

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

A Meeting of the Board of Commissioners ("Board") of the Houston Housing Authority ("HHA") was held on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 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 1-888-475-4499, the local number was 1-346-248-7799 and the meeting identification number was 867 8687 0005.

Chair Snowden called the meeting to order at 3:02 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

Secretary Thiele called the roll and declared a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Snowden stated the Board has had an opportunity to review the November 17, 2020, Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. He asked for a motion to adopt the November 17, 2020 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Thomas moved to adopt the November 17, 2020, Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to the November 17, 2020 Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. Having none, the minutes passed unanimously and are adopted.

Chair Snowden stated we will now have our Interim President's Report by Mr. Mark Thiele.

INTERIM PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Secretary Thiele stated, I would like to echo your comments and wish the commissioners, staff and visitors a wonderful and safe holiday season during this unusual time.

In Texas, we are at 1,100,000 confirmed cases and over 23,000 deaths during this pandemic. In Harris County there are 200,000 confirmed cases and over 3,000 deaths. As I have said before, get tested, mask up, social distance, wash your hands, and even though it hurts all of our hearts, love your family from a distance so we can get through this as we look forward to a vaccine.

I do want to remark that during the COVID-19 period, we have provided over 116,230 meals with our partners. More recently, over 500 COVID-19 tests at recent testing and food distribution events in conjunction with Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee over the past 6 weeks, including recent events since my last report at Historic Oaks of Allen Parkway, and we thank her and all who participated.

We are certainly keeping a watchful eye on our Congress as we move closer to a vote, we hope on a much-needed deal on government funding first of all with the Omnibus package. We are looking forward to a report on that as well. We understand that talks are in progress, even as we talk now, amongst congressional leaders on a new COVID-19, again on a much-needed, proposal at a little over \$900 billion. We wish Speaker Pelosi, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and our congressional leaders good luck in coming to a deal because we need that. We wish you in particular Mr. Chairman a wonderful day.

Secretary Thiele concluded by stating that is my report respectfully submitted.

Chair Snowden thanked Secretary Thiele and asked if there are any comments from the commissioners. Hearing none, he said let me take this time briefly to recognize my fellow commissioner, Commissioner Ballard. It is her birthday and we are celebrating both of our birthdays today. We are here doing the business of the HHA instead of being out in the bad weather. Commissioner Ballard, happy birthday to you. Commissioner Ballard thanked everyone for the happy birthday wishes.

Chair Snowden stated we will now move forward 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. Having none, we move on to our new business.

Robin Harrison began by stating: I attended the board meeting back in January 2020. Prior to the board meeting, I emailed some of the board members regarding the issues that I was going through. 1. My reasonable accommodation was being delayed. 2. There was a false inspection report that was completed and also alleged there was a second inspection conducted on my unit. The following day, I was issued a termination letter. Everything I was trying to do in order to move was frozen because of that false information. It was very disheartening what I was going through with Jonathan Campbell at that point in time. I reached out to Tammy Curtis Jones and she was helpful. She referred me to Keland Lewis who was his supervisor. I spoke with Jonathan Campbell the same day but the issues kept lingering.

Keland Lewis is Jonathan Campbell's supervisor as well as the general counsel, to me, it is like he is wearing two different hats. If your hands are involved in the daily affairs of the organization how do you get to stand there and be the one to represent the organization if anything comes up legally about your actions. I understand Jonathan Campbell is no longer there, but Keland Lewis cannot just say Jonathan Campbell is no longer there. But then his supervisor, and the emails I sent to him, that he never responded to. He was fully

aware of everything that was happening. I applied in July of 2019, for my reasonable accommodation and I was not able to get the benefit of it until March 2020 which is nearly 8 months at that point and that was unreasonable.

Chyna Gragg, with Roofing Designs, stated: I know we have not gotten to New Business but I am calling regarding the Lincoln Park gutters and downspouts. I believe this job bid opened Sept 11, 2020. I am looking under New Business, Resolution No. 3230, which states FRS Trenchore, Inc. is basically being awarded the project. We were the lowest bidder. We requested information months ago and got the information last week. Why are we not being considered? Our bid was neck and neck with everyone else's. Can anyone answer that?

Nakia Sims began by stating: We don't want to be taken care of. We want to take care of ourselves. We ask to be treated like human beings. Not numbers in a housing project. I pay homage and honor to Bertha Gilkey and Lenwood Johnson. I stand on their shoulders. I am a member of advocacy. I am a resident owned business owner as well as a Section 3 business owner navigating the not so resident friendly waters of certification which do not accommodate residents who do not have access to printers and do not have the same capital and access to competitors. I will continue to go through the process also with Section 3 through the City of Houston.

I come today, once again to reach out to our Board members and will continue to go to the city as well as the economic developments and letting our city officials and eventually our federal officials know that Section 3 still has missed opportunities. We do appreciate your staff meeting with us but we did not have a seat at the table. As a matter of fact, we did not even have a chair at the meeting. We were there and were asked questions but there is still not a Section 3 plan.

We have provided information and comments about the Moving To Work (MTW) plan and would appreciate the Interim President providing public comments and opportunities for residents. However, his staff has not followed up with us regarding our comments and our questions about what it means so that residents actually understand what is moving for the resident buy-in.

With respect to Section 3, the City of Houston has comments on their five-year plan with the housing community development. I looked at 2019 and it indicated there were no Public Comments. I will make sure I am submitting my comments so that they are added.

It indicated there were 55 people that benefited from the Pop-Up shop where a British man who was not from the HHA with no education, unlike the people that continue from public housing who often look like me with brown skin, African-American women who can have multiple degrees, law degrees, real estate licenses, teacher certifications and yet we still live in poverty. We are asking to no longer be under the color of law.

HHA, our Board members, I hope you are reading the packages, looking at the capital improvement plan which does not state what will be happening under RAD and making sure the HHA is not supporting disparate impact and racial inequity.

The Pop-Up shop business did not result in businesses for residents and was an opportunity where residents and HHA could not get bus passes. I have the emails where we asked for bus passes. It was for other people who lived in Katy. In fact, it contributed to the problem. As we were insulted by the British man who was, like so many other people, intimidated by the people from the HHA and people like us who are actually ambitious and talented. We are asking for an opportunity, not an entitlement. TIME IS UP.

Lauren Fielder stated: I used to live at 2100 Memorial. I am a retired hospice nurse and public health nurse. I would like to give the board insight to the current status of our hospitals at the Medical Center. I have been hospitalized 3 times in the past several months and the most recent as last week.

I have a lot of public health experience and started my career as a live-in nurse and a member of the LGBTQ community. I worked on the front lines during the HIV Epidemic in the 1980's both personally and professionally. I worked on the Texas New Mexico border as a tuberculosis contact tracer for the State of Texas. I also work in immigration and the customs enforcement processing center with Illegal immigrant detainees. Detainees originated from a host of many third-world countries with multiple infectious diseases, all highly communicable. In all of my professional experience in these public health arenas, the successful protocol was the same. 1. Infection control; 2. Science-based health instruction; 3. Clear, concise, authoritative messaging which are the standards of public health.

Right now, our country is at war with COVID-19. It is our solemn duty to support the troops on the battlefield which at this moment is our healthcare facilities and all of the people and all of the staff, the doctors, the nurses, the janitorial housekeeping, every single people in the laundry. Those people that I know from working with them and that I know from my 8 hospitalizations at Methodist in the Medical Center in the past four years are stressed beyond a level that I have ever seen. I have seen doctors who are 40 years in their career with tears in their eyes. Nurses crying. Nurse's aides that are scared that they are going to get rotated to the COVID-19 units. They have all of the supplies that they need but they are scared just as the as is the entire population. Part of what is making them so scared is that the patient load keeps coming and coming. You can make more beds but you can't make people to care for the people that are in those beds. When Dr. Anthony Fauci warned everyone...TIME IS UP.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 3226 – Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO to execute a three (3) Year Software Maintenance Agreement with Emphasys Software

Secretary Thiele stated Resolution NO. 3226 will be presented by our Director of IT, Mr. Roy Spivey.

Mr. Spivey stated Resolution No. 3226 recommends that the HHA Board of Commissioners authorize the Interim President & CEO to take all actions necessary to negotiate, execute and make necessary changes and corrections to a contract with Emphasys Software for a new software license agreement in the amount of \$660,622.00 for a period of three (3) years excluding possible future additional modules.

This is a software maintenance agreement. In the past we have gotten one with one-year renewals that have annual increases from 2.6% up to 14%. With this three-year agreement, we standardize that to a 5% or lower annual increase. Emphasys produces a software called Elite. Elite does our general ledger, HCVP and Public Housing. Accordingly, staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Mr. Spivey and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3226.

Commissioner Thomas moved to approve Resolution No. 3226. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3226. Having none, Resolution No. 3226 is adopted.

Resolution No. 3227 – Consideration and/ or take action to approve the 2021 Operating Budget

Secretary Thiele stated Resolution NO. 3227 will be presented by Vice President of Fiscal Operations, Mr. Mike Rogers.

Mr. Rogers stated that Resolution No. 3227 recommends that the HHA Board of Commissioners approves the 2021 Budget for the HHA for the Central Office Cost Center, Housing Choice Voucher Program, Low Rent Public Housing Program, and Section 8 New Construction Program.

The budget was developed as a collaborative process by the various agencies here at the HHA working with staff members within those agencies as well as considerable input from our third-party property management firms. The purpose of the budget is to establish operating guidelines for these segments of the HHA. We are very confident in the budget that we have produced. The methodology is very similar to the one that we have used in prior years although this year we did have to make allowances for the fact that some of our day-to-day operating expenses have been adversely impacted. From a planning standpoint, not necessarily from a budget standpoint, due to the pandemic situation where we a majority of our staff working from a remote location.

Our budget is heavily dependent, in certain segments, on actions taken by the federal government in the allocation and budgeting of the operating subsidy for both the public housing properties as well as the voucher department. We have looked at past history and made our best estimate as we can for what those operating funding levels will be for 2021 and we have included those in the budget.

We have taken extreme efforts to make sure we have identified the appropriate level of staffing needed to properly execute these budgets. We have worked with the management companies to make sure the property budgets adequately fund the day-to-day operations of the properties for both the Public Housing as well as the Section 8 new construction. We have taken into consideration, where appropriate, the events that are actually unfolding on the ground like the renovation on Telephone Road project right now which means that property is operating with substantial vacancies. Accordingly, staff recommends the Board approve the 2021 Operating Budget.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution presented by Director Spivey and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3227.

Commissioner Cooksey moved to approve Resolution No. 3227. Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3227. Having none, Resolution No. 3227 is adopted.

Resolution No. 3228 – Consideration and/or to take action to Update Utility Allowance Rates for Applicable Public Housing Developments

Secretary Thiele stated Resolution No. 3228 through Resolution No. 3231 will be presented by Vice President of Real Estate Investment and Development, Mr. Cody Roskelley.

Mr. Roskelley stated that Resolution No. 3228 is that the HHA Board of Commissioners authorizes the Interim President & CEO to update the utility allowance rates in accordance with the utility allowance study for applicable Public Housing and Tax Credit Developments and make any corrections and changes, pursuant to the memorandum dated December 3, 2020. Accordingly, staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3228.

Commissioner Ballard moved to approve Resolution No. 3228. Commissioner Kirkendoll seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3228. Having none, Resolution No. 3228 is adopted.

Resolution No. 3229 – Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO to enter into a contract with ERC Environmental & Construction Services, Inc. (dba ERC) to repair existing sidewalks at Cuney Homes Apartments

Mr. Roskelley stated that Resolution No. 3229 that the HHA Board of Commissioners authorizes the Interim President & CEO to negotiate, execute, and make necessary changes and corrections to a contract with ERC Environmental & Construction Services, Inc. (dba ERC) to repair existing sidewalks at Cuney Homes Apartments in the amount of \$216,865.35, pursuant to the memorandum dated December 1, 2020. Accordingly, staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3229

Commissioner Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 3229. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3229. Having none, Resolution No. 3229 is adopted.

Chair Snowden stated we will now move to Resolution No. 3230.

Resolution No. 3230 – Consideration to authorize the Interim President & CEO to execute a contract with FRS Trenchore, Inc. to install gutters and downspouts (which includes the installation of splash guards at the base of each downspout), at Lincoln Park Apartments

Mr. Roskelley stated that Resolution No. 3230 is that the HHA Board of Commissioners authorizes the Interim President & CEO to negotiate, execute, and make necessary changes and corrections to a contract with FRS Trenchore, Inc. to install gutters and downspouts (which includes the installation of splash guards at the base of each downspout), at Lincoln Park Apartments in the amount of \$145,333.00 pursuant to the memorandum dated November 23, 2020. Accordingly, staff recommends this resolution be adopted.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3230.

Commissioner Kirkendoll moved to approve Resolution No. 3230. Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3230. Having none, Resolution No. 3230 is adopted.

Chair Snowden stated we will now move to Resolution No. 3231.

Resolution No. 3231 – Discussion and/or to take action to approve to increase the contract amount for continued mold remediation, asbestos abatement, and lead abatement work at Houston Housing Authority properties

Mr. Roskelley stated Resolution No. 3231 is that the HHA Board of Commissioners authorizes the Interim President & CEO, to negotiate, execute, and make any necessary changes and corrections to increase the contract amount to \$1,200,000.00 for continued mold remediation, asbestos abatement, and lead abatement work at Houston Housing Authority properties pursuant to the memorandum dated November 25, 2020. Accordingly, staff recommends the Board adopt this resolution be adopted.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3231.

Commissioner Kirkendoll moved to approve Resolution No. 3231. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to approve Resolution No. 3231. Having none, Resolution No. 3231 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, December 15, 2020, at 3:34 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 4:12 p.m.

Secretary Thiele called the roll and declared a quorum present.

NEW BUSINESS continued...

Resolution No. 3232 – Consideration and/or to take action to authorize the Interim President & CEO to negotiate and execute a contract with an Executive Search Firm

Chair Snowden stated that the Board has heard the resolution and recommendation from staff. He asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 3232.

Commissioner Ballard moved to approve Resolution No. 3232. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopt Resolution No. 3232. Having none, Resolution No. 3232 is adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Snowden remarked this concludes the items on today's agenda.

For the staff that is on call, I know the commissioners are behind me 100%, we thank you very much for the work you have done over this last year. We have encountered a lot of obstacles and we appreciate, as we are going into the holidays, that you all are standing up firm and being committed to the work. Also, during this time, we hope that you are taking some time with your immediate families and we ask that you follow the CDC guidelines. We all are seeing the vaccines and is happening now and we still have a bit of time to go to get over this hurdle so please continue to be safe and thank you once again for your work.

Chair Snowden asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Ballard moved to adjourn. Commissioner Kirkendoll seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.