vouchers have been finding units that fall within rent limits and lack of landlords willing to participate in the program and accept a voucher.

c) **Family Self-Sufficiency**

Karolina Hopkins presented the monthly Family Self-Sufficiency report submitted with the board packet. We have 247 participants, 152 established escrow accounts with 788,898 in account balances and 71 homeowners. Karolina reported that we received 300 backpacks, filled with supplies, from the United Way. We distributed them to residents at Pisgah View, Deaverview, Hillcrest, Southside and Klondyke. Karolina also reported on upcoming events: Inclusive Hiring Partners community cookout at Hillcrest on 9/30/21 from 4pm to 7pm. WNC Career Expo on 10/12/21 11am to 4pm. Transportation will be provided to and from the fairgrounds for any residents in need. A flyer will go out next week to residents with all the information needed to sign up for the transportation.

Shaunda Jackson reported that Chosen donated Nike shoes and toiletry packs to children. She also commended Robert Butler on helping residents obtain tablets through the Lifeline initiative that helps anyone on government assistance programs to obtain tablets for \$11. David Nash recognized Shaunda Jackson for an excellent presentation about the PODS to Buncombe County Commissioners.

d) **Financial Report**

David Nash summarized the financial report as included in the Board packet. There continues to be an anomaly with reporting replacement reserve transfers that is

causing the apparent issue in the RAD properties, but we hope to have that corrected next month. The properties and agency as a whole are in good financial standing.

e) **Residents Council Report**

Crystal Reid thanked all property managers for good communication with the Residents Council cleanup crew. Crystal reports that they are encouraging all residents to participate in the upcoming election of resident's council. Resident's Council will start preparing for Thanksgiving meals and Christmas donations for families. Crystal also wants to promote environmental awareness by encouraging proper disposal of trash within HACA properties. Crystal thanked HACA for providing necessary tools to dispose of trash.

f) **Edington Center Report**

Shuvonda Harper let everyone know that we are having a pop-up bike park on 9/23/21 from 5pm to 7pm. Helmets will be given out to kids and someone will be on site to repair bicycles, if needed.

V. **New Business**

1. **Approval of the 2021 Operating Cost Adjustment Factor (OCAF) inflation adjustments to the contract rents for the RAD Project Based Voucher properties.**

David Nash explained that every year we have the opportunity to adjust our contract rents to keep up with inflation. HUD calculates the amount we can increase, and this year it is 2.6%. This increase will not affect income-based residents share of the rent, but the handful of higher income residents who pay the full contract rent without a subsidy will see a 2.6% increase in their rent. This increase is for all RAD properties except Maple Crest, which is on a different schedule.

**Roy Harris** made a motion, seconded by **Reginald Robinson** to approve the 2021 Operating Cost Adjustment Factor (OCAF) inflation adjustments to the contract rents for the RAD Project Based Voucher properties.

The Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE

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

NAY

**2. Authorization to allow employees to carry over up to 640 hours of PTO effective at the end of 2021 and beyond.**

David Nash explained that some staff haven't been able to take time off for various reasons during the pandemic. This increase will benefit staff by being able to carry over more PTO at the end of the year and in future years.

**Jennifer Pickering** made a motion, seconded by **Reginald Robinson** to approve allowing employees to carry over up to 640 hours of PTO effective at the end of 2021 and beyond.

The Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE

NAY

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

**3. Authorization for the Executive Director to approve a voluntary partial buy-back of employee regular PTO balances in December at 50% of value (one hour of pay for every two hours of PTO), up to a maximum of \$2000 per employee.**

David Nash explained that this helps employees avoid losing time and with some extra compensation for the holidays. It also saves the housing authority some money by paying out 50% of the value.

**Reginald Robinson** made a motion, seconded by **Jennifer Pickering** Authorizing the Executive Director to approve a voluntary partial buy-back of employee regular PTO balances in December at 50% of value (one hour of pay for every two hours of PTO), up to a maximum of \$2000 per employee.

The Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE

NAY

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

**4. Authorization to initiate the process to rename Atkinson Street in Hillcrest after Elder John Hayes.**

**Reginald Robinson** made a motion, seconded by **Roy Harris** to begin the process of renaming Atkinson Street to memorialize Johnny Hayes.

The Commissioners voted as follows:

AYE

NAY

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

**VI. Unfinished Business**


Jennifer Pickering asked for an update on HACA's strategic plan. David Nash explained that we are waiting on the report back from the facilitator and will bring the updated plan to the board next month.

**VII. Public Comment**

No public comment

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm. The next meeting will be held at the Central Office, 165 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville, NC 28801 on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 6 pm.

  
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Gene Bell, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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David Nash, Secretary