



Asheville Housing Authority
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
DRAFT Minutes: July 23, 2025
Meeting Location: 165 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville, 28801
[Click Here](#) to view all meeting materials

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 by Chair Bacoate.

Board Members Present: Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Maggie Slocumb, Commissioner Kidada Wynn. **Also in attendance:** HACA Interim ED Rhodney Norman, HACA COO Ella Santos, Susan Russo-Klein, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cherin Marmon-Saxe Executive Assistant.

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Carol Goins; Laura Sotelo-Garcia

- **Approval of Agenda:**

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

Commissioner Sean Aardema 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 provided an update on the HACA CEO Search.

- **Job Description:** Finalized and distributed.
- **Candidates:** Two strong candidates have already expressed interest; recruitment efforts continue.
- **Feedback from Board, Leadership, and Resident Interviews:**
 - **Successes:** Hiring of COO Ella Santos; appointment of a resident Commissioner; improved board-resident relations.
 - **Challenges:** Organizational complacency; organization is stuck where it is and unable to keep pace with the City of Asheville and housing issues; lack of consistency in the CFO office; severely insufficient community involvement; absolutely no consistency with resident services, availability of services and support wholly dependent on where you live.
 - **Desired Qualities in New ED:** Leadership, integrity, trust-building, housing experience, empathy, boots on the ground - strong community engagement, relationship-building with residents, staff, elected officials, and ability to lead and educate the Board, and capacity to generate non-federal funds.
 - **First-Year Priorities:** Immediate remedy of employee strife; conducting a full agency/organizational assessment of policies, procedures, protocol and staff; improving resident emergency response (mold and other issues); strengthening resident engagement; experience with lobbying non-federal funds; cultivate and grow team culture, SWOT analysis of staff.

- **Unique Features of Agency:** “Moving to Work” status and the presence of a Deputy Chief of Police as an officer on the Board—both notable factors that differentiate Asheville.

Next Steps:

- Continued candidate outreach and interviews over the next three weeks.
- Candidates to complete a **20-question questionnaire**.
- Two rounds of interviews to be conducted.
- A **candidate packet** will be prepared including:
 - One-page summary matrix of experience and competencies
 - Resumes
 - Questionnaire responses (written in candidates’ own words)
 - Summary of any negative media
- Board members will review the packet prior to a follow-up conversation to determine which candidates to advance to Zoom interviews.

Reports of the ED and COO were deferred.

- **Move to Close Session**

Commissioner Aardema made a the following motion to move to closed session: The purpose of this closed session is to (i) consult with the Authority's attorney in order to preserve the attorney[1]client privilege pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-318.11(a)(3), and (ii) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer pursuant to N.C. Gen Stat. §143-318.11(a)(6).

Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion. All Ayes, No Nays; The Commissioners unanimously approved the move to closed session.

Meeting Adjourned: 4:30 PM

II. **Regular Session** - Meeting Opening & Roll Call:

Chair Bacoate opened the Regular Session and asked for roll call at 5:23 PM.

HACA Mission Statement and Core Values were read.

Board Members Present: Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Maggie Slocumb, Commissioner Kidada Wynn. **Also in attendance:** HACA Interim ED Rhodney Norman, HACA COO Ella Santos, Susan Russo-Klein, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cherin Marmon-Saxe Executive Assistant.

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Carol Goins; Laura Sotelo-Garcia

Chair Bacoate asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. **Commissioner Maggie Slocumb made the motion** to approve the consent agenda as presented. **Vice Chair Kimberly Collins seconded.** All Ayes, No Nays, the amendment passes unanimously.

Public Comment

Commissioner Aardema read the Public Comment Guidelines. The Board of Commissioners heard from 10 public speakers on the following topics:

- Challenges with PEAK Academy and after school program space
- Southside Community Farm summer activities and community involvement
- PEAK Academy lease challenges
- Chose Pods and its impact and importance in this community

Chair Bacoate and Vice Chair Collins assured everyone that no programs are going away. All entities coexist and find collaborative solutions. The goals are centered around best practices not removal, and the kids are the most important aspect of all discussion.

• **New Business**

HACA COO Ella Santos reported on the status of the PEAK lease amendments,

- Working toward mutual agreement solution
- Most issues resolved except kitchen sharing
- Target completion: Coming week
 - Will provide update at next meeting
 - Special session may be called for vote if agreement reached before next meeting

Attorney Susan Russo-Klein shared more detail about the areas that are being discussed

• **Key Changes Overview**

- No substantive lease changes - just detailed guidance for operations
- Eliminates gray areas through specific procedural clarifications

- **Resolved Issues**

- **Parking**
 - Housing Authority issues parking placards for Peak staff
- **Mail**
 - Cluster mailboxes installed (costs split between parties)
- **Security**
 - Cameras added to classrooms lacking them
 - Security issue reporting process established
- **Infrastructure**
 - Good faith estimates for installations and wall modifications
 - Some classrooms need ceiling-height walls
- **Operations**
 - Custodial care procedures detailed
 - Maintenance request protocols clarified
- **Shared Use Schedule**
 - Auditorium: Peak vacates by 2:15 PM
 - Gym: Peak vacates by 3:30 PM
 - Classrooms: Peak teachers can stay for work/tutoring if not interfering with Pods
 - Tutoring available to all children (not just Peak students)
- **Scheduling & Calendar**
 - Annual calendar updated yearly
 - Housing Authority schedules events outside Peak hours when possible
 - Notice required for scheduling conflicts
 - Peak requests additional use "like any other tenant" at no extra charge
- **Dispute Resolution**
 - Unresolved issues go to COO for lease enforcement
 - Either party can appeal to board
- **Child Safety**
 - Both parties ensure children never unsupervised
 - Notification required between parties
- **Outstanding Issue**
 - **Kitchen sharing** requires separate agreement
 - **Different regulatory requirements between organizations**
 - **Continuing meetings to resolve**
- **Next Steps**
 - **Target agreement by late next week**
 - **Update at next meeting or special session if resolved earlier**

Commissioner Farkas asked for clarification about whether PEAK teachers tutor only PEAK kids or all kids. Susan confirmed that it is all kids.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:10 PM



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Mychal Bacoate
Mychal Bacoate, Board Chair

Date: 8/27/25

ATTEST:

Rhodney Norman
Rhodney Norman, Associate Secretary

Date: 8/27/25

