



**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Board of Commissioners of the
Housing Authority of the City of Everett**

March 25, 2020

Meeting Called to Order

The Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Everett was called to order by Chair Allison Warren-Barbour at 12:04 p.m. on Monday, March 25, 2020. This meeting was held via Zoom videoconference as an emergency measure to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 coronavirus.

Commissioners Present at Roll Call:

Chair Allison Warren-Barbour
Vice-Chair George Perez, Jr.
Commissioner Benjamin Young

Commissioner Koren Smith
Commissioner Chip Burgess
Commissioner Tammy Williamson

Commissioners Absent:

None

Also in attendance were:

Staff:

Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Executive Director
John Forsyth, Director of Housing Operations
Wendy Abbey, Director of Finance
Steve Yago, Acting Director of Development
Wendy Westby, HCV Program Director
Tony Nabors, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Paula Kennedy, Human Resources Manager
Linda Baines, Deputy Director of Housing Management
Chris Neblett, Hearing Officer/Administrative Coordinator
Jaysen Garcia, Executive Assistant

Guests:

Becky Ableman McCrary, City of Everett

Public Comment

None

Communications

None

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson dedicated the first half of his report to the agency's response to the COVID 19 pandemic. He said efforts to date have been spearheaded by Assistant Executive Director John Forsyth, as he recently completed a period of self-quarantine after vacationing overseas. All Housing Authority offices were closed to the public in mid-March, and over eighty percent of staff were working remotely from home at the time of this meeting. Agency operations have centered on essential functions, including but not limited to landlords and vendor payments; emergency work orders and unit turns, rent collection, assisting with food deliveries for Housing Authority tenants, and maintaining uninterrupted IT services. Current protocol only allows for one person at a time to be working at an office full-time, with all other traffic monitored and strictly limited.

At the time of this meeting, three Housing Authority tenants and one staff member had been diagnosed with confirmed or probable cases of COVID 19. The Housing Authority has notified all who may have been in contact with these individuals while maintaining their confidentiality in accordance with HIPAA. The Executive Director was working with political contacts, HUD, and trade industry groups like AWHHA to develop strategies and best practices that will help to mitigate the disruptive effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. This included relief from HUD regulations pertaining to client signature and income reporting requirements, as well as pending legislation that will provide paid sick and medical leave when staff or their families are ill or quarantined due to COVID 19.

Continuing his report, the Executive Director said the first phase of the Baker Heights redevelopment project was still on track. This entailed the construction of up to 105 units on a portion of the 15 acre site in North Everett containing 244 single-story units of decommissioned public housing. Mr. Lommers-Johnson said WSU may ultimately purchase less of the property than originally planned – seven acres instead of 10 – as a result of complications working out a leasing plan for the vacant units that will be included in the sale. This issue was further complicated by the possibility that the Department of Commerce could require the purchase and sale agreement to be executed by the end of the month. The Executive Director said he had spoken with the Mayor and the head of a local non-profit about the possibility of using some vacant units at Baker Heights as emergency housing for people affected by the coronavirus. Such use would not be permitted under the current agreement with HUD, but this stipulation could more than likely be waived if there were a demonstrable need for emergency housing as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Consent Agenda

Chair Warren-Barbour called for approval of the Consent Agenda, containing the following items:

1. Section 8 Payments for the Month of February 2020
2. Summary of Vouchers for the Month of February 2020

3. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on February 24, 2020 and Special Meeting Held on March 9, 2020
4. Renew Earthquake Insurance for Broadway Plaza, Wiggums Park Place
5. Approve Contract for Colby Office Upgrades

Commissioner Perez moved for approval of the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Young seconded and the motion carried.

Items for Individual Consideration

Resolution No. 1487 Adopting PHA Five Year Plan Effective July 1, 2020

Hearing Officer/Administrative Coordinator Chris Neblett said this resolution served to adopt the Agency Five Year Plan before it was submitted to HUD for final review and approval. He said the only changes that have been made to the Plan since it was presented in draft form at last month's public hearing were further revision of the Housing Authority's mission statement and the addition of management's response to the Resident Advisory Board's comments. Mr. Neblett said the City had also provided the required certification documenting the Five Year Plan was consistent with its Five Year Consolidated Plan.

Commissioner Perez moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Burgess seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 1488 Revising HCV Program Utility Allowances

Hearing Officer/Administrative Coordinator Neblett first provided some background information regarding utility allowances, including HUD's requirement that each PHA must review its schedule of utility allowances annually. Going into this year's review, it was found that the model used to calculate allowances needed to be updated; however, the consultant that created this model was no longer available. In keeping with past practice, the Housing Authority partnered with the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO) to procure a new vendor, and the Nelrod Company was hired to provide new utility allowance schedules common to both agencies.

Mr. Neblett said the Nelrod Company's schedules reflected new utility allowances across all structure types and bedroom sizes, regardless of whether the utility rate used to calculate any single allowance had changed by 10 percent or more. He concluded by saying that the HCV department intended to modify the Nelrod schedules into a more familiar format. Although the Nelrod schedules comply with HUD regulation, the Housing Authority planned to explore other alternatives in advance of next year's review.

Commissioner Smith moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Perez seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 1489 Appointing Directors to HUD 202 Nonprofit Corporations

Acting Director of Development Steve Yago began by explaining that each of the eleven HUD 202 properties the Housing Authority sponsors was registered as a nonprofit corporation with a governing board. The Housing Authority was responsible for appointing its commissioners to serve as directors on those boards, and this resolution served to

appoint Commissioners Benjamin Young and Chip Burgess to fill vacancies on those boards following the resignations of Commissioners Todd Taylor and John Mierke last year.

Commissioner Perez moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Williamson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously

Resolution No. 1490 Revising Everett Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency Program Policy/FSS Action Plan

Hearing Officer/Administrative Coordinator Neblett said the Housing Authority was required to update its Family Self-Sufficiency program policy as a condition for receiving a recent program grant from HUD. Family Services Program Manager Donelle Kienholz spearheaded the effort, and the revised Plan was an exhibit to this resolution. It was also noted that Board Chair Warren-Barbour, who serves as CEO of the local United Way, had requested that the final version of this policy not reference the United Way as a service provider, as her agency was not currently providing services to the Housing Authority's FSS program participants.

Commissioner Young moved to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Smith seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.:

Policy Discussion

Financial Reports for Quarters Ending September 30, December 31, 2019

Finance Director Wendy Abbey began by noting that, although the current meeting agenda packet only contained financial statements for the period ending December 31, 2019, the Board had been provided with both sets of statements at its last meeting; however, this item was subsequently deferred to the present meeting. She said her report would be brief, as she previously reviewed the statements in detail with the Board's Finance Committee. Net cash flow for the tax credit properties was around 10 percent higher than expected, and Ms. Abbey was happy to report that the next quarter's statement will reflect an additional \$1.4 million revenue in developer fees resulting from the conversion of the Wiggums Park Place construction loan.

Ms. Abbey attributed a net loss among the Core Properties to the ongoing disposition of the remainder of the Public Housing portfolio, although the actual negative variance was better than budgeted. Statements for the Supporting Programs, which include the CoCC and Voucher program, reflected a number of expenditures that typically occur within the first six months of the fiscal year. These losses were budgeted to be offset by gains in the final two quarters, resulting in an anticipated positive variance for the fiscal year.

Board Chair Warren-Barbour wondered what effect the economic slowdown caused by the COVID 19 pandemic might have on the fiscal health of the Housing Authority's programs over the next six months. Ms. Abbey responded that she had given this issue a fair amount of thought and expected HUD will continue to fund its programs at the levels reflected in the federal budget. She expected a certain amount of lost rent revenue from tenants of the Housing Authority's unsubsidized units, and her staff has been tracking a number of additional expenses associated directly with the COVID 19 pandemic, including but not limited to overtime for maintenance staff and IT equipment that allows staff to work

remotely. Ms. Abbey said that although these losses to revenue and additional expenses were worrisome, she did not expect them to be catastrophic because the Housing Authority was on solid financial footing. Senior management was also in the process of looking into what, if any, government-sponsored emergency funding options the Housing Authority might be eligible for, such as the federal Families First program.

Commissioner Perez moved for approval of the Housing Authority's financial reports for the quarters ending September 30, 2019 and December 31, 2019. Commissioner Burgess seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Warren-Barbour adjourned the meeting at 12:53 p.m.



Benjamin Young (May 30, 2020 13:41 PDT)

Vice-Chair Pro Tem, Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Secretary