



The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Previous Minutes: May 20, 2026

The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville ("HACA") held a regular meeting at HACA's administrative offices located at 165 South French Broad Avenue, Asheville, NC on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

There was not a closed session.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Mychal Bacoate, Commissioner Sean Aardema, Commissioner Scott Farkas, Commissioner Carol Goins, and Commissioner Kidada Wynn

Commissioners Absent:

Vice Chair Kimberly Collins, Commissioner Maggie Slocumb, Commissioner Laura Sotelo-Garcia, and Commissioner David L. Robinson Sr.

A quorum was present.

Others Present: Ella Santos, *President & CEO*; Marvin Jean Jacques, *Chief Operating Officer*; Rodney Norman, Sr. *Advisor to the President & CEO*; Cherin Marmon-Saxe, *Executive Assistant to the President & CEO*; and Cindy M. Rice, Roberts & Stevens, P.A., *Legal Counsel*

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. The Chair read the Mission and Core Values of HACA.

Commissioner Roll Call: Ms. Marmon-Saxe called the roll to determine all Commissioners in attendance.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Ms. Marmon-Saxe noted a typo in the April 22, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes (the word "exceed" was left out of the bullet points on Page 2). Commissioner Goins made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda (including the meeting minutes with the correction noted by Ms. Marmon-Saxe). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Aardema. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Approval of Closed Session Minutes: Ms. Rice handed out the draft meeting minutes for the April 22, 2026 and May 11, 2026 closed sessions for the Board's review, and then collected the draft closed session minutes from the Board. There was no discussion. Commissioner Goins made a motion to approve the closed session minutes for the April 22, 2026 Special Meeting and the May 11, 2026 Special Meeting and to seal and withhold such minutes from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purpose or purposes thereof. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Aardema. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Approval of 2026 Updated Lease, House Rules and Policies

Ella Santos, President & CEO

Ms. Santos explained that the HACA Lease, House Rules and Policies had been updated to strengthen the terms and make the rules clearer to residents. She went on to mention a few rule changes in particular and explained that the changes being implemented are consistent with other housing authorities and private landlords.

Commissioner Goins inquired about whether HACA sought to collect attorney's fees and costs in connection with an eviction, and Mr. Norman explained that HACA only sought to recover actual filing costs. Commissioner Goins also asked about the change in visitor terms and if there were ever exceptions granted. Ms. Santos and Mr. Norman indicated that reporting the visitor was the key purpose, and that exceptions were granted on a case by case basis (e.g. a grandchild visiting their grandparent in the summer). Finally, Ms. Goins asked about the penalty if a tenant elected to terminate early, and Mr. Norman indicated that they were responsible for 30-day notice only (and not for the duration of the lease term).

Commissioner Aardema made a motion to approve the 2026 Updated Lease, House Rules and Policies. Commissioner Wynn seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0).

Presentation – Asheville Police Department (APD)

Ella Santos, President & Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Santos introduced APD's Interim Chief Jackie Stepp. Interim Chief Stepp then spoke briefly about her key focuses: transparency and community engagement. She encouraged questions of the community related to the real-time intelligence center and otherwise. She noted that a member of the HACA team will be joining the program policy board. She also noted that APD is bringing back the HACA team in early July (formerly the housing team).

Presentation- Introduction of Tara Boestan-Smith

Ella Santos, President & Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Santos introduced and welcomed HACA's new Director of Finance, Tara Boestan-Smith. Ms. Boestan-Smith was previously with HACA for 5 years. Ms. Santos noted that she was bringing great institutional knowledge and finance knowledge to the organization.

Finance Officer Bond

Mychal Bacoate, Chair

Chair Bacoate noted that with the return of Ms. Boestan-Smith to HACA, it was necessary for HACA to approve a finance bond by statute. There was no discussion. Commissioner Goins made a motion to approve the finance bond. Commissioner Farkas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Resolution – 2025/2026 Approval of Write Off of Bad Debt

Tara Boestan-Smith, Director of Finance & Rodney Norman, Sr. Advisor to the President & CEO

Ms. Boestan-Smith explained that the write off was for that period of time from July 2025 to December 2025 in the amount of approx. \$175,000. She also explained this was an accounting “clean-up” and that it was a standard procedure for HACA. Mr. Norman added that the write off did not mean that HACA could not collect the money, but he also noted that there was a strong likelihood that the individuals are “judgment proof”.

Commissioner Aardema inquired about why Asheville Terrace’s amount was so high. Mr. Jean Jacques explained that the arrears were extremely high (close to \$1million following Helene) because in addition to rent forgiveness some properties just stopped collection practices. He explained that the arrears are now down to about \$550,000, but that \$175,000 of this must be written off for this period. He added that the HACA staff was working with residents to refer them to other resources for assistance and also to track and provide monthly reports regarding collections. Commissioner Farkas inquired about the amount budgeted for write offs, and Mr. Jean Jaques explained that no amount was included in the budget.

Resolution – 2026/2027 Amended Payment Standards

Noele Tackett, Director of HCVP

Ms. Tackett explained that the new fair market rents (FMR) were recently released by HUD, and that HACA had HUD’s approval to increase payment standards to 120% of fair market rents for all voucher sized. She added that HACA was seeking approval to approve and adopt the updated fair market rents (120%), and that such a change would be put in place effective June 1, 2026. Commissioner Aardema made a motion to approve the amended payment standards. Commissioner Goins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Resolution – 2026/2027 Move to Work Supplement

Alex Ruiz, Assistant Director of HCVP

Mr. Ruiz explained that in November of 2025 the Board approved the move to work or “MTW” Supplement, which was then submitted to HUD. He went on to explain that HUD has now requested a formal resolution. There was no discussion. Commissioner Aardema made a motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Goins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Sneak Peek of the New HACA Website

Ella Santos, Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Santos introduced Ty Young, Founder and Creative Director of TGP Brand Studio. She explained he is an Asheville native and graduate of Appalachian State University. He began TGP Brand Studio in 2014 and has worked with a number of community organizations and small businesses.

Mr. Young presented a new logo (dark background and light background versions) and referenced the HACA staff and Board input. He then showcased the new website home page and the separate departments: Admissions, Resident & Community Services, Doing Business (landlords, vendors, etc.). He then gave an overview of the new website, noting specific additions such as: AI help desk, news features, and a connection to the customer relations management software.

Commissioner Farkas asked about accessibility and Mr. Young showed the disability access features on the new website.

Public Comment:

Mr. Bacoate noted that public comments cannot be about personnel issues or personal tenant grievances, and one of the two individuals who signed up for public comment elected not to speak.

The Board then heard from Ms. Chloe Moore about the Southside Farm. Ms. Moore provided a summary of the recent harvest and of items being planted. She noted a new collaboration that allows the farm to have 2 interns from Asheville High School for 6 months to learn about urban agriculture. She also spoke about an event last weekend in which herb plants were given away to the community including those with container gardens and noted a public potluck coming up this Sunday with a focus on teas.

Closed Session: None.

Mr. Bacoate noted that the organization is moving toward bi-weekly meetings, but that in conversation with Ms. Russo Klein it is better to keep the monthly schedule and cancel as needed, (as opposed to having to schedule special meetings and change the bylaws).

Operational Overview: None.

Remarks from President & CEO:

Ella Santos, Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Santos provided brief comments to the Board. She noted partnerships that HACA is working to build related to workforce development, connecting residents to support, etc. She mentioned a Transitional Career Day to help residents prep for the job hunt. She also mentioned a new FAQ available on the move to work requirements. She referenced the Bridge to Brilliance program that has taken over the after care and summer care programs, and indicated that the programs are currently full, but have a waitlist.

Ms. Santos noted that she had been at HACA for just about one year, and that they had made a lot of customer service focused changes and recentralized focus on improvements for residents, landlords, partners, etc. She also mentioned HACA's efforts to work toward self-sufficiency with residents and families to achieve economic independence, and towards operational self-sufficiency. She noted that HUD is asking all housing authorities to move to work to eliminate federal funding (for individuals) and as an agency and implement more sustainable operational models. She referenced utilizing assets more efficiently, adding better performance measures, and focusing on outcomes. Finally, she noted that Ben Hobbs, HUD Asst. Secretary will be joining HACA for the upcoming homeownership event and to talk about HUD's expectations for housing authorities going forward.

Meeting Adjourned: At approximately 6:08 p.m., Chair Bacoate adjourned the meeting.



The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Previous Minutes: May 20, 2026

05/20/2026 Regular Board meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:

Cindy M. Rice, Legal Counsel to the HACA Board

APPROVED:

Mychal Bacoate, Board Chair

Date: 6/24/26

ATTEST:

Ella Santos, Secretary

Date: 6/24/26