



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

March 23, 2023- 9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>
Renee Brouse	Komi Kalevor
Eric Schmidt	Melissa Sonsalla
Sheila Greenlaw-Fink	Jacob Boyett
Narendar Sahgal	Katherine Galian
Nina Stafford	Amy Mettler
Melinda Bell	Leslie Gong
Dave Bachman	Andrew Crampton
Sid Scott	Liz Morris
John Epstein	Will Seals
Gena Briggs	Jes Larson
<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>GUESTS</u>
Carine Arendes	Emily Roots
Nina Sparr	Jacquelyn Saito
	Brian Schimmel
<u>HABOD MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – 9:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES

None.

III. ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee voted to approve the January 20, 2023 meeting minutes.

Motion: Sheila Greenlaw-Fink

Second: Sid Scott

Vote: All in favor

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Presented by Komi Kalevor, Executive Director.

Komi announced today is Sid Scott’s last meeting and thanked him for his ten years of service on the Housing Advisory Committee. The Board of County Commissioners appointed five new members (Ryan



Cain, Hayley Purdy, Deena Castrejon, Bruce Dickinson and Fernando Lira) to the HAC along with returning member, Dave Bachman.

Housing Authority highlights shared at the January Housing Forum:

- 1,300 individuals experiencing homeless placed into long term housing
- Provided 320 year around temporary and winter shelter beds
- 875 units created from the Metro bond, six units under construction, and 117 units completed
- 3,800 rental assistance vouchers distributed
- With the 650 Housing Authority owned units, 332 in five buildings are being rehabilitated
- An RFP was issued for shelter capacity and ten developments were selected throughout the county. These include facilities to be rehabilitated and proposals to build transitional housing as well.

The low-income tax credits that originally financed the 172 unit Wood Spring property in Tigard has expired and the Safe Harbor period ends at the end of 2023 which could increase rents to market rate. The Housing Authority has agreed to acquire this property for 46.6 million to keep rents affordable. OHCS is contributing 25 million with the remaining portion supported by rents.

QUESTIONS:

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink inquired about the form is the funding from OHCS.

Komi stated OHCS funding will be in the form of a loan with the Housing Authority contributing 4 million.

John Epstein asked if the county is tracking similar properties like Wood Spring that may be available in the near future to acquire.

Komi noted that twelve properties that will be expiring in the next several years. Four are owned by non-profits that will most likely remain affordable. They are in contact with the owners of the other privately owners properties and acquisition is a possibility dependent on funding.

Narender suggested keeping track of the supply and demand of housing when reporting to keep apprised of what the Housing Authority is able to fund to satisfy the housing needs.

Komi explained that Andrew and his team are working on tracking this information and that information will be made available by the end of the year.

V. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS

A. Approve Return to In-Person Meetings

Renee Brouse stated HB 2560 requires public meetings to be held in a hybrid format and asked HAC members their thoughts about returning in person. Several members were in favor of in person meetings with the hybrid option if schedule conflicts arise. Input from newly appointed members will be acquired during their onboarding process.

ACTION: Approve returning to in person-meetings with a hybrid option

MOTION: Eric Schmidt

SECOND: Gina

VOTE: Unanimous approval



B. Elections – 2023 HAC Chair and Vice Chair

Due to the previously elected Chair, Alma Flores moving out of state, the HAC will vote on the current Vice-Chair, Renee Brouse moving to the role of Chair and the election of a new Vice-Chair.

ACTION: Elect Renee Brouse to the role of Chair to replace Alma Flores and elect Melinda Bell as Vice-Chair.

MOTION: Eric Schmidt

SECOND: Sheila Greenlaw-Fink

VOTE: Unanimous approval

C. Approve 2023-24 Annual PHA Plan & MTW Supplement

Melissa Sonsalla explained the Move to Work (MTW) program allows Housing Authorities flexibility around federal statutes to create local programs that better fit the community. Three goals of the MTW program are to increase affordable housing choices, increase cost effectiveness, and promote self-sufficiency. The yearly waivers submitted to HUD within this program have to fall into one of these categories. The annual PHA plan and MTW supplement requires a 45 day public comment period which ends on April 3 for this year's submission. The revised submission will be presented to the Housing Authority Board of Directors for approval before submission to HUD on April 14, 2023.

About 600 of public housing and housing choice voucher participants are eligible for the tiered rent program with new applicants enrolled in May 2023. Rent will be assessed based on unadjusted income and will be reviewed every three years. Any wage increases within that three year period will not have to be reported.

2023 MTW ACTIVITIES:

Simplified Utility Allowance Schedule: The Housing Authority is requesting a waiver to change the current utility allowance to simplify the calculation for participants as they shop for a rental property. The new calculation incorporates a chart that factors in the bedroom size and rent cost. An analyst is reviewing this new simplified calculation to make sure it is minimizing both household and agency impact.

Payments Standards: Setting voucher payment standards are required to set the maximum amount of subsidy for anyone participating in a program. HUD sets fair market rent (FMR) and requires the maximum amount of those vouchers to be within 90%-110% of that. HUD updates the FMR annually requiring a change in the payment standard causing rents to rise across the board. To combat this, affordable housing units will be set between 90%-100% FMR and units in the private market will have a payment standard of 100%-110%.

Local Homeownership Program: A waiver to change the local homeownership program will be submitted to improve the support of low-income families. This would allow Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to be used to purchase a home and receive monthly assistance for home ownership expenses. The requirements to join this program are significant which has limited participation. The average monthly



cost per participant is higher at \$1,600 whereas those with Housing Choice vouchers is about \$1,000. The length of time in homeownership program averages 17 years versus 10 years on the HCV program. The waiver would create a local homeownership program that would expand eligibility requirements to include those in public housing and change participation requirements to focus on programs and education that lead to successful homeownership. There would also be the implementation of a one-time downpayment grant that could reduce interest rates and prevent private mortgage insurance to reduce monthly costs.

Next Steps:

- Continue the public comment period through April 3, 2023
- Hold community stakeholder and resident/participation meetings
- Present to the Resident Advisory Board and Housing Advisory Committee
- Hold a public hearing and request for approval from the Housing Authority Board of Directors

ACTION: Recommend Approval of the 23/24 Annual PHA Plan & MTW Supplement to the Housing Authority Board of Directors

MOTION: Melinda Bell

SECOND: Eric Schmidt

VOTE: Unanimous approval

QUESTIONS:

Narendar Sahgal wondered why participants are not required to report annual income because many in these wage categories are not required to do taxes.

Melissa explained this change has been implemented because as a participant's income increases, it has to be immediately reported to the Housing Authority which disincentives people to increase their income if they know they will be penalized for it. This change allows people to increase their income without the immediate impact of increasing their rent. The tiered rent program will be studied over the next six years to analyze the outcomes in relation to the current procedure.

Melinda Bell asked if the tiered rent program is geared for seniors and those with disabilities and how participants are selected.

Melissa stated there are two different programs. The first is the triennial review schedule for seniors and people with disabilities that are under the same rent calculation that is currently in place. The second is the tiered rent program for participants between the ages of 18 and 56 who are in the housing choice voucher or public housing programs.

Gina inquired about the goal of the tiered rent program and if there are any life skills requirements to encourage financial management noting the plus side of including this as a requirement.

Melissa stated there are no requirements of that nature, however if participants are interested in the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program, those requirements are included. Liz noted the goal of the tiered rent program is to provide an alternate way of rent calculation to study how its effectiveness. Will Seals added additional resident services are expanding to include financial education and job skills trainings. A request was made to inform the HAC of these expansions in services at a future meeting.



Narendar Sahgal asked about how the control group is set up.

Melissa explained the research company randomly selects half of eligible participants to be part of the tiered rent program while the other half will continue with the standard rent program.

John Epstein wondered with so little participation in the homeownership program if resources might be better spent in other areas.

Melissa explained the intent of the waiver would allow those who have inquired about the program to now qualify with the proposed eligibility requirements increasing participation.

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink suggested partnering with other homeownership assistance initiatives within the county to leverage the assistance the modifications in this program will offer to new participants.

Melissa explained they have been in contact with other organizations who offer homeownership programs to add layers to what they will be offering in this revised program. With the statutory limitations in the Housing Authority program, there are limitations on the households they serve.

A suggestion was made to add an additional career coach to assist participants with life skills and increase their careers.

Additional input or questions can be sent to Melissa Sonsalla at

melissa_sonsalla@washingtoncountyor.gov or Liz Morris at liz_morris@washingtoncountyor.gov

VI. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Annual/2024 Housing Department Budget Planning

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink agreed with the comments and recommendations made in the email submitted by Carine Arendes. Other HAC members were in agreement with the proposed annual budget.

For more information or to submit input or comments, you can contact Leslie Gong at

leslie_gong@washingtoncountyor.gov

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Washington County Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Celebration will take place on April 13, 2023 from 5:30-7:30 pm at the Wingspan Conference Center in Hillsboro. This is a free but ticketed event and reservations need to be completed by Wednesday, April 5, 2023.

VIII. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Homeless Programs Updates

Katherine Galian reported all funding streams are being integrated into a One Homeless Services System. The three main funding sources are the federal HUD funds that are administered through the Continuum of Care (CoC), the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) funds which include Metro Supportive Housing Services funds and the Governor's Executive Orders from the Emergency Declaration. The



overall goal is to make sure funds are used for the most appropriate service to achieve the collective outcomes.

Successes in FY 22/23

- Housed 1,000 people in Supportive Housing
- Doubled housing program capacity to now supporting 2,000 households at once
- 70% of those housed in programs were either unsheltered or in a shelter
- Launched Rapid Rehousing expansion with SHS funding.
- Implemented the Housing Careers pilot program and the Aloha Inn opened which is the first 100% PSH community

Goals met so far in the current year work plan (FY 22/23 – SHS)

- Supportive Housing placements: 396 of a goal of 500
- Rapid Rehousing placements and eviction preventions: 109 of a goal of 600
- New community based housing workers: 54 out of a goal of 71
- Projects based PSH capacity: 84 out of a goal of 100
- Year round shelter capacity: 75 out of a goal of 75

Note: Rapid Rehousing got a late start but current projections will move closer to the year-end goal

Unmet Needs:

- 170 unsheltered people on any given night
- 630 households waiting for long-term housing support
- 841 households waiting for short-term housing support
- 269 waiting for shelter
- People are in shelter more than 100 days before obtaining housing

Housing Services FY 23/24 overall goal is to have one plan that incorporates all system wide goals.

- Create new housing stability to create new placements in Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Rapid Resolution programs and increasing eviction preventions
- Increase shelter beds, supportive housing system capacity, and rapid rehousing system capacity
- Add 60 new shelter beds, 500 new supportive housing placements, 200 new Rapid Rehousing, and launching 45 new individuals in housing careers through workforce development initiative
- Resolve racial disparities for Asian American/Pacific Islander populations, expand diversity, equity, and inclusion training to providers, and expand contracts to increase technical assistance support for culturally specific providers to serve those populations more effectively
- Improve System performance goals by: Providing capacity building grants to 75% of organizational partners. Decreasing the average shelter stay to no more than 100 days. Launching a Recuperative Care and youth focused program. Evaluating and monitoring for the new system growth. Creating an aligned structure to increase effectiveness

Sheila expressed the value of dispersing the funds to providers quickly to assist with capacity building.



QUESTIONS:

Narendar Sahgal thought that resources should be focused on unsheltered individuals first before continuing to fund programs like homeownership. He asked how system level priority can be the focus of everything the Housing Authority is currently managing to utilize funds in the best manner possible. Katherine noted that building shelters to house unsheltered individuals leaves many still homeless but instead there is a need for the continuum of services to move people into permanent housing.

John Epstein asked if data is available that reveals how many of the unsheltered numbers are due to economic, mental, or physical circumstances in order to assess funding needs for social services. Katherine explained this data is collected and reviewed against the goals that are set to find gaps in social services.

Nina Stafford inquired about the Medicaid waiver that will connect needed service for people to obtain long-term stability.

Katherine noted the waiver is currently being developed to reach the goal of better integrating housing and health services.

B. Development Updates

Andrew Crampton reported Washington County's portion of Metro bond funds have been expended and they are now planning on how to continue the development work going forward.

Continuing the Development Pipeline proposals

- Supporting development partners
- A site acquisition model to creatively find sites due to the limited availability within the county
- Leveraging federal funding opportunities by using the Housing Authority's MTW status, pursuing federal grant programs, and linking public health and housing
- Looking at non-LIHTC funding opportunities
- Metro Site Acquisition fund

Due to time constraints the remaining portion of this update will take place at a future meeting.

C. Additional Department Updates

No additional department updates were shared.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Komi Kalevor
Secretary/Executive Director