



# MEETING MINUTES

## HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

June 27, 2024 – 9:04 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting In-Person & Via Zoom

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>
Bruce Dickinson	Bianetth Valdez
Dave Bachman	Fahad Kazi
Deena Feldes (Castrejon)	Jacob Boyett
Hayley Purdy	Jill Chen
John Epstein	Kat Watkins
Melinda Bell	Kristina Follis
Narendar Sahgal	Leslie Johnstone
Ryan Cain	Lisa Varon
	Liz Morris
	Melissa Sonsalla
<u>ABSENT</u>	Meredith Cook
Carine Arendes	Michael Clark
Fernando Lira	Molly Rogers
Gena Briggs	Nadia Mohammad
Nathan Teske	Nicole Stingh
Nina Stafford	Tatiana Gammatt
Renee Brouse	<u>GUESTS</u>
	Brian Schimmel
	Erin Doyle
	Jacquilyn Saito

I. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** – 9:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS – ATTENDEES (INCLUDING ONLINE GUESTS)**

None.

III. **DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES/ROLL CALL**

John Epstein stated he attended the meeting for the approval of the Housing Authority of Washington County Operating Budget for FY2024-2025 on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and he complimented the staff that the new budget passed smoothly. Staff and presenters received very good compliments from the Board of Directors.



#### IV. ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee voted to approve the May 23, 2024 meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Bruce Dickinson

**Second:** Dave Bachman

**Vote:** All in favor

#### V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

##### **Welcome New Member**

Molly Rogers (she/her) stated in honor of Pride Month, she wanted to elevate the importance of using our pronouns for those who feel comfortable. Molly then introduced our newest member of the Management Team, Lisa Varon, who started today in the position of Real Estate Manager. Jill Chen gave a brief introduction of Lisa and her background. Lisa recently moved here from Los Angeles/Irvine area, and she has decades of experience in affordable housing, so we are very happy to have her join our Housing Services. With the departure of Andrew Crampton to Clackamas County, Jill stated she will be announcing some other changes in the Development division in the future.

Lisa Varon shared that she is thrilled to be here. She worked in local government for 13 years, worked with real estate developers, and interned with NEF (National Equity Fund) in the non-profit space. Prior to that, Lisa worked 10 years in the social services arena, including healthcare, homeless services, family services, and childcare as a fundraiser. Members introduced themselves to Lisa.

##### **Metro and Washington County to celebrate opening of Cedar Rising in Aloha**

On June 13<sup>th</sup> Molly Rogers, along with local leaders and project partners, celebrated the opening of Cedar Rising, an 81-unit apartment building in Aloha, which was another Metro bond project that came out of the Washington County allocation. It is being developed by BRIDGE Housing, and Hacienda CDC will provide residents culturally specific youth and family services with a focus on serving Latine and Asian communities. Molly gave a shout out that they are already 100% occupied and many lives are being transformed. Cedar Rising is the second affordable housing project we've done in Aloha, and we will have two more projects that will open later this year. We are still on track to surpass all our Metro bond goals. The original goal for the bond was 814 units for Washington County, and we will surpass it by 18% for a total of 958 units.

##### **Approval of the FY 2024-2025 Housing Authority of Washington County Budget**

Molly Rogers shared that we had a unanimous passing of our Housing Authority budget this month for FY 2024-2025. Molly gave a big thanks to John Epstein and this committee. After last month, we made some adjustments to our charts and graphs to show an ambitious budget, but one with some great things planned for next year along with some challenges. Overall, the presentation was well received by the Housing Authority Board of Directors. Molly expressed thanks to Michael Clark and Fahad Kazi for all their work, collaboration, transparency, and empowerment. Molly also expressed thanks to everyone who contributed to the budget. The key this year is stabilization and continuing to build out the team to be strong in the future.



### **New Vision and Mission Statements**

Molly Rogers announced that we are very close to launching our new Vision and Mission Statements. She thanked everyone for their input as they finalize the process of finding the right wording for each statement. She confirmed that we will be rolling that out in July and August.

### **Project Turnkey Roundtable Hosted by Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici**

In conclusion, Molly shared some news on the legislative front about an initiative called Project Turnkey where we have had resources to acquire hotels or motels and then convert them to either shelter or transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing as well. Project Turnkey is being elevated to a national level with a new proposed legislation from Oregon Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, who is calling it the Project Turnkey Act. The Project Turnkey Act would create a federal Project Turnkey Program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development and provide \$1 billion annually for communities to meet their housing needs, including transforming vacant buildings like hotels, offices, and hospitals. It would also provide direct support to people at risk of experiencing homelessness through rental, security deposit, and utility bill assistance. Congresswoman Bonamici facilitated a roundtable discussion on June 6<sup>th</sup>, including Jes Larson and Chair Harrington and others in the county, to showcase how we've been able to use Project Turnkey to address our homelessness crisis. We will lend our support to the Congresswoman to work on this important legislation. We will also continue to pursue more hotel acquisitions in Washington County.

### **The floor was opened for questions or comments for Molly Rogers:**

**Bruce Dickinson** asked if the funding for Project Turnkey is federal. Molly answered saying that Bonamici's proposal would use Federal funds, but the original project came from the State, OHCS (Oregon Housing Community Services).

## **VI. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS**

None.

## **VII. STAFF LIAISON UPDATE**

### **A. Housing Forum Discussion**

Bianeth Valdez announced this year's Annual Housing Forum will be held **Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>** at the Wingspan Event and Conference Center. In the past we've had local leaders, state leaders, and panel discussions. Bianeth would like to continue to hear your feedback for this year's event and she thanks all the members who participated in the survey she sent out to gather your ideas and preferences. She shared the results of the poll responses from her survey in a PowerPoint presentation.

### **B. Meeting Updates**

Bianeth Valdez also announced that the Housing Advisory Committee will not be meeting in July, August, or December in 2024.



### C. Listening Sessions

Bianeth Valdez shared some upcoming engagement opportunities in the month of August. Instead of having a regular Housing Advisory Committee meeting in August, committee members are invited to attend Listening Sessions. There will be one on **Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:30-10:30am** on Zoom for an HSSN (Housing and Supportive Services Network)/Provider session. There will be another one on **Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:00-7:00pm** that is a General Public Session in-person at the Beaverton public library.

#### The floor was opened for questions or comments for Bianeth Valdez:

**John Epstein** asked if there are providers out there who provide the whole spectrum of housing services and care from transitional to permanent housing that includes social services. He wonders if others have a different model. Bianeth Valdez replied that we, as a Housing Authority, do provide the whole spectrum. **Melinda Bell** added that the Union Gospel Mission provides a full spectrum of services starting with drug treatment, then education, job search support, and housing (where a participant pays 30% of apartment rent). **Deena Feldes** also shared that the NARR (National Alliance for Recovery Residences) has a lot of discussions with Washington County, and she is a housing provider for people who identify as having a substance abuse disorder and/or mental health issue. They do Aid and Assist which contributes to the whole spectrum of support. They provide housing with supports and transitional housing. The program is very successful, people are working, and we're transitioning them into more permanent housing. Bianeth thanked members for sharing.

**John Epstein** further suggested having a moderator and a panel for the Housing Forum and to bring in people with a national perspective. For example, the National Equity Fund has an office in Portland and can give a national perspective.

**Deena Feldes** added an announcement that they are holding their first Oregon NARR (National Alliance for Recovery Residences) housing conference on November 15<sup>th</sup> at the Double Tree, and there will be national speakers there if Washington County Housing Services is interested in attending. She offered to send information to Jes Larson.

## VIII. ONGOING BUSINESS

### A. Public Housing/Section 18

Jill Chen gave a PowerPoint presentation with a quick update about the Section 18 disposition. She discussed the reason for disposition, location of properties proposed, update of the timeline and steps, overview of the process, and the proposed use of proceeds. Jill announced that the job posting for Section 18 Coordinator went out earlier this week. Melisa Dailey is currently providing support to this role, and she is working closely with Matthew Fullen to make sure residents are taken care of.



**The floor was opened for questions or comments for Jill Chen:**

**Bruce Dickinson** asked if the sales of the properties will relieve an expense burden. Jill Chen confirmed that is the case, and she explained that Housing Authorities throughout the country are finding the same thing we are, that managing single family homes or plexes are very expensive. Molly Rogers added there are three benefits of Section 18: the sales proceeds, reduction of operational deficiency around the upkeep, and it brings in additional vouchers for our community.

**Ryan Cain** stated that he appreciates we are working with the tenants who are potentially interested in purchasing a property. Ryan asked if tenants are being helped with funds to renovate the properties once they have purchased them. Jill Chen explained that we have been talking with Shannon Wilson's team, which runs a home repair program. There is also a small down payment assistance available. We are also seeking to get some EPA funds that could potentially be available for this. Ryan also asked what percentage of current tenants are considering purchasing a home. Jill stated that less than 20%, maybe a dozen tenants, are going to be eligible to afford the home purchase.

**Narendar Sahgal** asked if the Housing Authority has done an analysis of the cost comparison of building versus rent subsidy to see which is more cost-efficient. Jill Chen answered by saying that she doesn't know of a statistical study that she can quote, but it is a great idea to research.

**Dave Bachman** asked if Washington County was in the news regarding Section 18 after the second notice went out and he wondered if there was a way to get ahead of the next press event. Melissa Sonsalla confirmed there was a news story. Jill Chen added that it could create an opportunity for a positive story if there are tenants who want to purchase a property, and there was discussion about avoiding a negative spin with the news media.

**B. Development**

Jill Chen continued her PowerPoint presentation and discussed the development pipeline timeline. Jill concluded by discussing an update for the Woodspring resyndication, the Aloha 209 history and details, and the Aloha 209 potential timeline.

**The floor was opened for questions or comments for Jill Chen:**

**Ryan Cain** commented that it looks like it is the first time the Housing Authority is going through the ORCA (Oregon Centralized Application) process, because it's a new process. Ryan stated even OHCS (Oregon Housing and Community Services) doesn't know what these new processes are going to look like. Jill Chen mentioned that OHCS has already told us that private activity bonds are done and there will not be additional allocations. Additionally, most of the 2025 allocation is going to be taken as well.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. FY 2023-2024 Quarter 3 Financial Report**



Michael Clark gave an update for the FY 2023-2024 Quarter 3 Financial Report with a PowerPoint presentation. He discussed the following topics: total revenues and expenditures for Housing Authority of Washington County, Housing Choice Vouchers program, Public Housing program, Development program, and the Affordable Housing program.

**The floor was opened for questions or comments for Michael Clark:**

**Bruce Dickinson** asked if the increased expenditures for the Affordable Housing program were mostly due to unique events. Michael Clark confirmed that part of it was due to unique events consisting of a fire at Aloha Park and flooding at about 5 apartments.

**John Epstein** asked if we are expecting a deficit at year-end. Michael Clark confirmed they are expecting a deficit and that has been factored into the new budget. Michael added that a lot of it is from covering the depreciation expense associated with our properties that have tax partnerships. He further said that we will continue to review these issues in quarterly updates. Michael concluded by saying that going forward, it will probably take 2-3 budget years to fine tune the budget processes.

**B. Potential Metro Reform of Supportive Housing Services**

Nicole Stingham shared a PowerPoint presentation on the Potential SHS Reform Measure. Nicole was joined by Erin Doyle, Senior Government Relations Manager for Washington County, who also discussed and explained information in the slides shown. Nicole started by sharing that the revenue forecast is very volatile, because it is based on income taxes, which can fluctuate. At this time, they are anticipating a shortage of around \$5 million for Washington County's budget but will have more information on that in August. Nicole next reviewed the SHS (Supportive Housing Services) goals to end chronic homelessness and have no increase to homelessness, including successes and challenges in achieving these goals.

Molly Rogers also shared information from the PowerPoint regarding recent stakeholder advisory table discussions and the potential changes being considered. This included looking at ways to increase funding as well as recognizing the various tradeoffs from potential changes. Molly reviewed the Guiding Principles for Washington County to stay focused on SHS goals, ensure flexibility, and continue funding the systems in place. As a reminder, she stated that we are in Year 3 of a 10-Year program and are still building out the program.

**The floor was opened for questions or comments for Molly Rogers:**

**Narander Sahgal** asked a question regarding the slide, "Rising costs of supportive housing" where the increasing cost seems to be higher than the rate of inflation. Is this just an estimate, or is it an actual number in cost? Molly Rogers responded by saying the original estimates were from 2019, and in the last 5 years, rents have gone up higher than inflationary factors.

Erin Doyle shared next regarding the Timeline Summary from the PowerPoint presentation. She explained that the Metro Council directed their Chief Operating Officer to bring back a recommendation for a potential ballot measure for the November 2024 election regarding funding for affordable housing. In conclusion, Erin shared some discussion questions and asked for

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feedback.

**The floor was opened for questions or comments for Erin Doyle:**

**Hayley Purdy** stated that she really appreciates this overview, as it was very thorough and added a lot of clarity.

**Molly Rogers** said she thought question 4 was key: What should the Department work to hold harmless? We know this new ballot measure could come with a tax reduction. We also know we have plans to spend out our whole budget. This will mean some kind of reductions to our currently built system of homeless services that we are still building out.

**Ryan Cain** commented that it sounds like we are planning for flexibility in the future to respond to fluctuations in available funding, especially if funds go down.

**Bruce Dickinson** asked Michael Clark what are all the revenue funnels available each year? He would like to see a slide that shows the funnels of income per year for 2024-2026. Michael responded by saying we have multiple funds and revenue going into different funds, and it ties back to the budget. Molly Rogers added that we would like to have a sunset extension, but we're in a bit of a holding pattern for now until the meetings in July and August take place. Molly concluded by suggesting that since the HAC committee is not meeting in July and August, we can send out an email with updated information regarding any recommendations made regarding future funding.

**X. DEPARTMENT UPDATES AND Q&A**

**A. Additional Department Updates (See Department Written Reports)**

The following were not reviewed or discussed in the meeting but are referenced in the written HAC packet: Homeless Services update, Rental Assistance update, and Development update.

**XI. MEMBER SUGGESTED FUTURE DISCUSSIONS**

None.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

There wasn't a quorum to vote for adjournment, so Melinda Bell declared the meeting adjourned.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.**

Molly Rogers  
Secretary / Executive Director