



**Asheville Housing Authority**  
**Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**

Draft Minutes: March 27, 2024

Meeting Location: HACA Central, 165 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville 28801

**I. Work Session Meeting Opening & Roll Call:**

Chairman Jackson opened the Work Session and asked for roll call at 5:07 PM

**Board Members present:** Tilman Jackson, Board Chair, Reginald Robinson, Board Vice-Chair, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Roy Harris, Commissioner, Dr. Shantelle Simpson, Commissioner Kidada Wynn. Commissioner David L. Robinson Sr joined the meeting at 5:15 pm, after roll call. HACA President & CEO Ms. Monique Pierre was also present at the meeting.

• **Approval of Agenda**

**Commissioner Kidada Wynn moved** to approve the agenda as presented. **Commissioner Shantelle Simpson seconded** the motion. The Commissioners unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

• **New Business**

1. **NCDOT Project I-2513AC: Temporary Construction Easement:** Ms. Monique Pierre introduced Ms. Jillian Lundy, Right of Way Agent from AECOM to discuss an NCDOT project that impacts HACA property. The project, **I-2513AC** is to upgrade the I26, I40 and I240 infrastructure, which includes grading, paving, and drainage etc. There will be a 0.019-acre Temporary Construction Easement on HACA land granting permission for NCDOT to house equipment, supplies and walk on the property during the construction period. Once the project has been completed, the parcel of land will revert to HACA full ownership. There is currently no timeframe for the project. The **Let Date**, which is when NCDOT will turn the project over to the contractors to do the work, is estimated for November 2024. NCDOT has taken and contractors involved are aware of concerns to impact to the residents in the area and will take all concerns into consideration as the project progresses. All questions about the project should be forwarded to [Cherin Marmon-Saxe](#), HACA Executive Assistant.

Ms. Pierre explains further that this is specific for the widening of Amboy Road. She is working closely with NCDOT to minimize the environmental impact. NCDOT is offering a generous fee for the duration of the project, which will go toward our Youth Scholarship program.

**Chairman Jackson asked** about the duration of the project. **Ms. Pierre responded** that no duration has been set, that the commencement is set for November 2024, and that she anticipates, based on other large-scale projects, it to take 12 – 24 months if not longer.

2. **Organizational Change Management Meetings:** Ms. Pierre provided historical details about the August 2023 Board Meeting where staff were candid about workload, low morale, and staffing needs. Additional meetings were held with HCVP teams, to discuss all issues, define what is needed, and collaborate on solutions.

[Click here](#) to view Ms. Pierre’s full Organizational Change Management report.

**a. Immediate Triage:**

- i. Paused pulls from the wait list
- ii. Paused walk-ins on Thursdays

## Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

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- iii. Reduced Hours of Operations to give staff more time to complete wrap around work
- iv. Recruiting and hiring additional staff for HCVP
- b. Defining and acting on systemic issues that have led to existing conditions:**
  - i. KPI's to address changes required and concerns raised
  - ii. Invited other departments who are impacted and who impact HCVP
  - iii. Define what else goes with hiring additional staff
- c. Drive recruiting and hiring for the open positions**

**Ms. Pierre introduced Ms. Elaine Scott, HACA Compliance and Audit Specialist**, to further discuss actions taken and planned to positively impact processes within the department.

[Click here](#) to view Ms. Elaine Scott's full presentation: **Driving Compliance Excellence**

- a. Purpose of Training Sessions:** To equip our HCVP team members with essential skills and knowledge to enhance operational efficiency, foster strategic decision-making, and drive positive change within our organization.
- b. Process Development Timeline:**
  - i. **Process Mapping** – Group collaboration / brainstorming what improved process will look like: January 8, 2024
  - ii. **SWOT Analysis** – What is it and how do we turn strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats into actionable strategies: January 25, 2024
  - iii. **Key Performance Indicators** – Understanding importance of KPI's, relate them to overall HACA goals and objectives, and start the creation of HCVP KPI's: February 15, 2024
  - iv. **30 – 60 – 90-day reviews begin:** May 6, 2024
  - v. **30 – 60 – 90-day reviews projected completion:** Q2 2025
- c. Conclusion:** The HCVP organizational change process has enhanced staff involvement in problem solving, leadership's awareness of the difficulties staff face and helped establish baseline goals for performance improvements.

**Chairman Jackson asked** if the creation of this process is a direct result from the candid discussion had at the previous Board meeting. **Ms. Pierre responded** that this opened the door for additional meetings to further discuss all their concerns, create the process, collaborate with staff in the process and the solution creation.

**Chairman Jackson asked** for further information about where we are with the intake process, after pausing it in February? **Ms. Pierre responded** that the pause was concluded on February 1st, and there was a "Super-Pull", along with adjusting the admission policies, focusing on those on the list the longest. ~ 500 cases from the existing waiting list. Next pull is not scheduled yet, but capacity is building due to additional training and additional staff being hired. We are not open to taking new admissions yet because we are moving to an electronic application process. It will be April or May before we will roll out with testing.

**Commissioner Kidada Wynn asked** where we are with the hiring of new staff? **Ms. Pierre responded** that we have hired 4 new staff members, and we have 2 additional positions, one of which is an internal staff member

## Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

---

moving into an open position. Over hiring will benefit the teams and create more time for completing tasked and lessening pressure.

**Commissioner Wynn asked** why new staff appear to be carrying the biggest caseloads? **Ms. Pierre responded** that she is aware of this and is looking into why and what processes needs addressing that will create better assignment practices This will include a stepped approach as they gain experience.

**Commissioner Wynn asked** if workload breakdown is available for all departments. **Ms. Pierre explains** this is in the works along with the organizational charts and staffing charts. The goal is to build up middle management to allow for Directors to director and work on strategic planning and layer the management to spread the access and knowledge so that it does not fall to one person.

**Commissioner Roy Harris asked** what it will look like a year from now? **Ms. Pierre responded** that the goal is better balance. The numbers will be higher, but more evenly distributed across the staff.

**Commissioner Harris asked** which of the employees is the longest standing employee? **Ms. Pierre responded** Ms. Cornelia Battle, Co-Director Michelle Moore, and Ms. Marva Campbell. Ms. Renee Crain is longest standing employee overall.

**Commissioner Harris asked** if we are worried about burnout. **Ms. Pierre responded** that the staff, as it looks today, is bigger than it was when she started, and reiterates how focused we are to continue that growth. **Ms. Elaine Scott also responded** that the training courses give the staff knowledge, tools, and confidence to approach their jobs and handle the caseloads from a better place. We keep going.

**Commissioner Wynn asked** if the morale is better? **Ms. Pierre responded** that we were not there yet. We need more time to replace the years of past negativity with positivity, training, building trust, hiring, and continued collaboration and inclusion.

**Commissioner Harris asked** how will we know when it's done? **Ms. Pierre assures** the BOC that there will be continuous reporting, blind surveying of staff to get their input on where they think they are and what else is needed.

**Commissioner Wynn asked** how many people completed the initial survey? **Ms. Scott responded** that 11 out of the 18 in HCVP responded, but it did not include the other areas who participated. Additional information about recommendations and next steps are included in the packet.

**Chairman Jackson asked** if these positions were existing positions that represented full staff? **Ms. Pierre responded** that she does not know due to the fact there are organizational charts that define the department structure and what is full or half staffing. **Chairman Jackson asked** Co-Director Ms. Michelle Moore for additional information. **Ms. Moore responded** that there are 2 additional Housing Support Specialist from the original structure. **Ms. Pierre adds** that based on the needs of the department, there is an additional Housing Support Specialist, a Housing Quality Inspector, and a File Clerk that are currently being recruited for.

## Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

---

3. **Pilot Security Program with local law enforcement agencies:** Ms. Devin Brown arranged a meeting with residents at Asheville Terrace to discuss the security issues that threaten all, but especially the seniors and vulnerable populations. There have been robberies, intimidation, aggression, drug activity, older ladies being pushed aside when they are entering their homes, and harassed to sell their pills, among other activities. After meeting with Jon Mobley, who is very familiar with the site, it is recommended that beyond Protective Services, already present at the site, additional security presence is required. Recommendation:
- a. Hire off-duty deputies and police officers to patrol during defined high incident times
    - i. Pilot program to work with county initially, to provide this service to tamp down the activity, and make the environment calmer and safer.
    - ii. Resolution asked for an *initial pilot investment* of \$100,000 with long-term expansion with city and local entities to offer additional services.

**Ms. Brown** added that much of the trouble comes from residents of Compass Point by Homeward Bound who frequently enter the property.

**Commissioner Shantelle Simpson** asked if anyone has communicated with Compass Point Leadership? **Ms. Pierre** responded that there has been, and most recently, at a meeting this past week with interim ED. Additional meetings have been agreed.

**Commissioner Scott Farkas** asked realistically, long will the \$100,000 last? **Ms. Pierre** responded that at \$60 per hour, not long. We will be judicious with time, and schedule based on specific times, or activity as it is escalating. There will not be 24/7 coverage.

**Chairman Jackson** stated that Homeward Bound has reached out to help with insight on how to help with the situation. **Ms. Pierre** responded that she would contact; it is important to have peer to peer interactions to create the practice of remedying the situation.

4. **HACA Rebranding Project:** Anonymous survey to staff for input and ideas. 27 responses not all expressing in favor of changing were shared. The Resolution being presented to the Board requests an approval to move forward with the project and engage an outside firm to assist with the legalities of rebranding, and the project overall.

**Commissioner Farkas** asked what the price for the consultant is. **Ms. Pierre** responded that we would need to progress with Professional Services and do an RFP. A specific amount is being requested to be set aside, the expectation is not to be over \$100,000 for the whole project. Goals with the firm include preparing multiple options to the branding, roll out to the Board, and engage the residents to ensure that they can identify with the new branding.

**Commissioners Kidada Wynn and Vice-Chair Reginald Robinson** questioned the low response of the staff. **Ms. Pierre** explains that while it is a small percentage of responses, they are happy with whatever decision is agreed.

# Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

---

**Commissioner Wynn suggests** that it may be that since there was a full presentation in the past, they may believe that it is a done deal, and are not comfortable saying anything otherwise. Before a decision is made, it is important to hear from everyone.

**Vice-Chair Robinson suggests** that the Board go into the departments and ask for their input, without the CEO or local leadership asking. He expresses that he is adamant that we keep the name and identity, and he is against the trend of society changing everything that has happened until this point. **Ms. Pierre responded** that she is committed to that and is appreciative of ideas for additional feedback as it is likely that they are just not used to being asked for their feedback because it has been such a long time since it has happened.

**Chairman Jackson comments** that part of the success of changing, you must have your voice, feel safe enough to express your opinion, and if you do not speak your honest opinion, you cannot complain. It's not about yes men, or opposing each other, but about working together.

5. **Edington Center Youth Play Area:** Ms. Pierre explains that currently Edington Center does not have any outdoor, fresh air space for the EC kids to play, and do the things that kids like to and need to do. The Community Farm, which has been in a place for a long time, allows people in the community to house a farm on HACA property, but it does not serve the Edington Center community. In consultation with the Resident Services Director, Ms. Shaunda Jackson, the recommendation to the Board is that HACA reclaim the farm and turn it into an Edington Center Youth Outdoor play area. Ms. Jackson further explains that the farm and the area on the side, mostly owned by the church, are the only areas available to build safe outdoor space for the kids. It has been budgeted to fence in HACA owned portion of the side lot to make safer for kids.

**Vice-Chair Robinson asked** if we still own the property where the basketball courts used to be? **Ms. Jackson reminds** the Board that it is now residential apartments. **Ms. Pierre further explains** that it is an inadequate space for the kids, they must cross the street, and would have to utilize residential property to play. There are 130 – 150 kids participating in EC summer camp and activities. The Farm is on HACA property, and there is a federal obligation for us to use this space to benefit our communities and residents. It is not our residents who tend the farm, or get food out of the pantry, and it is not the highest and best use of our land for our residents, which is our federal requirement.

**Commissioner Roy Harris comments** that there are 40-year residents who have a stake in the Farm. He further requests that all three sides are heard before a decision is made. **Ms. Jackson explained** that the Resident Services Staff will be surveying families who accurately represent the southside communities and the residents that utilize the after school and summer activities.

**Vice-Chair Robinson asks** Commissioner Harris If we look to replace the farm somewhere else suitable, would you be on board? **Commissioner Harris responded** that he has a vested interest in the farm and gardens. He explains that he has just purchased gift cards for renovating the memorial in the gardens.

Further discussion ensued about the history of the farm.

- **Meeting Adjourned at 6:40 PM**

# Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

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## II. Regular Session Meeting Opening & Roll Call:

Chairman Jackson opened the Regular Session at 6:45 PM and asked for a motion to adjourn to a closed session, to discuss a personnel matter, after all business has been discussed. Chairman Jackson further asked for a motion to amend the consent agenda to exclude Resolution 2024-10 and 2024-11 based on the discussion held during the Work Session.

**Commissioner Shantelle Simpson** moved to amend the consent agenda to exclude Resolution 2024-10 and 2024-11. **Vice-Chair Reginal Roberson** seconded. The Commissioners unanimously approved the amendment to the Consent Agenda.

Chairman asked for roll call at 6:50 PM

**Board Members present:** Tilman Jackson, Board Chair, Reginald Roberson, Board Vice-Chair, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Roy Harris, Commissioner, Dr. Shantelle Simpson, Commissioner Kidada Wynn. HACA President & CEO Ms. Monique Pierre was also present at the meeting.

- Approval of Agenda:

The distributed agenda requires an amendment adding a closed Executive session to the end of the Regular Session. This session will address a personnel matter. **Commissioner Farkas** moved to amend the agenda as presented, **Commissioner Kidada Wynn** seconded the motion. The Commissioners unanimously approved this amendment to the March 27, 2024 agenda.

- Approval of Previous Minutes: February 28, 2024

**Commissioner Roy Harris** moved to approve the minutes from February 28, 2024 meeting, as presented. **Commissioner Shantelle Simpson** seconded the motion. The Commissioners unanimously approved the previous meeting minutes from February 28, 2024.

- Public Comment

There was no Public Comment at the is meeting.

- Report of the Secretary

1. Executive Report (click to view full report):

- a. **Urgent News:** Ms. Monique Pierre opened the discussion with Urgent News reiterating the work session discussion about the need for heightened security, and reporting a violent assault at Aston Garden Apartments, many instances of trespass, homeless encampments at Pisgah View, dumping garbage cans looking for personal information and several other activities making properties unsafe. Discussions have been held with Chief Lamb, and Sherif Miller to create partnership opportunities for offering additional safety and security at properties, hiring off duty Deputies and Officers to police high risk areas. Discussions were had with managers and staff to highlight the importance of completing police reports for every instance.
- b. **Reimagine Deaverview** has been put on hold indefinitely due to development partner opting to discontinue the partnership.

# Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

---

- i. Presents opportunity to pursue a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant and a more robust relationship with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, our residents, and other community stakeholders.

**Commissioner Roy Harris asked** who our partner was. **Ms. Pierre responded** with Mountain Housing Opportunities.

- c. **Human Resources-** has continual postings for 9 positions, and is committed to filling open site manager, assistant managers, and maintenance positions. Ms. Joyce Willoughby, Director of HR has been involved in many interviews, including for Arthur Edington Center, and is committed to bringing us up to being fully staffed.
- d. **Public Safety** – there is a shortage of Protective Services, and we are trying to hire more staff and to increase security presence.
- e. **Internal Process Improvement** – making additional progress with processing Insurance claims by increasing communications with staff to help move claims along faster and get checks processed faster.
- f. **Resident Participation Activities and Engagement-** 11 applications received for Resident Initiatives Coordinators (RICs)
  - i. Not caseload positions
  - ii. Site work and resident relationship positions to help foster communication, and resident participation.

**Chairman Jackson asked** if the positions listed under HR section the same as what was discussed during the Work Session? **Ms. Pierre responded** yes except for one existing Housing Support Specialist, which is posted, but not listed. In addition, a new Payroll Clerk, Jess Dobson has been hired.

- g. **Information Technology-** Adina Bianchi, Director of IT has completed the conversion to MS 365, and the current servers are being decommissioned.
  - i. Request / considering hiring an IT Technician to help with the load of supporting all our users. Having in-house support is much more efficient and cost effective
  - ii. Creation of SharePoint Sites for staff is in the works and will help build internal communication platforms, shared documents, version control etc.

## 2. **Financial Report**

Tara Boestan-Smith reported on the Financials for February 2024. Revenue and Expense summaries can be found in the Board Packet. Overall, we had a good month, and we are on budget. We await funding from HUD, which is skewing numbers a bit, but they will be updated as soon as received.

4 proposals have been received for the Audit Services RFP. Elaine Scott, Audit and Compliance Assistant, and Tom Newton, HACA Legal, assisted with the review and scoring of the responses and the top 2 have been given to Ms. Pierre for final review. Next stage will be presentations to the Board of Commissioners.

# Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

---

A new A/P position is posted with the goal being to hire a back-up, so that there is never the stress of not being able to get the work completed if there is an absence or vacation.

There is a project starting to transition to electronic billing for Duke Energy. This will make the process of reconciliation much more efficient.

**Chairman Jackson asked** how many open positions there are in accounting. **Tara B. responded** 1 A/P and 1 A/R, and this is because the current A/R staff member was promoted to Accounting Manager.

**Chairman Farkas asked** why there is such a big difference in the Grant Income budgeted numbers vs. actual numbers for the Edington Center. **Tara B. responded** that she is currently working with the county to report all expenses. The county is updating their numbers, and it will likely be next fiscal before we see that update.

## 1. Family Self Sufficiency/Homeownership

Congratulations to Ms. Handy, who after many obstacles and a great deal of hard work accomplished her goal of homeownership. Also, congratulations to an anonymous FSS Participant for receiving a vehicle through HACA's partnership with Working Wheels!

Full Resident Services report can be found in the Board Packett.

## 2. HCVP- Admissions

Noele Tacket presented the February report submitted with the Board packet. In February, we moved in 28 families and our overall unit turn around days averaged 75 days per unit. The overall occupancy rate was 93%. We ended the month with 148 vacancies, 29 out of service for various reasons, 117 in repair make ready for maintenance repair and 2 ready to rent.

Since June 1st, Admissions has had 115 enrollments into the MTW program. 102 have consented to the study and 58 have been assigned to Stepped Rent.

## 3. HCVP – Continued Occupancy

Michelle Moore presented the February report submitted with the Board packet. Housing Support Specialists completed 187 on-time annual recertifications, and 300 Housing Quality Standards inspections were completed.

HCVP had twenty-four (24) MTW enrollments in February, ten (10) of which were enrollments at new admission/lease-up. Of the total twenty-four (24), twelve (12) were assigned to Standard Rent and twelve (12) were assigned to Stepped Rent. As of the end of February, 1004 households have been enrolled, 500 of which have been enrolled in Stepped Rent.

# Asheville Housing Authority: Board of Commissioners March 2024 Meeting

DRAFT Minutes: March 27, 2024

---

- **New Business:**

1. **Consent Agenda to accept all Resolutions:** Chairman asked for a motion to accept the remaining Resolution as presented.

- a. **Resolution 2024-9: Approving Security Pilot**

- ~~b. **Resolution 2024-10: Approving Rebranding project commencement**~~

- ~~c. **Resolution 2024-11: Approving Edington Center Outdoor Play Area**~~

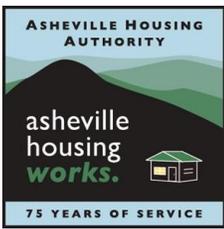
Commissioner Shantelle Simpson moved to accept the consent agenda. Commissioner Kidada Wynn seconded the motion. The Commissioners unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

- **Adjourn to Closed Session: 7:26PM**

- **Reopen Regular Session: 8:20 PM**

- **Meeting Adjournment: 8:21 PM**

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at the Edington Center, located at 133 Livingston St., Asheville, 28801.



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Tilman Jackson, Board Chair

**Date:**

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**ATTEST:**

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Monique Pierre, Secretary

**Date:**

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*Transcribed by: Cherin Marmon-Saxe, HACA Executive Assistant to President & CEO*