



I. Work Session

Chair Bacoate opened the Work Session and asked for roll call at 4:04 PM.

Roll Call taken by Cherin Marmon-Saxe; **Quorum was present.**

Board Members Present: Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Carol Goins, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Maggie Slocumb. **Also in attendance:** HACA COO Ella Santos, Susan Russo-Klein, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cindy Rice, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cherin Marmon-Saxe Executive Assistant.

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Laura Sotelo-Garcia, Commissioner Kidada Wynn, HACA Interim ED Rhodney Norman.

- **Approval of Agenda:**

Motion to Accept Agenda as presented: Commissioner Goins

Second: Vice Chair Collins

Motion Carried: (6-0)

- **Report Overview – Ella Santos**

- Review of materials included in the Board packet
- Introduction of **Interim CFO Ryan McClung**, summarizing his tenure, departmental experience, and strengths in cross-team communication.
- Emphasizing that Ryan has stepped into the Interim CFO role under heavy operational pressure and continues to manage audit completion, financial cleanup, and budget work.

- **Financial Reporting – Ryan McClung**

- **Overview**

- The 2024 yearend financial review in final stages, expected to conclude within 1–2 weeks.
- The 2023 audit was completed late (March 2025), creating overlap and increasing legal/audit costs reflected in current statements.
- Finance is implementing standardized SOPs to unify receivables, payables, and ledger management across departments.

- **Budget Development Support**

- 2025 budget produced inhouse had structural issues and did not meet the standard needed.
- For the 2026 cycle, HACA engaged Consultant John Serra of Progressio, referred through a professional recommendation, and brings strong experience in public housing finance, HUD schedules, and MTW budgeting
- All department directors are involved to ensure accurate projections.

- **Expense Pressures**

- Utilities remain the largest cost driver, with increases in electricity, water/sewer, and gas across all properties.
- Emergency maintenance, repairs, and unit turnarounds continue to push expenses upward.
- Some repairs may qualify as capital improvements, requiring review for proper classification.

- **Abatements**
 - Abatements remain a major financial impact but have improved significantly.
 - 52% cleared in the past three months, releasing withheld subsidy.
 - HUD often issues several months of abatement related funds in one lump sum, creating temporary revenue spikes.
- **Digital Modernization**
 - Finance is moving toward paperless processing, digitizing older records, and reducing manual payment handling.
 - Rent Café remains a key 2026 initiative to support online tenant payments and stronger receivables tracking.
- **Overall Trend**
 - Expenses continue to exceed revenue in 2025 due to utilities, abatements, maintenance costs, and elevated audit related expenses.
- **Q&A**
 - Q: What is included in the utilities expense line?
 - A: Electricity, water, sewer, and gas across all properties, with major increases seen in each category.
 - Q: Can the Housing Authority pursue wholesale water rates with the City?
 - A: Yes. Ella will connect the agency with the Assistant City Manager to explore potential cost relief.
 - Q: Would smart thermostats, aerators, or efficiency devices help reduce utility expenses?
 - A: Ryan is open to researching these measures; further analysis is needed.
 - Q: How are abatements reflected financially once they are lifted?
 - A: HUD releases multiple months of withheld subsidies in a single lump sum, creating temporary revenue spikes.
- **2025 5YP / MTW – Noele Tackett**
 - **Overview**
 - The 2025–2029 Five-Year Plan was completed previously but never submitted; content remains unchanged.
 - HACA is catching up on required submissions, HUD documents and certifications
 - The 2026 Annual Plan and MTW Supplement are posted for public comment.
 - Required Resident Input Sessions were held; feedback was minimal and focused mainly on safety concerns rather than MTW policy.
 - Public Hearing directly November 19, 2025 Boc meeting
 - **Q&A**
 - **Q: Any changes to the Five-Year Plan?**
A: No changes; only submission outstanding.
 - **Q: Any significant public comments?**
A: Very few; safety concerns only.
 - **Q: Utility allowance update applies to PBV?**
A: No — only tenant-based vouchers.
 - **Q: Who is affected by RAD rent increases?**
A: 65 full contract-rent tenants.
 - **Q: Why use 120% FMR?**
A: Asheville rents are high; 120% improves voucher success.

- **RESOLUTIONS – Noele Tackett / Ella Santos**

- **Resolution 2025-08: Amended 2025 Utility Allowances for HCVP**
 - Third party study showed 10%+ increases in utility costs.
 - HUD permits adjustments above 10%.
 - Applies only to tenant-based vouchers; PBV not affected.
- **Resolution 2025-09: Updated 2025 RAD Contract Rent OCAF**
 - HUD inflation factor for 2025 is 5.2%.
 - Updates RAD contract rents across the portfolio.
 - Only 65 full contract rent tenants see a change.
- **Resolution 2025 10: 2025 Amended Payment Standards**
 - Payment standards set at 120% of FMR due to Asheville's high-cost market.
 - Supports voucher lease up.
 - Brief discussion on possible future use of 150% under MTW flexibility.
- **Resolution 2025-11: HACA 2025 Holiday Closure Schedule – Ella Santos**
 - Routine annual adoption.
 - No concerns or changes.

- **Move to Closed Session: 4:28 pm**

The purpose of this closed session is to (i) consult with the Authority's attorney in order to preserve the attorney 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).

Motion: Commissioner Slocumb

Second: Commissioner Goins

Motion Carried: (6-0)

Return to Open Session: 5:05 pm

Motion to Seal Closed Session Just Completed

Motion: Commissioner Goins

Second: Vice Chair Collins

Motion Carried: (6-0)

- **Motion to Adjourn**

Motion: Commissioner Slocumb

Second: Vice Chair Collins

Motion Carried: (6-0)

Meeting Adjourned: 5:07

II. Regular Session

Chair Bacoate opened the Regular Session, asked for rollcall at 5:16 pm, and read HACA's Mission Statement and Core Values.

Roll Call taken by Cherin Marmon-Saxe; **Quorum was present.**

Board Members Present: Chair Mychal Bacoate, Vice-Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Carol Goins, Commissioner David S. Robinson Sr., Commissioner Maggie Slocumb. **Also in attendance:** HACA COO Ella Santos, Susan Russo-Klein, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cindy Rice, Attorney, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., Cherin Marmon-Saxe Executive Assistant.

Not in Attendance: Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Laura Sotelo-Garcia, Commissioner Kidada Wynn, HACA Interim ED Rhodney Norman.

- **Approval of Consent Agenda:**

Susan Russo Klein passed out the closed session minutes for 08/27/2025 and 09/24/2025.

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda as modified by removing closed session minutes

Motion – Vice Chair Collins

Second – Commissioner Slocumb

Motion Carried (6-0)

Motion to Approve the Closed Session General Accounts from the 08/27/2025 and 09/24/2025 meetings and withhold as confidential

Motion – Commissioner Aardema

Second – Vice Chair Collins

Motion Carried (6-0)

- **Remarks from President & CEO – Ella Santos**

- **Overview**

- Appointed President & CEO on October 8; begins November 3.
- Grateful for the Board's trust and staff welcome.
- Master's degree from NYU Wagner; career shaped by public-service values.

- **Experience**

- Former NYCHA staff (largest housing authority in the U.S.).
- Led an international nonprofit.
- Additional roles in teaching, consulting, and research.

- **Early Priorities & Key Accomplishments**

- Build trust, strengthen systems, and support staff.
- Personally visited every development and met with most staff.
- HCVP restructuring: Reduced abatements, improved leasing.
- Vacancies: Lowered; customer service strengthened.
- IT upgrades: Phones, laptops, networks, expanded CCTV.
- Resident Services: Restructured for better outreach.
- Asset Management: Streamlined property operations.
- HR: Added structure and a communications unit.
- HACA University: Centralized platform for staff training.

- Digital updates: Launched Red Café for online rent; modernized processes and policies.
- **Engagement**
 - Met with residents, staff, and partners (ADT, Habitat, Buncombe Hospital).
 - Reestablishing the Resident Council.
- **Next Priorities**
 - Resident & Community Engagement
 - Reestablish and support the Resident Council.
 - Strengthening communication and follow-up across all properties.
 - Use resident, staff, and landlord surveys to identify priorities and guide improvements.
 - Deepening engagement through surveys and listening sessions.
 - Open line via AskTheCEO@haca.org.
 - Leadership grounded in transparency, compassion, accountability.
- **Staff Development & Systems & Modernization**
 - Expand HACA University with core and role-specific trainings.
 - Clarify performance expectations and strengthen department coordination.
 - Continuing IT, network, phone, and CCTV upgrades.
 - Improve data accuracy and digital tools for residents (payments, forms, notifications).
- **Property & Asset Management**
 - Standardize maintenance expectations and inspection follow-through.
 - Support long-range capital planning and consistent site operations.
- **Acknowledgment**
 - Thanked staff for dedication.
 - Recognized Interim CEO Rhodney Norman for stabilizing operations.
- **Public Comment**

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

- **Kyle Parker from Deaverview Apartments**
 - Concern about unit conditions and inconsistent quality.
 - Stated residents often lack clear rent amount/due date information.
 - Noted hardship when income changes lead to penalties during transitions.
 - Questioned visibility of expansion/extension projects.
 - Felt resources are not always accessible or equitably distributed.
 - Shared residents struggle with self-reliance when support feels inconsistent.
- **Lydia Koltai gave an update on the Southside Farm**
 - Hoop house completed, mobile cooler near completion.
 - Announced Fourth Sunday potluck and staff farewell.
 - Reported current harvest of greens, herbs, and seasonal produce.
 - Continued partnership with Manna Soul Market for food access.
 - Youth education with Teak Academy in week five.
 - Interested in meeting with the new CEO.

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

Asheville Housing Authority - Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes: October 22, 2025

- **New Business**
 - **Two housing keeping items**
 - November meeting is virtual
 - December meeting cancelled
 - Back in person in 2026

Meeting Adjourned: 5:35 PM with no motion



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

Minutes: October 22, 2025

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

Mychal Bacoate, Board Chair

Date:

ATTEST:

Ella Santos, Secretary

Date:
