



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

**May 24, 2021**

**Meeting Called to Order**

The Regular 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 12:02 p.m. on Monday, May 24, 2021. This meeting was held via Zoom videoconference as an emergency measure to prevent the spread of the COVID coronavirus.

**Commissioners Present at Roll Call:**

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

Commissioner Koren Smith  
Commissioner Chip Burgess  
Commissioner Tammy Williamson

**Commissioners Absent:**

None

**Also in attendance were:**

**Staff:**

Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Executive Director  
John Forsyth, Deputy Executive Director  
Wendy Blain, Director of Finance  
Jason Morrow, Director of Development  
Linda Manning, Director of Human Resources and Administration  
Wendy Westby, HCV Program Director  
Janinna Attick, Senior Policy Analyst  
Chris Neblett, Hearing Officer/Administrative Coordinator  
Jaysen Garcia, Executive Assistant

**Guests:**

Liz Vogeli, City of Everett  
Becky Ableman McCrary, City of Everett

**Public Comment**

None.

## **Communications**

None

## **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson was pleased to report the Housing Authority was one of ten agencies from around the country HUD has selected for admission to the Moving to Work (MTW) demonstration program. He said this was a big accomplishment, considering that there were already four PHAs in the state (Tacoma, King County, Seattle, and Vancouver Housing Authorities) with MTW status. He briefly discussed next steps in the implementation process, starting with the execution of an MTW Agreement in July (in order to maximize the term of a new 20-year funding contract with HUD), to be followed by staff training and the development of an MTW Plan. The Executive Director reminded the Board that a key feature of the MTW program will be the funding flexibilities it offers, including the ability to utilize around \$4.5 million in Public Housing funds that otherwise would have to be returned to HUD once the Public Housing program is exited.

The Executive Director continued his report with an update on the first phase of the Baker Heights redevelopment. Financing for this project closed at the end of March, and demolition of existing units in advance of construction of a 105-unit development started approximately one month later. The development budget for this project was \$43 million, with a \$1.4 million contingency. The key target population for these new units will be homeless families with children enrolled on Everett Public Schools, and the first new residents were scheduled for move-in sometime in July 2022. Master planning for the remainder of the Baker Heights site was currently in progress and will include upcoming meetings with both the community and the City of Everett.

The Executive Director next updated the Board on 56 Emergency Housing Vouchers that were recently allocated by HUD. These Vouchers are designated for homeless or at risk of homelessness households and include built in funding for supportive programs and the Admin Fee funded at 100 percent. Applicants will be drawn from the County's Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry waiting list, and the Executive Director has emphasized in discussions with the County that homeless Everett school children and their families should receive preference on the waiting list for these Vouchers. The Housing Authority has requested 150 additional Emergency Housing Vouchers from HUD, contingent on available funding; however, these Vouchers are not tied to permanent funding and will eventually be phased out.

The Executive Director went on to report on the status of negotiations with AFSCME and Teamsters, the unions representing administrative and maintenance staff, respectively. Deputy Executive Director John Forsyth has been heading up both sets of negotiations, and although issues around compensation and salary remain to be resolved, management hoped to sign renewed three-year agreements with both unions by the end of June. The Executive Director next advised the Board that, since it appeared the pandemic was finally winding down, staff would likely be required to return to their offices effective September 8. Management was developing new policies in advance of that date, taking into consideration

some key issues that will need to be addressed in order to ensure the safety of our staff and the vulnerable populations we serve. These included the extent of remote work that will be allowed for different positions, vaccination requirements for staff that work directly with clients, the issue of unvaccinated staff, and expectations around wearing masks at work.

The Executive Director concluded his report by expressing appreciation for Housing Hope's decision to recognize the Housing Authority as its Partner for 2021 at the annual Stone Soup event. He also noted that he and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Tony Nabors did a joint Fireside Chat on the Housing Authority's new mission statement and strategic plan at the Public Housing Authority Directors Association (PHADA) National Conference on May 17. This focused on the agency's journey towards becoming an anti-racist organization.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Warren-Barbour called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 22, 2021 and the Special Meeting held on April 9, 2021. Commissioner Smith moved for approval, Commissioner Perez seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

1. Section 8 Payments for the Months of February, March 2021
2. Summary of Vouchers for the Months of February, March 2021
3. Approve Contract for Agency Wide Elevator Preventative Maintenance Program

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

### **Item for Individual Consideration**

#### ***Resolution No. 1509 Authorizing Execution of the Moving to Work Amendment to the Annual Contributions Contract(s) and Related Actions to Enter the Moving to Work Demonstration***

The Executive Director asked Senior Policy Analyst Janinna Attick to comment on this resolution, as she was the primary author of the Moving to Work (MTW) application and will play a major role in the implementation of the MTW Demonstration. Ms. Attick touched on the process that led to the Housing Authority's selection as an MTW agency and went on to point out that "thriving resident households" was the core theme of the MTW application and will also serve as the framework for initiatives under the MTW Demonstration. She further observed that the Housing Authority was selected for the MTW Demonstration as

part of a cohort tasked with studying the effects of rent reform, and this will entail implementing tiered rents for a select number of households.

Ms. Attick said admission to the MTW Demonstration was contingent on the Board's adoption of an amendment to the Annual Contributions Contract (ACC), which was an exhibit to this resolution. The Housing Authority will be able to begin to utilize the funding flexibilities offered under MTW in August; around that same time staff will begin drafting the MTW Plan, in the form of a Supplement to the Annual Plan, which will identify changes to programs and policies under the MTW Demonstration. Ms. Attick said the Housing Authority was awaiting guidance from HUD regarding requirements for resident and community engagement in that process. It was anticipated that some of the new policies could be ready to implement by March 2022.

Ms. Attick concluded by noting that this resolution authorized the Executive Director to execute the ACC amendment with HUD and any other actions required to enter the MTW Demonstration. She went on to say that the Board will be asked to adopt a resolution approving the MTW Plan in late summer or early fall.

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

***Resolution No. 1510 Approval of Rucker Land Closing and Commencement of Predevelopment Activities***

Director of Development Jason Morrow said this resolution was the next step in the acquisition process for a parcel of land on Rucker Avenue since the Board authorized execution of a purchase and sale agreement in February. He said the development team has spent the past three months engaged in a variety of due diligence activities, including architectural and engineering studies, in order to confirm the site's development potential and mitigate risk. The purpose of this resolution was twofold: first, to authorize moving forward with the land acquisition while exercising the right to complete additional due diligence; second, contingent on closing, to authorize commencement of predevelopment activities up to a final budget amount of \$3.75 million. This budget was subject to further refinement if the purchase goes through.

Director Morrow reminded the Board that the purchase price for this land acquisition was \$3.1 million plus closing costs, with the option for three one-month extensions of the due diligence period, at a cost of \$5000 per extension. He anticipated a single extension would be required, in order to complete a soils study and work through a surveying matter with the City. Director Morrow expected that both of these issues would be resolved and closing on this purchase could commence within 30 days. He went on to say that initial predevelopment activities would include a conceptual and schematic design phase to get a better idea of the site's development capacity, followed by the entitlement stage, and finally closing. Prior to the start of construction it will be necessary to get the Board's approval on bonds, financing, and any related requests.

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

### ***Resolution No. 1511 Amending the Personnel Policy to Recognize Juneteenth as an Agency Holiday***

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson said the senior management team took notice upon learning the State was about to adopt Juneteenth as a public holiday, and it began discussing whether the Housing Authority should do the same. He went on to relate that Juneteenth is celebrated to recognize the end of slavery in the United States, and as such, this holiday is very much in alignment with the Housing Authority's commitment to racial justice and equity. In its discussions on whether to propose adopting Juneteenth as an official agency holiday, senior management considered three options: to replace one of the twelve existing holidays with Juneteenth, to add it as an additional, thirteenth holiday, or to opt not to celebrate it at all. In the end all agreed strongly that the best course would be to add Juneteenth as an additional holiday, in order to avoid the potential for a staff member to blame the loss of an existing holiday on the agency's journey towards racial equity.

In addition to its decision to recommend Juneteenth an official agency holiday, senior management has also decided to establish a workgroup headed by Senior Policy Analyst Janinna Attick to develop policies around agency holidays and the process for creating new ones in the future. The Executive Director concluded by saying that this resolution amended the Personnel Policy to adopt Juneteenth as an agency holiday, and because the official holiday falls on a Saturday this year, to observe the agency holiday on Friday the 18th.

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

### ***Resolution No. 1512 Adopting Pacific Premier Bank Resolution***

Finance Director Wendy Blain said Pacific Premier Bank has acquired the bank where the Housing Authority's accounts are held, Opus Bank, and has provided a resolution for the Board to adopt that recognizes Pacific Premier Bank as the institution that now maintains those accounts.

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

### **Policy Discussion**

#### *Agency Budgets Effective July 1, 2021*

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson presented the Board with a list of twelve priorities that will be incorporated into the agency budget for fiscal year 2021-22. He said some of these would receive more elaboration than others in the final budget document, but he wanted to share them with the Board for discussion and comment. These covered a wide range of agency activities and resources and included priorities related to compliance, customer service, Moving to Work, and acquisitions, among others. Comments from the Board included a reminder to consider the issue of equity when making decisions related to "maximizing the use of resources for the benefit of our residents and participants," and the thought that it might be possible to consolidate the activity-focused priorities under others

that relate to broader goals. The Executive Director took note of these comments and concluded by saying said these priorities, or draft objectives, would be reviewed and refined as necessary before the final budgets were presented to the Board for adoption at the end of June.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Warren-Barbour adjourned the meeting at 12:58 p.m.

  
Allison Warren-Barbour (Jun 28, 2021 20:34 PDT)

Chair, Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Secretary