

# HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

**Tuesday, January 26, 2021**

A Meeting of the Board of Commissioners (“Board”) of the Houston Housing Authority (“HHA”) was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, via telephone conference pursuant to the March 16, 2020 Notice issued by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and in accordance with the applicable portions of the Texas Open Meetings Act. The U.S. toll-free number was 1-877-853-5257, the local number was 1-346-248-7799 and the meeting identification number was 884 2844 8412.

Chair Snowden called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Secretary Thiele called the roll and declared a quorum present. Chair Snowden offered the use of an interpreter, who has been instructed to be on teleconference as well and will be available to Spanish speakers who may need assistance for public comments only. Olga Infante was asked to introduce herself in Spanish and let the attendees know of her service.

Present:           LaRence Snowden, Chair  
                      Kristy Kirkendoll, Vice Chair  
                      Stephanie A.G. Ballard, Commissioner  
                      Andrea Hilliard Cooksey, Commissioner  
                      Guillermo “Will” Hernandez, Commissioner  
                      Dr. Max A. Miller, Jr., Commissioner  
                      Mark Thiele, Secretary  
                      Kris Thomas, Commissioner

### **ANNUAL MEETING – ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS**

Chair Snowden stated at this time, Secretary Thiele will conduct the election process.

Secretary Thiele called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Cooksey nominated Chair Snowden for the position of Chair.

Secretary Thiele asked if there are any other nominations, having none, he called for a vote to close the nominations.

Commissioner Cooksey moved to close the vote on nominations for Chair, Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

Secretary Thiele asked if anyone opposed the close of nominations, having none, the nominations for Chair were closed.

Secretary Thiele called for a vote to re-elect Chair Snowden by saying all in favor signify by saying aye. All Commissioners signified by saying aye.

Secretary Thiele stated the vote is unanimous. Commissioner Snowden is re-elected to the position of Chair of the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Secretary Thiele called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Chair Snowden nominated Commissioner Kirkendoll for the position of Vice Chair.

Secretary Thiele asked if there are any other nominations, having none, he called for a vote to close the nominations.

Commissioner Cooksey moved to close the vote on nominations for Vice Chair, Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

Secretary Thiele asked if anyone opposed the close of nominations, having none, the nominations for Vice Chair are closed.

Secretary Thiele called for a vote to re-elect Commissioner Kirkendoll for Vice Chair by saying all in favor signify by saying aye. All Commissioners signified by saying aye.

Secretary Thiele stated the vote is unanimous. Commissioner Kirkendoll is re-elected to the position of Vice Chair of the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Secretary Thiele congratulated Chair Snowden and Vice Chair Kirkendoll for their re-election.

Chair Snowden thanked the Commissioners for re-electing him to this position. I appreciate your confidence in me in continuing work. We have had some great successes but we have got a lot of work to do. I hope by next meeting I will have a follow up on the accomplishments and I think Secretary Thiele will be presenting later to us if he has already discussed with you. I am excited about what is in front of us as well. The obstacles will remain in place but we are a mighty force to deal with. I think we have a lot of the right things in place to continue to do the work that really fits within the mission of this organization.

I always say it is important that we place our clients and the individuals that we serve as the main priority for the work of this agency. As they are making changes on the national level with HUD, I think that it is important that we start looking and becoming more strategically or visionary about what we are able to do for housing affordability. I have talked with Mayor Turner and other elected officials, as well as others within the community. We all recognize that housing affordability and the desperate need for more of it is important. We will continue to do what we can and what we should be doing. We will also continue to push the envelope and making sure the tools that are out there are available to us. That we use them to the best of our ability.

I will close by saying it is important also that we continue to educate the people around us not just our clients and the people we serve but the individuals we do business with, in the community and across this city, and also our elected officials because as we all have learned and what I have learned most is that we do not know it all. But it is important that we use what we do know to make sure that we continue to provide those necessary resources. I am excited about what is in front of us. I do not take this opportunity lightly. I can share with you my time and commitment has really escalated over the past year during this interim period we have been through. I must say that we have learned, we have grown and will continue to grow. I look forward to more work and more engagement with each of you.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Snowden stated the Board has had an opportunity to review the December 12, 2020, Board of Commissioners Meeting minutes. He asked for a motion to adopt the December 12, 2020 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Thomas moved to adopt the December 12, 2020, Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. Commissioner Cooksey seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to the December 12, 2020 Board of Commissioners Meeting minutes. Having none, the minutes passed unanimously and are adopted.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has had an opportunity to review the January 5, 2021 meeting minutes. He asked for a motion to adopt the January 5, 2021 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Miller moved to adopt the January 5, 2021, Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to the January 5, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. Having none, the minutes passed unanimously and are adopted.

Chair Snowden stated we will now move to the Interim President's report.

## **INTERIM PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Secretary Thiele congratulated Chair Snowden and Vice Chair Kirkendoll on the election. We as staff deeply appreciate your energy and demonstrated deep commitment to outstanding leadership of this agency. As we move forward, what we have to do, I agree that it is a tall order and we seek to achieve much. It could not be a more serious moment in time, with over 2,270,000 confirmed COVID cases in Texas and over 35,000 deaths. In Harris County there are over 301,000 confirmed cases and over 4,000 deaths.

As I have said over and over: Get tested, get tested, get tested, mask up, social distance, wash your hands, and love your family from a distance and now get vaccinated. The HHA's top priority is health and safety to those we serve amid the pandemic. We are pleased to inform our families, and we have done so directly, for our elderly families, that appointments for vaccinations are available at designated City of Houston Health Centers and designated Multi-Service Centers. The opportunity is for seniors 65 and older and for seniors 60 and older with underlying conditions. We have been in touch with the Area Agency on Aging. Their intake number is 832-393-4301 you will need to leave a message and they will call you back. We do encourage folks to call now for the vaccination. The staff is beginning to get vaccinated and with a number of our elderly beginning to get vaccinated. We continue to work with the health department and the Area Agency on Aging to assist in facilitating vaccinations towards folks that we serve.

I also say it was not that long ago that I heard the great Eugene Robinson, the Pulitzer Prize winning Washington Post writer, indicate to housers, that we were not only not at the table but we were not in the room and this was back in Cleveland.

We are very pleased to have made first day agenda of the new administration in terms of the extension of the eviction moratorium to the end of March. We watch with bated breath as they try to move forward with a \$1.9 trillion legislative proposal for comprehensive COVID-19 relief, to include another extension of that

moratorium, some \$30 billion in emergency rental and utility assistance, additional stimulus checks and \$5 billion to address the health and housing needs of the people experiencing homelessness. Houston and Harris County have already invested some \$150 million into the relief, rental assistance and direct assistance. We have had great leadership at a local level and we continue to call for that as we move forward.

Other things of note, HHA was awarded an additional 25 vouchers and \$324,000 under the Foster Youth to Independence initiative targeting housing assistance to young people in our foster care and who are in extreme risk of experiencing homelessness that builds upon our FUP program and initiatives taken at our own behest previous to that. We also received an award of Carbon Monoxide Grant, \$250,000 to install and replace carbon monoxide detectors in our public housing developments so I would like recognize both the HCVP program and Public Housing Operations program for pursuing these opportunities. This last item results in a minor adjustment to our annual plan which had been submitted right about the same time that award was coming to us. We also submitted a Moving To Work (MTW) application as a result of your permission in an earlier meeting this month and we appreciate that.

As Chair Snowden has mentioned, there has been outstanding work done and I have shared with you those accomplishments and will continue to share with you so you can pass the good word on to other folks. There is a lot of work being done here, Mr. Chairman and Board of Commissioners under your outstanding direction. We deeply appreciate it.

Secretary Thiele stated that this concludes his Interim President's Report respectfully submitted.

Chair Snowman thanked Secretary Thiele for his remarks and stated we will now move to Public Comments.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Snowden stated if an individual would like to make public comments at this time to press \*9 to raise your hand for your question or comment. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes for public comments. Speakers will only be allowed to speak once. I will inform you when your three minutes have expired. The Board will generally not provide responses to the comments or answer any questions. However, HHA residents making comments are encouraged to clearly state their name and the property where you reside. We will have someone from the property management team or from our staff, to reach out to you directly regarding any issue or concern you may have

Chair Snowden asked if there are any individuals that would like to make public comments at this time. It was determined that there would be no Public Comments.

Chair Snowden stated he will now move forth with the New Business.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Resolution No. 3235: Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO or designee to Write-off he Interim President & CEO or designee to Write**

Secretary Thiele stated that Resolution No. 3235 will be presented by Mr. George Griffin, III, Vice President of Public Housing Operations.

Mr. Griffin stated that Resolution No. 3235 is the HHA Board of Commissioners authorizes the Interim President & CEO or designee to write off vacated tenant accounts for the period of October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 in the amount of \$22,220.48. HUD requires housing authorities to reduce public housing

accounts receivable balances quarterly by writing off outstanding debt that are owed by former tenants after the debt has been deemed as uncollectable. This is usually as a result of voluntary and/or involuntary move outs. This debt includes rent additional rent resulting from unreported income, maintenance fees, legal fees, excessive utilities and other fees. Therefore, this resolution recommends authorizing the Interim President & CEO to take all necessary actions, to negotiate, execute and make changes and corrections to write off vacated tenant designated accounts that is deemed uncollectible in the amount of \$22,220.48. Staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Mr. Griffin and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3235.

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve Resolution No. 3235. Commissioner Cooksey seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3235. Having none, Resolution No. 3235 is adopted.

**Resolution No. 3236: Consideration to authorize the President & CEO or designee to execute a contract with Texas Municipal League Intergovernmental Risk Pool for the 2021 policy year**

Secretary Thiele stated that Resolution No. 3236 will be presented by Mr. Michael Rogers, Vice President of Fiscal Operations.

Mr. Rogers stated that this resolution seeks authorization for the Interim President & CEO or designee to negotiate, execute and make necessary changes and corrections to execute an insurance contract with Texas Municipal League Intergovernmental Risk Pool with total premium paid not to exceed \$585,000 for the policy year 2021. Texas Municipal League has been one of our primary insurers for a lengthy period of time. We are able to work with them through our position as a governmental agency. The premium for the current year is coming in at a reduced level from what we have asked for in previous years and that is due to the fact that some of the assets that we previously insured are no longer eligible to be covered by this pool. That means the units at Clayton that were sold to TxDOT and the removal of the Telephone Road building when it was moved over into the new Tax Credit Partnership for it to be redeveloped. As you can see from the detail, they provide a wide variety of insurance for us with the largest amount of it due to the property insurance that we cover. They have been extremely responsive to us in the past and continue to be with any claims that we file. Staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Mr. Rogers and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3236.

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve Resolution No. 3236. Commissioner Cooksey seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3236. Having none, Resolution No. 3236 is adopted.

**Resolution No. 3237: Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO or designee to Sign the FY 2020 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant Agreement and the Assistance Award/Amendment**

Secretary Thiele stated that Resolution No. 3237 will be presented by Mr. Alan Isa, Policy Analyst.

Mr. Isa state that Resolution No. 3237 seeks authorization for the Interim President & CEO or designee to sign the FY 2020 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant Agreement and the Assistance Award/Amendment. HHA

received an official letter from HUD on December 16, 2020 notifying us that HHA has been selected for the Planning Grant and received a FY 2020 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant Agreement. In the letter, HUD also asked for several of the documents and the official grant agreement be signed and returned back to them by February 1, 2021. The letter also specified HHA to obtain a Board Resolution authorizing the lead grantee's Executive Director to sign the HUD-1044 form and the Grant Agreement. Finally, the resolution also asks you to authorize the Interim President & CEO to perform any and all actions as necessary to be carried out per the Grant Agreement and what is stated in the resolution as the lead grantee. Staff recommends the Board adopt of this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Mr. Isa and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3237.

Commissioner Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 3237. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3237. Having none, Resolution No. 3237 is adopted.

Chair Snowden stated we will be hearing more about the FY 2020 Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant in the near future. We will definitely have a session, Secretary Thiele, to bring the commissioners up to speed on all of the good things that can come and will provide them an update. We will talk a bit as part of the about that development discussion.

Secretary Thiele replied looking forward to it.

**Resolution No. 3238: Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO or designee to execute a contract with A-Rocket Moving & Storage, Inc.**

Secretary Thiele stated that Resolution No. 3238 will be presented by Mrs. Donna Dixon, Director of Community Affairs and Communications.

Mrs. Dixon stated this resolution seeks authorization for the Interim President & CEO or designee to execute a contract with A-Rocket Moving & Storage, Inc. This contract will be for moving services at various Houston Housing Authority's developments being affected by either RAD, the TxDOT highway extension program or building rehab. The moving company will move all of the residents into their stated residency. For the seniors and people with disabilities, the moving company will pack and unpack the residents. Staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Ms. Dixon and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3238.

Commissioner Ballard moved to approve Resolution No. 3238. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3238. Having none, Resolution No. 3238 is adopted.

**Resolution No. 3239: Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO or designee to execute a contract with PDG Architects for A&E disaster recovery services associated with Hurricane Harvey**

Secretary Thiele stated that Resolution No. 3239 will be presented by Mr. Cody Roskelley, Vice President of Real Estate Investment and Development.

Mr. Roskelley stated Resolution No. 3239 is that the HHA Board of Commissioners authorizes the Interim President & CEO or designee to negotiate, execute and make necessary changes and corrections to a contract with PDG Architects and extend the existing 3-year contract for an additional year pursuant to the memorandum dated January 14, 2021. Staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Mr. Roskelley and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3239.

Commissioner Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 3239. Commissioner Kirkendoll seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3239. Having none, Resolution No. 3239 is adopted.

Chair Snowden stated at this time, the Board will move into Executive Session.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Snowden suspended the Public Session on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 3:29 p.m. to convene into Executive Session to discuss personnel, legal and real estate issues in accordance with Sections 551.074, 551.071 and 551.072 respectively, of the Texas Government Code.

### **PUBLIC SESSION RECONVENED**

Chair Snowden reconvened Public Session at 4:03 p.m.

Chair Snowden stated that Commissioner Hernandez was present during the Executive Session and it should be noted in the minutes.

Secretary Thiele offered to call roll. Chair Snowden stated he could see all of the Commissioners were present therefore a quorum was declared.

### **NEW BUSINESS continued...**

**Resolution No. 3240: Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO or designee to facilitate the development of 2100 Memorial Apartments, to be located at 2100 Memorial Drive, Houston, Texas 77007**

Chair Snowden stated that the Board has heard the resolution and asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 3240.

Commissioner Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 3240. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopt Resolution No. 3240. Having none, Resolution No. 3240 is adopted.

Chair Snowden stated we will move now to Resolution No. 3240.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Snowden remarked this concludes the items on today's agenda. In wrapping up, I would like to say thank you to everyone who remained with us, to our Commissioners and staff. Let me also say again thank you for your support and allowing me to continue to lead as the Chairman of the Board for the work we have to do into the future.

Chair Snowden concluded by stating, I will be in touch with the Commissioners individually to talk about some of the things we have ongoing for the upcoming month.

Chair Snowden asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Cooksey moved to adjourn. Commissioner Miller seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.