



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

**May 26, 2020**

**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 Secretary Ashley Lommers-Johnson at 12:18 p.m. on Tuesday, May 25, 2020. This meeting was held via Zoom videoconference as an emergency measure to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Prior to calling the meeting to order, Secretary Lommers-Johnson introduced two new additions to the senior management team: Director of Human Resources and Administration Linda Manning, and Director of Development Jason Morrow.

**Commissioners Present at Roll Call:**

Commissioner Benjamin Young  
Commissioner Koren Smith  
Commissioner Chip Burgess

Commissioner Tammy Williamson

**Commissioners Absent:**

Chair Allison Warren-Barbour  
Vice-Chair George Perez, Jr.

**Also in attendance were:**

**Staff:**

Ashley Lommers-Johnson, Executive Director  
John Forsyth, Director of Housing Operations  
Wendy Abbey, Director of Finance  
Jason Morrow, Director of Development  
Linda Manning, Director of Human Resources and Administration  
Steve Yago, Deputy Director of Development  
Wendy Westby, HCV Program Director  
Tony Nabors, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion  
Paula Kennedy, Human Resources Manager  
Brenda McLeod, Asst. Director of Procurement and Contracts  
Chris Neblett, Hearing Officer/Administrative Coordinator  
Jaysen Garcia, Executive Assistant

**Guests:**

Gary Haddenham, Broadway Plaza Resident Council President  
Julie Willie, City of Everett  
Liz Vogeli, City of Everett

## **Motion to Appoint Commissioner Benjamin Young Vice-President Pro Tem**

The Chair and Vice-Chair being absent from the meeting, Secretary Lommers-Johnson called for a motion to appoint Commissioner Young to preside as Vice-President Pro Tem, pursuant to Article II Section 6 of the Housing Authority's Bylaws. Commissioner Smith motioned as requested, Commissioner Burgess seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Communications**

Broadway Plaza Resident Council President Gary Haddenham reported that residents were following protocols in order to prevent the spread of COVID 19. This included practicing social distancing, wearing masks, and the cancellation of social events such as the annual Family Day celebration.

## **Executive Director's Report**

At Executive Director Lommers-Johnson's request, Director of Housing Operations John Forsyth and HCV Program Director Wendy Westby updated the Board on operations within their respective departments during the coronavirus pandemic. Director Forsyth first recalled conditions in mid-March that led to the implementation of agency-wide emergency measures, an effort he oversaw as assistant executive director when the executive director was out of the country. Director Forsyth said his department's operations during this pandemic have centered around three key principles identified by the executive director: keeping residents safe, the most vulnerable in particular; providing a safe working environment for staff; and continuing operations with the first two principles in mind. He attributed the low incidence of confirmed cases of COVID-19 among tenants (five persons to date at four locations, of whom two had recovered, one was quarantined, one in the hospital, and one deceased) to staff and tenants following protocols designed to mitigate spread of the coronavirus. Director Forsyth concluded by discussing the pandemic's impact on rent collection. An uptick in unpaid outstanding rent since the start of the pandemic (totaling \$3,500 for Jan./Feb. versus \$17,600 for Mar./Apr.) was seen as manageable, as it was generally confined to tenants with unsubsidized rents (around 100 units out of a portfolio of approximately 1,500 units) who lost jobs.

HCV Program Director Westby said her department was in the process of identifying how to best allocate an additional \$582,000 in administrative fee funding from HUD meant to offset program management expenses related to the coronavirus. Expenditures included the purchase of laptops and Internet hotspots that have allowed 15 of the 16 HCV staff to work remotely from home. The inspector's continuing work in the field was limited to unoccupied units prior to move-in and subject to additional safety precautions. Director Westby expressed pride in the ability of her department to provide excellent customer service to approximately 3,000 program participants while working remotely, and she attributed this flexibility to use of Yardi's cloud-based Rent Café portal, which her department implemented some time ago. Director Westby said Housing Assistance

Payment costs had increased by \$139,000 between March and April, and although this increase was not unexpected, she hoped HUD would provide additional funding to offset it. Concluding her report, Director Westby was happy to report HUD was providing the Housing Authority with an additional 18 vouchers effective October 1, designated specifically for homeless, disabled persons under the age of 62.

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson said Housing Authority offices and resident common areas would remain closed until at least September 1, in order to protect vulnerable clients, and in order to monitor the level of transmission rates of the coronavirus as restrictions in the wider community were lifted. Following a brief discussion on additional funding HUD will allocate to PHAs to defray costs associated with the coronavirus mitigation efforts, the Executive Director provided an update on Baker Heights. He hoped continuing negotiations with WSU to purchase a majority share of the property would wrap up in the next month or two. Efforts to finance the first phase of redevelopment on a section of the property were in full swing. This first phase will entail construction of 105 total housing units at an estimated cost of \$42 million, with 67 of these units intended for homeless families with children enrolled in Everett schools. The Housing Authority was in the process of lining up multiple funding sources expected to close later in September, with groundbreaking for this project potentially taking place the following month.

The next item in the executive director's report concerned the Housing Authority's new draft mission statement: "We create affordable housing, foster healthy communities where households thrive, and replace systemic racism with equity for all." This was developed based on the Board's direction at a retreat with senior management last Spring and incorporated three components, including one regarding systemic racism. It was expected that the new mission statement would be presented for adoption at the June regular meeting, after further review by the Board's Policy and Program subcommittee. The executive director further noted that the Board provided direction at last year's retreat with respect to the four core objectives contained in the Housing Authority's long-range Strategic Plan. This included plans to add 1,500 units to the agency's housing inventory (doubling the current inventory) over the next ten years, to provide access to communities of higher opportunity for its residents and participants, to address systemic racism and inequity internally and externally, and to promote a work culture where all staff are proud of their contribution to EHA's mission. Although development activities and the effort to incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion in recruitment and hiring of agency staff were moving forward, senior management was postponing the launch of other strategic planning activities until January 1, 2021, given the current priority focus on emergency operations related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson concluded his report to the Board by noting that he was not aware of any planned cuts to federal funding on the horizon. Rather, the Housing Authority has received close to \$650,000 from HUD to cover increases in administrative costs related to the coronavirus. He said there was a slight chance that HUD will provide funding for Vouchers targeted at those who have lost their housing as a result of this pandemic.

## **Consent Agenda**

Vice-President Pro Tem Young called for approval of the Consent Agenda, containing the following items:

1. Section 8 Payments for the Month of March 2020
2. Summary of Vouchers for the Month of March 2020
3. Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting Held on March 25, 2020

Commissioner Smith moved for approval of the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Burgess seconded and the motion carried.

## **Items for Individual Consideration**

### ***Resolution No. 1491 Authorizing a Loan from Banner Bank to Purchase Pepperwood Senior Apartments***

Deputy Director of Development Steve Yago began by noting the Housing Authority's approach towards acquiring this property had changed over time. Original plans called for a transfer of control of the governing limited partnership, until the decision was made later to purchase it outright from the partnership. This resolution will enable the Housing Authority to complete that purchase, although it has managed the property over the past few years.

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

Following a vote on the resolution, Executive Director Lommers-Johnson commented that this represented the last property in the portfolio acquired from Senior Services of Snohomish County. He also noted that the property was in the red when the Housing Authority first took over its management, but Pepperwood was now financially stable and was expected to remain in the black going forward.

### ***Resolution No. 1492 Authorizing the Sale of a Portion of Baker Heights to Mosaic Housing***

Deputy Director of Development Yago introduced this resolution as a prerequisite to a submittal of an amendment to the Section 18 application to HUD authorizing disposition of Baker Heights. This resolution authorized conveyance of a portion of the property to Mosaic Housing, a recently incorporated nonprofit entity under the Housing Authority's control. Executive Director Lommers-Johnson provided some additional background by explaining Mosaic Housing was created primarily to serve as a development arm for the Housing Authority, and it will be instrumental in the second phase of the redevelopment of Baker Heights. He said that the Mosaic Board held an organizing meeting a week ago, and an application for Mosaic to gain 501(c)(3) status with the IRS was pending. The Executive Director further noted that this resolution authorized sale of the property to Mosaic Housing for less than fair market value, or more specifically, for \$1.00.

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

## **Policy Discussion**

*Agency Budgets Effective July 1, 2020*

Finance Director Wendy Abbey said her presentation was meant to provide an overview of the proposed agency budgets. In keeping with the process followed over the past few years, she planned to meet with the Board's Finance Committee for a detailed review of proposed budgets prior to their adoption at the regular June meeting. To the greatest degree possible, the proposed budgets kept expenditures at current levels over the first six months of the fiscal year beginning July 1. If conditions warranted, budgets would be revised effective January 1, 2021 to account for additional expenditures related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In the meantime, additional administrative costs could potentially be covered using coronavirus emergency grants, pending further guidance from HUD. Additionally, HUD appeared to be granting flexibility by allowing Public Housing operating reserves to be applied towards renovation costs.

Following her presentation, Director Abbey yielded the floor to questions from the Board. Vice-President Pro Tem asked what effect a transition to the Moving to Work Demonstration Program might have on the budgets. Executive Director Lommers-Johnson responded that the Housing Authority was still awaiting HUD's invitation to submit a full application for the MTW program, and it was unlikely this would be forthcoming in the near future given that HUD has had to shift its administrative focus on combatting the coronavirus.

Responding to Vice-President Pro Tem Young's invitation to comment, City representatives Julie Willie and Liz Vogeli expressed their support of the Housing Authority's strategic initiatives, particularly with respect to its plans to further diversity, equity, and inclusion within the agency and the wider community.

Executive Director Lommers-Johnson noted that Chair Allison Warren-Barbour was absent from today's meeting due to the start of a new employment opportunity. He said that both he and the Mayor hoped Chair Warren-Barbour would be able to continue to serve on the Board.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Vice-Chair Pro Tem Young called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Smith made such a motion, Commissioner Burgess seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

ATTEST:



Secretary

  
Allison Warren-Barbour (Jun 22, 2020 14:59 PDT)

Chair, Board of Commissioners

# Regular Board Mtg Minutes 20200526

Final Audit Report

2020-06-22

Created:	2020-06-22
By:	Chris Neblett (chrisn@evha.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA86Trq7MarunrYfC3O05RvYec-DKTqQm6

## "Regular Board Mtg Minutes 20200526" History

-  Document created by Chris Neblett (chrisn@evha.org)  
2020-06-22 - 9:43:52 PM GMT- IP address: 50.34.67.226
-  Document emailed to Allison Warren-Barbour (allisonwb@evha.org) for signature  
2020-06-22 - 9:45:38 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Allison Warren-Barbour (allisonwb@evha.org)  
2020-06-22 - 9:58:03 PM GMT- IP address: 24.17.237.177
-  Document e-signed by Allison Warren-Barbour (allisonwb@evha.org)  
Signature Date: 2020-06-22 - 9:59:11 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 24.17.237.177
-  Document emailed to Ashley L-J (ashleyflj@evha.org) for signature  
2020-06-22 - 9:59:13 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Ashley L-J (ashleyflj@evha.org)  
2020-06-22 - 9:59:27 PM GMT- IP address: 73.11.169.193
-  Document e-signed by Ashley L-J (ashleyflj@evha.org)  
Signature Date: 2020-06-22 - 9:59:39 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 73.11.169.193
-  Signed document emailed to Chris Neblett (chrisn@evha.org), Ashley L-J (ashleyflj@evha.org) and Allison Warren-Barbour (allisonwb@evha.org)  
2020-06-22 - 9:59:39 PM GMT