



HOUSTON
HOUSING AUTHORITY

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**MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

A Meeting of the Board of Commissioners (“Board”) of the Houston Housing Authority (“HHA”) was held on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at the Houston Housing Authority Central Office, 2640 Fountain View Drive, Houston, Texas 77057.

Chair Snowden called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. Secretary Northern called the roll and declared a quorum present.

Present: LaRence Snowden, Chair
Kris Thomas, Commissioner
Kristy Kirkendoll, Vice Chair
Andrea Hilliard Cooksey, Commissioner
Stephanie A.G. Ballard, Commissioner
David A. Northern, Sr., Secretary

Absent: Dr. Max A. Miller, Jr., Commissioner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Snowden stated the Board has had an opportunity to review the September 12, 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes and asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes.

Director Cooksey moved to adopt the meeting minutes and Director Kirkendoll seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to the September 12, 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Having none, the minutes are adopted.

Chair Snowden said we will now move to the President’s Report.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has had an opportunity to review the October 10, 2023 Special Board of Directors meeting minutes and asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes.

Director Cooksey moved to adopt the meeting minutes and Director Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to the October 10, 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Having none, the minutes are adopted.

Chair Snowden said we will now move to the President’s Report.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Secretary Northern stated HHA and Columbia Residential held a community meeting at the Boys and Girls Club Center for former 2100 Memorial residents to share information on the new complex, features, progress, application process, right to return, and other relevant information to make their transition as seamless as possible if they choose to move back.

The Golf Tournament Fundraiser raised \$91,110 to fund scholarships for our clients to continue their higher education. Six scholarship recipients were awarded this year.

Also attended the Knowles Rowland Center Celebration. HHA partnered with Bread of Life Inc., on a project to rebuild and repurpose the Knowles-Rowland Center for Youth. Beyoncé made a guest appearance to celebrate the project and the partnership. This new building will serve as housing for those who don't have a home in Houston. HHA provided 31 vouchers to the recipients.

We received information regarding unclaimed funds from the State of Texas, Texas Comptroller Office, and completed the paperwork spearheaded by Corey Franklin and Mike Rogers. HHA recovered \$26,000 in previously unclaimed funds. Funds can be used to support the HHA's initiatives of providing safe and affordable housing to our program participants or support employee-related items. We will continue to review the website on a yearly basis to capture all the money due to the Houston Housing Authority.

Chairman Snowden gave kudos to Donna Dixon and her crew for the money raised during the Golf Tournament. In regards to CNI - Chairman Snowden also gave kudos to those with a key role in our success. Ms. Delores Ford, the new resident President for Cuney Homes, Sasha Marshall-Smith and Cupid Alexander for getting the plan over the finish line at the end of September. Thank you for all the work being done. The HHA agency is on a good path and all is in order.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Snowden offered the use of an interpreter to be available to Spanish speakers who may need assistance for public comments only. Ms. Elizabeth Parris was asked to introduce herself in Spanish and let the attendees know of his service.

Chair Snowden stated that 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 they 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 who would like to make public comments at this time.

Jon Rosenthal, Texas State Representative, House District 135 and I am a vocal advocate for homeownership and here to help and to get to know HHA.

Renee Gervais, KB Homes, here to support the housing voucher program as homeownership is extremely important for Houstonians.

Shad Bogany, Broker for Better Homes and Gardens, asking the Board to consider raising the housing voucher program amount and for HHA to host a stakeholder meeting. Mr. Marquis is also a former chair of HAR.

Eunice Banks, a former tenant of the Family Self Sufficiency Program, asked the Board to continue supporting and spark changes to the program as well as to educate the residents. Ms. Banks became a homeowner and was able to raise her children then years later sold her home for a generous profit and was able to give to her grandchildren for their future.

Jessica Eblen, 1st Class Real Estate Luxury Living Offer Agent, Broker is requesting HHA to educate the tenants, realtors, builders, and mortgage lenders. Ms. Eblen created a video on YouTube and receives five calls per month asking about the program.

David Rosales, Mortgage Banker with Amegy Bank, was challenged by Alyson Griffin with Cross Country Mortgage to get involved and assist residents with the Section 8 voucher program. We believe in helping families build wealth and change lives. How can we build this up even more and that is to get the families bankable ready.

Melissa McDonough, Texas State Congressional District 38 and running for congressional district 38. I would love to take your voice and what matters to you to do your job and make it a reality for our community, and especially for our candidates.

Veralisa Hunter, Covenant Capital and I want to learn more about the housing choice voucher program and how I can share the knowledge. I have offered to start a company to help address the housing choice voucher program.

Lakeisha Lott, a resident who used the FSS program. In August 2020, Ms. Lott became a homeowner and it was all because of the program.

Brad Tiffan, Senior Vice President of Legend Homes Builder and we have collaborated closely with families benefiting from the housing choice voucher program. Our aspiration is to extend this support to a broader audience. Legend Homes is eager to explore a partnership with HHA with the sincere intention of enhancing efforts to facilitate homeownership for families.

Todd Barrow, Chesmar Homes is asking for vouchers to keep up with the home median pricing and commerce. The current voucher amount is too low so please just do what is right.

Alyson Griffin with Cross Country Mortgage: After leaving the last meeting I realized that it takes a village to help families on the housing choice voucher program to become homeowners. That entails builders, lenders, realtors, and the HHA to name a few. Let's work on a plan to achieve this. All the people are here today so you can hear firsthand how we are helping families become homeowners and we are here to continue to help. I also want to recognize and thank two key HHA employees, Jordan and Melody. They went above and beyond to help rework the numbers for a family to be able to close on the home in November. There are laws that support buyers from discrimination, Equal Credit Opportunity Act. I look forward to this village to come together and help all the families.

Dominique Spivey: My experience with the FSS program was successful and I would like to offer myself as an ambassador for the program. I encountered discrimination and I do not want others to struggle. I would like to sit with administrative staff to provide my assistance with policies for future homeowners.

Chair Snowden stated: that there is a sense of urgency to educate all and it is a must. The FSS program is not an easy process and requires making a commitment. There's an opportunity for congressional members, state representatives, and advocates to go to DC and speak to individuals to obtain increases. Please let them know

that HHA is not the enemy and we are indeed part of the solution. There are rules and regulations with any federal monies and we all have to abide.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution No. 3712: Consideration and/or action to authorize the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to adopt the Policy on Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information (PII) at the Houston Housing Authority.

Secretary Northern stated Roy Spivey, Director of Information Technology will present this resolution.

Mr. Spivey stated Resolution 3712 reads: That the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to adopt the Policy on Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information (PII) at the Houston Housing Authority that is attached pursuant to the memorandum from Roy Spivey, Director of Information Technology, dated September 30, 2023, to David A. Northern, Sr., President & CEO.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the reading of the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3712.

Commissioner Thomas moved to adopt Resolution No. 3712. Commissioner Kirkendoll seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopting this resolution. Having none, Resolution No. 3712 is adopted.

Resolution No. 3713: Consideration and/or take action to authorize the renewal of employee health and welfare benefits effective January 1, 2024

Secretary Northern stated that Resolution No. 3713 will be presented by Patricia Guerra, Director of Human Resources, Training and Development.

Ms. Guerra stated our intent was to really enrich our current benefits without increasing that cost to employees or to HHA.

- 1) Cigna will continue to be the medical plan. We currently have two healthcare plans available to employees. We added a third plan which is a high-deductible health care plan. We offer healthcare savings accounts;
- 2) Vision coverage will remain with MDA. There was a bit of an increase in that offering;
- 3) Dental had a small increase to increase the financial benefit;
- 4) Guardian Basic Life and AD&D will continue with no price increase;
- 5) We also offer additional Volunteer Life and AD&D coverage for employees who wish to elect a higher amount;
- 6) The Employee Assistance Program will continue with Aetna as this was the richer plan. This does have to have face-to-face visits for each family member within the household;
- 7) Colonial Life, is a different type of administrative offering;

We recommend Cigna for voluntary accident, critical illness, and hospital indemnity and this is at the cost of the employee. We recommend to add MetLife Legal as an option for employees at their cost. We are proposing to add Short-Term and Long-Term Disability and will be employer paid. These changes do not increase employee contribution and does cause a small increase to HHA over cost.

Ms. Guerra stated Resolution No. 3713 reads: That the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners authorizes the President & CEO to execute and make necessary changes and corrections to the current contracts for Medical benefits, Vision Insurance, Dental Insurance, and Basic Life and Accidental Death and

Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance and enter into new contracts for employer-paid Short-term and Long-term Disability, Voluntary Life and AD&D, Voluntary Accident, Critical Illness, Hospital Indemnity Hospital and Legal provided by HHA to all active full-time employees for an annual estimated renewal package increase of \$876 over the prior plan year to the Authority pursuant to the October 11, 2023, memorandum from Patricia Guerra, Director of Human Resources, Training and Development to David A. Northern, Sr., President & CEO.

Chair Snowden had a couple of questions and requested Mr. Gallagher to approach the podium. You stated there was no impact on the cost to the employees and there is a small impact to the agency in the amount of \$876. Chair Snowden wanted clarification of the cost to the agency.

Ms. Guerra said \$876 total for the year and not per person.

Chair Snowden requested that we look at other agencies our size and within Texas to compare where we stand. Their coverages and amount versus HHA.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the reading of the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3713.

Commissioner Cooksey moved to adopt Resolution No. 3713. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopting this resolution. Having none, Resolution No. 3713 is adopted.

Resolution No. 3714: Consideration and/or take action to authorize the President & CEO or designee to Write-off vacant tenant accounts for July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023.

Secretary Northern stated that Resolution No. 3714 will be presented by George D. Griffin III, Vice President of Housing Operations.

Mr. Griffin stated this is a standard resolution presented to the Board on a quarterly basis. Therefore Resolution 3714 recommends that the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners authorize the President & CEO or designee to write off vacated tenant accounts designated as uncollectible in the amount of \$140,664.05 for the captured months of July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023.

You'll notice this is a 30% increase from the second quarter write-offs which did \$100,005.64. This brings us to a year-to-date totals for write-offs at \$371,004.94, which is a slight increase at this time, last year. HUD requires housing authorities to reduce public housing accounts receivable balances by writing off the outstanding debt that is owed by former tenants after the debt has been deemed as uncollectible. This debt includes rent, additional rent, resulting from unrecorded income, maintenance fees, legal fees, excessive utilities, and other fees. Unfortunately, I do expect this debt to increase in the future due to the economic climate that we're all experiencing. This upward trend is obviously adversely affecting everyone. But no other demographic or group is affected more than our clients and our residents. HHA and its property management agents are committed to preventing homelessness by educating our clients on available options and when our clients and residents experience hardships. Some of the things that we do to remain committed is collecting rents, but then balancing the dynamics of not increasing homelessness. When rent is not received by the 5th of every month, we send notices, and usually between the 5th and the 10th of each month, we will do home visits. After that, we actually make phone calls and present options such as our repayment agreement. In certain situations, we also refer to our Client Services Specialist to identify other available resources. Many of you know during COVID, we had Baker Ripley, we had Catholic Charities, unfortunately, those resources have dried up. There were also moratoriums that are no longer available for our clients.

Mr. Griffin stated Resolution No. 3714 recommends: That the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners authorizes the President & CEO or designee to write off vacated tenant accounts designated as uncollectable in the amount of \$140,664.05 and make necessary changes and corrections pursuant to the memorandum from George D. Griffin III, Vice President of Housing Operations dated October 2, 2023 to David A. Northern, Sr., President & CEO.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the reading of the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3714.

Commissioner Kirkendoll moved to adopt Resolution No. 3714. Commissioner Cooksey seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopting this resolution. Having none, Resolution No. 3714 is adopted.

Resolution No. 3715: Consideration and/or take action to authorize the President & CEO or designee to enter into a contract with Civix for comprehensive Data and GIS Consulting Services. This engagement will encompass a thorough effort by Civix and MPACT to perform data and spatial analysis of both existing and newly gathered HHA-related information, ultimately aiming to provide robust insights that will assist cross-functional teams and leadership in making informed strategic decisions.

Secretary Northern stated that Resolution No. 3715 will be presented by Cupid Alexander, Senior Vice President of Operations.

Mr. Alexander stated: I'm excited to present an opportunity that not only aligns with our mission but also underscores a commitment to inclusivity. This opportunity is centered around geographic information systems technology which has the potential to significantly enhance our data analysis capabilities, and empower our decision-making process. The use of GIS technology represents a host of positives for the Houston Housing Authority. It allows us to enhance our data visualization, optimize resource allocation, engage with our community more effectively, realize cost savings and ensure compliance with regulations, all while advancing our mission of providing quality housing solutions and support services. Using the two maps provided is an example of what can be done through this contract, but more importantly, it helps visualize where there might be opportunities for the Houston Housing Authority to advocate on behalf of the clients that we serve. If you look at this example, you will see there is light colored areas, and there are dots. These dots indicate grocery stores, banks and healthcare facilities. Notice in the light areas, many dots are missing. I was not going to mention this, however, you just heard about the Community Reinvestment Act and the need for banking solutions. There is a requirement for banks to invest in the areas but that's only if you have a bank in your community and in many communities where our residents live, there is a lack of ability to leverage financial resources because there are simply no banking options. Through contracts like this, we have the ability to visualize and indicate where there may be additional investments to advocate for.

Mr. Jared Genova stated that he is a Project Manager with Civix, a national professional services firm that works with the public sector agencies across the country, on community development, grants management, disaster recovery, and technology services, including GIS services, and database services. We specialize in meshing these two things together and being able to understand the needs of the Houston Housing Authority, and also looking at what kinds of technology services solutions can best help you to do your jobs. Our team is a really great example of bringing these two things together. We are also joined by a local Houston-based firm here, MPACT Consulting and I am joined by a couple of colleagues here today. Their MBE (Minority Business Enterprises) and HUD-certified firm, based here in Houston, and they will be supporting us on this engagement throughout. We are looking forward to getting into all the types of data the Houston Housing Authority already has, and also those that might need to be collected in the future. Just as an example, the types of data that you already have, certainly tell the story. And being able to layer those and disaggregate them where possible to really understand

the impact that you're already having, and the impact that you might be able to have in the future across Houston across the ETJ. That is really what's going to help drive those next decision points. We are here to help support your decision-making in the future and we look forward to working with you and staff moving forward.

Mr. Alexander stated: What makes this opportunity even more remarkable is the top three responders among the seven total submissions for this opportunity, were Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), this is a testament to our dedication to fostering diversity and promoting economic growth in our community, and doing so intentionally and inter-sectionally.

Mr. Alexander stated Resolution No. 3715 reads: That the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners authorizes the President & CEO or designee to negotiate, execute, and make necessary changes and corrections to a contract with Civix for comprehensive Data and GIS Consulting Services. This engagement will encompass a thorough effort by Civix and MPACT to perform data and spatial analysis of both existing and newly gathered HHA-related information, ultimately aiming to provide robust insights that will assist cross-functional teams and leadership in making informed strategic decisions. This contract is proposed at an amount, not to exceed 5 years and \$200,000, pursuant to a memorandum from Sarah Rashid, MTW and Policy Coordinator, and Cupid Alexander, Senior Vice President of Operations, dated October 4, 2023 to David A. Northern, Sr., President & CEO.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the reading of the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3715.

Commissioner Cooksey moved to adopt Resolution No. 3715. Commissioner Kirkendoll seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopting this resolution. Having none, Resolution No. 3715 is adopted.

Chair Snowden stated: a couple of items 1) individuals taking data and collecting data need training and; 2) training for those entering the data and they are responsible for checking the data being entered and verifying. How will staff and agency handle making sure this is handled properly?

Mr. Alexander stated the team is going through extensive amounts of data checking each file and correcting information that may have been transposed and any errors found. We have to check our data while moving from the old system to Yardi. Once we get to GIS Specialist the information will be correct.

Chair Snowden asked how Civix and MPACT work in conjunction with other HUD tools and systems currently in place so it does not become a point to question where people are.

Mr. Alexander stated the GIS is now in use with HUD, most housing authorities, and housing and redevelopment agencies. I have used GIS and will be checking.

Resolution No. 3716: Consideration and/or take action to authorize the President & CEO or designee to facilitate the acquisition of Trails at City Park located at or about 2201 West Orem Drive, Houston, Texas 77047, and the execution of all required documents therefor.

Secretary Northern stated that Resolution No. 3716 will be presented by Jay Mason, Director of REID.

Mr. Mason stated Resolution No. 3716 reads: That the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners authorizes the President & CEO or authorized representative of the Houston Housing Authority (the "**Authority**") to take such actions necessary or convenient to facilitate the acquisition of Trails at City Park located at or about 2201 West Orem Drive, Houston, Texas 77047 (the "**Project**") using an ownership structure under Chapter 392

of the Texas Local Government Code and without the usage of a public facility corporation, pursuant to the memorandum from Jay Mason, Director of REID dated October 17, 2023, to David A. Northern, Sr., President & CEO.

Jay Mason stated: staff recommends approval of this resolution primarily because this development has 288 units with 50% being affordable with a little over 60% of the units being at 60% AMI with the remainder of the affordable units, or 86 units, being at 80% AMI. We have done our analysis on this development and the additional affordability brings us to the total public benefit for residents out of a little over 90% which meets Houston Housing Authority's criteria. Again, this is the reason why the staff recommends approval of this resolution.

Chair Snowden stated the Board has heard the reading of the resolution and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution No. 3716.

Commissioner Kirkendoll moved to adopt Resolution No. 3716. Commissioner Ballard seconded the motion.

Chair Snowden asked if there is any discussion or objection to adopting this resolution. Having none, Resolution No. 3716 is adopted.

Chairman stated he has a couple of points:

- 1) We will have meetings and discussions with the sub-committee;
- 2) For those mapping the location, I recall is at the West City Park area between Almeda and Highway 288 for count workers who may want to move closer to the city is the West Orem exit. That area is called City Park. Fair Housing advocates pushed us up to this area years ago and could be a win. We recognize that this is not a PFC transaction. It is under the 392 that has been issued by the state.

Mr. Northern stated to make note of the Development Report provided to the Board of Directors.

Chair Snowden confirmed Development Report was provided to the Board of Directors.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Snowden stated there would be no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Snowden remarked this concludes the items on today's agenda and declared the meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.