



Asheville Housing Authority
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

Minutes: June 25, 2025

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

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I. Work Session - Meeting Opening & Roll Call:

Chair Bacoate opened the Work Session and asked for roll call at 4:09 PM.

HACA Mission Statement and Core Values were read.

Quorum was present. **Board Members Present:** Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Carol Goins, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Maggie Slocumb, **Also in attendance:** HACA Interim ED Rhodney Norman, HACA COO Ella Santos, Cindy Rice, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cherin Marmon-Saxe Executive Assistant.

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Kidada Wynn; Laura Sotelo-Garcia pending arrival at start of meeting

• **Approval of Agenda:**

Vice Chair Kimberley Collins moved to accept the Work Session Meeting Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Maggie Slocumb seconded. All Ayes, No Nays; The Commissioners unanimously approved the meeting agenda as presented.

• **CEO Search Update**

Ms. Simone Gans Barefield, from Gans, Gans and Associates acknowledged delay in progress due to unforeseen circumstances and presented strategy to the Board of Commissioners.

1. Individual Board Member Interviews
 - Conduct one-on-one calls
 - Understand board's expectations and agency culture
2. Job Description Development
 - Edit existing description
 - Incorporate board insights
3. Candidate Recruitment
 - Post job description
 - Identify 5-8 qualified candidates
 - Conduct internal candidate screening
4. Community Engagement
 - Schedule Zoom meetings with stakeholders
 - Board
 - Staff
 - Residents / Community leaders
5. Candidate Evaluation
 - Develop candidate questionnaire
 - Conduct Zoom interviews
 - Rate and rank candidates
6. Final Selection

- Coordinate in-person interviews
- Recommend top candidates to board

Cherin Marmon-Saxe to coordinate staff and community calls with Gans, Gans & Associates to happen before the July 23rd Board meeting.

- **Introduction and swearing in of Ms. Laura Sotelo-Garcia.**

Chair Bacoate introduced and welcomed Ms. Sotelo-Garcia onto the Board of Commissioners of Asheville Housing Authority. Ms. Sotelo is the BOC's housing resident representative.

Cherin Marmon-Saxe performed the swearing in duties.

- **Introduction of HACA's new Chief Operating Officer – Ms. Ella Santos**

Interim ED Rhodney Norman introduced Ms. Santos, and Ms. Santos introduced herself and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve. She shared her commitment to strengthening internal talent and will meet one-on-one with each board member to align on vision and priorities.

- **HOTMA (Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act) Updates**

Interim ED Rhodney Norman and Director of Non-Profit Operations, Noele Tackett presented key updates including

- Asset Limit: Increased from \$100,000 to \$103,000
- Elderly/Disabled Deduction: Increased from \$400 to \$525
- Medical Deduction Threshold: Increased from 3% to 10% of income
- Interim Income Review Threshold: Increased from 3% to 10%

Noele also discussed the transition to triennial recertifications in early 2026, emphasizing the need to carefully schedule residents so everyone isn't recertifying simultaneously, with the ultimate aim of allowing staff more individualized attention to each case. Key points include:

- Part of NTW (Neighborhood Transformation Workforce) waivers
- Approved last year but not yet implemented
- Will require staggering residents' recertification schedules
- Goal is to free up staff to be more hands-on with individual cases
- Not all residents will recertify at the same time
- Staff will need to carefully manage the transition of certification dates

- **PEAK Lease Amendment Discussion**

Ella Santos, HACA COO, informed the Board that the PEAK Academy Lease is under review and there are proposed amendments to be discussed, and requested detailed discussion and vote be postponed until the July 23rd Board meeting. Ella invited each Board member to contact her individually for further discussion about the lease if they so choose.

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Chair Bacoate and Vice Chair Collins emphasize the importance of collaboration with all stakeholders. Getting it done right not quickly is key.

Amendment will need to be made to Regular Session Agenda.

Chair Bacoate determined no need for a closed session and asked for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Sean Aardema moved** to adjourn the Work Session. **Commissioner Carol Goins seconded.**

All Ayes, No Nays; The Commissioners unanimously approved the meeting agenda as presented.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:53 PM

II. Regular Session - Meeting Opening & Roll Call:

Chair Bacoate opened the Regular Session and asked for roll call at 5:05 PM.

HACA Mission Statement and Core Values were read by Commissioner Maggie Slocumb.

Quorum was present. **Board Members Present:** Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Carol Goins, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Maggie Slocumb, Commissioner Laura Sotelo-Garcia. **Also in attendance:** HACA Interim ED Rhodney Norman, HACA COO Ella Santos, Cindy Rice, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cherin Marmon-Saxe Executive Assistant. **Not in Attendance:** Commissioner Kidada Wynn.

Interim ED Rhodney Norman requested that the consent agenda be amended to include the approval of the PHA Plan, HOTMA Updates.

Chair Bacoate asked for a motion to. **Commissioner Carol Goins moved** to amend the consent agenda to include approval of the PHA Plan, HOTMA Updates, and to approve the agenda as presented. Vice Chair Kimberly Collins seconded. All Ayes, No Nays, the amendment passes unanimously.

The Consent Agenda includes:

- Approval of Previous Minutes from Regular Meeting: April 23, 2025
- Approval of Previous Minutes from Special Meeting: June 10, 2025
- Approval of PHA Plan, HOTMA Updates

Chair Bacoate requested a motion to amend the remaining agenda including removing the Executive Report and referring the Board of Commissioners to the documents received in preparation for the meeting, as well as removing the New Business item discussing the PEAK Academy Lease amendments and rescheduling this agenda item to the July 25, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

Vice Chair Collins moved to accept the agenda amendments, **Commissioner Slocumb seconded.**

• Public Comment

Commissioner Goins read the Public Comment Guidelines. The Board of Commissioners heard from 4 public speakers on the following topics:

- PEAK Academy Lease amendments and potential to disruption of vital after-school programs and other activities that are critical to the children and families in the communities.
- Invitation Community Kindness Block Party being held in August
- Southside Community Farm Update

• New Business

Vice Chair Collins addressed the meeting attendees and public comment speakers, and thanked everyone for their contributions, and keeping the Board informed of the things that are happening in the communities that we serve. She informed every one of the following:

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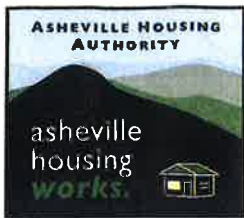
- CEO search is on-going. Meetings will be scheduled for staff, community members and residents to meet with the search firm and take part in process by sharing thoughts on how leadership can best serve the communities we serve.
- PEAK Academy Lease and proposed amendments are being reviewed by the Board and a working committee.
 - Current lease was voted on by previous Board of Commissioners
 - After a year in practice, collaborating with all parties involved in the activities at the Edington Center, Christine Avery, PEAK, the residents, the community, to ensure continued growth is critical.
 - Inclusive, transparent, and collaborative conversations to be had

Chair Bacoate spoke on potential 51% HUD funding cuts and stressed the importance of strong partnerships with community organizations not reliant on federal funding. He emphasized that such a significant cut would severely impact the housing authority's ability to serve residents, noting that a 51% reduction is not a minor adjustment but a fundamental threat to critical services and programs provided to the community.

- Emphasized developing partnerships with community organizations like PODS, CWA
 - Stressed importance of alternative funding sources beyond federal funds
 - Highlighted need to support children's education and opportunities
 - Called for breaking stereotypes about children in public housing
 - Urged proactive approach to maintaining support for residents if federal funding is cut
 - Advocated for collaborative community resources and support networks
- **Recognition Presentation for Mr. Roy Harris**
- Former Commissioner Roy Harris** was honored with a plaque and thanked for decades of service. Chair Bacoate shared personal memories and appreciation for Mr. Harris' community involvement and leadership, school board service, and service on the Asheville Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Roy Harris shares his reflections on his service and changes to the communities we serve and offers words of encouragement for the road ahead.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:53 PM



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Mychal Bacoate

Mychal Bacoate, Board Chair

Date: *7/23/25*

ATTEST:

Rhodney Norman

Rhodney Norman, Associate Secretary

Date: *7/23, 25*

