I. Work Session - Meeting Opening & Roll Call:

Chair Bacoate opened the Work Session and asked for roll call at 4:08 PM.

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

Board Members Present: Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Carol Goins, 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 Scott Farkas; Laura Sotelo-Garcia

- **Approval of Agenda:**

Vice Chair 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, Gans, Gans and Associates**

Ms. Gans Barefield, thanks the Board for the opportunity to provide an update on the HACA CEO Search.

  - Approximately 60–65 applications were received.
  - About 30 applicants possessed some housing or public-sector leadership experience.
  - After full vetting, eight (8) candidates were advanced for Board consideration.
  - Two additional resumes were received but did not meet selection criteria.
  - Ms. Gans Barefield recommended that the Hiring Committee conduct initial Zoom interviews with the vetted finalists, followed by in-person interviews for selected semi-finalists.
  - She confirmed her full availability to accommodate the Committee's scheduling preferences.

Next Steps:
Ms. Marmon-Saxe will coordinate with Vice Chair Collins and the Hiring Committee to identify a date for the first interview session and circulate an email confirming attendance.

No action was required of the full Board at this time.

- **Review of Administrative Plan Revisions – Interim ED Rhodney Norman / Director of Admissions Noele Tackett**

Rhodney and Noele provided a section-by-section summary of the 2025 HCV Administrative Plan updates required to maintain compliance with HUD guidance and regulatory changes.

Key highlights included:

- **Chapter 3 – Eligibility Definitions**
  - Clarified language regarding marital status, gender identity, and sexual orientation in accordance with HUD nondiscrimination policy.
  - Updated definitions for family composition, "father," and "child."
- **Chapter 5 – Family Verification Requirements**
  - Expanded procedures for verifying household information and required documentation.
- **Chapter 7 – Terminations of Assistance**
  - Simplified notice requirements and clarified family obligations.
- **Chapter 14 – Program Integrity**
  - Added procedures for interim re-examinations and routine file audits to ensure accuracy and prevent fraud.
- **Chapter 15 – Special Housing Types**
  - Added provisions enabling vouchers to assist with manufactured-home lot rental or homeownership costs.
- **Chapter 17 – Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs)**
  - Revised maximum allowable PBV allocation from 20 percent to 40 percent of total authorized vouchers, expanding capacity to partner with developers for new or rehabilitated affordable units.
- **Chapter 19 – Special Purpose Vouchers**
  - Clarified referral and case-management requirements for VASH, FUP, and FYI vouchers.
  - Noted that participants who discontinue case management will have 120 days to relocate or transition assistance.

Board Discussion and Questions:

Non-Discrimination Clarifications:
Commissioners expressed concerns about new references to *marital status, gender identity, and sexual orientation* would affect eligibility and intake practices. **Rhodney responded:** The revisions align HACA policy with HUD standards and codify protections already in practice which are based on equity, accessibility and inclusivity. They do not introduce new procedural requirements. Rhodney also stated that additional training will be given to property management and staff.

Project-Based Voucher Clarifications:
Commissioners expressed concern that the **current payment standards** and **limited unit availability** may continue to hinder voucher lease-ups. Commissioners asked whether the Authority has tools to respond to rising market rents and whether program participants were at risk of losing vouchers while searching for housing.

Noele explained that HACA actively monitors **voucher utilization rates** and **Fair Market Rent (FMR)** benchmarks and can seek **HUD approval to adjust payment standards** when justified by local data. She noted that staff are in contact with landlords to expand participation and that the plan's updates formalize staff discretion to **grant extensions** when families face documented hardships during their search.

Commissioners also inquired how the plan ensures **equitable access** and prevents procedural inequities. **Noele confirmed** that the revisions strengthen documentation and verification protocols and that all staff receive **annual fair-housing and compliance training** to ensure uniform application of rules.

Portability Clarifications:

Commissioners raised concerns about **delays and communication gaps** when families move to other areas, particularly to larger or higher-demand cities such as Charlotte, and whether those delays could jeopardize a participant's voucher. They also asked whether HACA retains oversight once a family transfers to another housing authority.

Noele explained that the updated policy imposes **clearer coordination timelines** between HACA and the receiving Public Housing Authority (PHA) and establishes **defined check-in procedures** to track each portability case. She added that HACA maintains case responsibility until the receiving agency formally accepts billing or absorbs the family into its own program, ensuring that no assistance is lost during transfer.

In response to questions about fairness and administrative load, Ms. Smith assured the Board that staff monitor all active portability cases weekly and that the revised plan gives the Executive Director discretion to authorize additional time when families face verified barriers such as housing shortages or slow administrative processing.

Board members agreed the strengthened portability procedures improve **accountability, transparency, and continuity of assistance** while preserving compliance with HUD regulations.

Summary:

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the clarity and completeness of the update, and acknowledged the effort to maintain balance between **regulatory compliance and family support**, commending staff for their proactive management of the program under challenging housing conditions.

Report from the Chief Operating Officer – Ms. Ella Santos

Ms. Ella Santos provided an operational report highlighting current priorities and overall agency performance. She noted that day-to-day operations remain stable, with **property management, maintenance, and administrative teams** maintaining steady workflow and responsiveness.

She informed the Board that **capital improvement and modernization projects** are advancing on schedule, including upgrades in unit maintenance, infrastructure repairs, and site safety improvements. Ms. Santos emphasized continued focus on **preventive maintenance** and timely completion of outstanding work orders to sustain property standards and HUD compliance.

Ms. Santos also reported that interdepartmental communication has improved, particularly between **Property Management**, **Asset Management**, and **Housing Choice Voucher** divisions, resulting in better coordination on inspections, resident requests, and compliance tracking.

She concluded by noting that staff morale and performance remain strong, and a **comprehensive operational summary** will be presented at the **September Board Meeting** for review.

- **Amendment to PEAK Lease Contracts**

Attorney Susan Russ-Klein stated that amendment has been made to the PEAK Lease Contract to accommodate an Indebtedness Clause required by Peak Academy for Audit purposes.

- **Move to Closed Session – 4:32 PM**

  Commissioner Goins made 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 Aardema seconded the motion.** All Ayes, No Nays; The Commissioners unanimously approved the move to closed session.

  No formal return to open session or closure of meeting
  Meeting Adjourned: 5:10

II. Regular Session - Meeting Opening & Roll Call:

Chair Bacoate opened the Regular Session and asked for roll call at 5:12 PM.

HACA Mission Statement and Core Values were read.

Quorum has been met. Board Members Present: Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Carol Goins, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Laura Sotelo-Garcia, 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, Chief Lamb, APD, Captain Joe Silverman, APD, Captain Jonathon Brown, APD.

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Scott Farkas

Interim ED Rhodney Norman asked that the consent agenda be amended to include the approval of the 2025 Administrative Plan Updates. Chair Bacoate asked that an additional amendment be made to separate the approval of the amended PEAK Lease so that Commissioner Wynn could recuse herself form the vote.

Chair Bacoate asked for a motion to amend the Consent Agenda. **Vice Chair Collins made the motion** to approve the amended consent agenda **Commissioner Sean Aardema seconded**. All Ayes, No Nays, the amended agenda passes unanimously.

Chair Bacoate asked for a motion to accept Commissioner Wynn's recusal from approval of the amended PEAK Lease Contract. **Commissioner Goins made the motion** to accept Commissioner Wynn's recusal, and the amended consent agenda as amended. **Commissioner Sean Aardema seconded**. All Ayes, No Nays, the amended agenda passes unanimously.

Public Comment

Commissioner Slocumb read the Public Comment Guidelines. The Board of Commissioners heard from 2 public speakers on the following topics:

- Dwayne McAfee spoke about Black Men Mondays and Young Struggle partner together and have asked for the use of Hillcrest Community building that is not in use. He spoke passionately about how the building must be used to serve the community and not sit unused.

- Chloe Moore gave an update on the Southside Farm growth and engagement in the community. The kids have been busy cooking and baking and crafting throughout the summer. New cooler is being built. It will be mobile and run by solar energy being donated by Footprint Project.

Chair Bacoate deferred the Executive and Financial report discussion and asked the commissioners to review the documents previously issued.

- **New Business**
  - **Presentation by the Asheville Police Department**

Chief Mike Lamb, Chief of the Asheville Police Department, provided an overview of the department's structure, staffing, and public safety initiatives. He noted the significant staffing losses between 2020 and 2022 and highlighted progress in recruitment, with fifteen new officers recently graduated and twenty-one recruits currently in training. Chief Lamb reviewed the history of the department's Public Housing Unit and shared plans to reinstate it as staffing improves. He emphasized that long-term safety depends on collaboration among residents, property managers, and law enforcement, rather than enforcement alone.

Captain Joe Silverman, of the Criminal Investigations Division, discussed APD's shift from a drug suppression focus to the current **Street Crimes Unit**, which targets gun violence and repeat offenders through data-driven methods. He described expanded partnerships with state and federal agencies and noted that community cooperation has led to stronger investigations and higher case-closure rates.

Captain Jonathan Brown, of the Community Engagement Division, described the department's outreach work, including "Rec & Roll" events, back-to-school giveaways, and popsicle drop-ins at housing communities. He highlighted the **Citizens Police Academy**, a ten-week program that fosters transparency and builds trust between officers and residents. Captain Brown reiterated that intentional relationship-building remains central to APD's approach in all public housing communities.

Commissioners commended APD's renewed commitment to partnership and voiced support for reestablishing the Public Housing Unit. Discussion centered on neighborhood safety priorities, harm-reduction practices near public housing, and strategies to strengthen collaboration between officers, managers, and resident councils. Chief Lamb acknowledged the Board's concerns and affirmed that APD is coordinating with county and state partners to address unsafe practices and maintain safer community environments.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:06 PM

Mychal Bacoate, Board Chair

Date:

ATTEST:

Rhodney Norman, Associate Secretary

Date: