

FAYETTEVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
Commissioners Special Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 22, 2021, 1:00 pm

Via Zoom

*Error with Zoom recording- audio picked up during New Business discussion after the presentation.*

**I. New Business**

**A. Emergency Rental Assistance Program funds received by Washington County**

Commissioner Terry wanted to know what concerns Executive Director Belford had regarding the Excellerate Foundation. Executive Director Belford explained the lack of adequate follow-up with HARK's Catalyst funds, as well as a need for more community engagement with decision making.

Executive Director Belford opened the floor for further questions from the Board.

Commissioner Jones asked how the administrative costs would be split, and if one agency would administer both Washington and Benton counties.

Commissioner Terry initiated a discussion regarding indirect costs and the 10% of the grant set aside for administration.

Jen Cole asked for clarification regarding supportive services for voucher holders.

Sarah Moore asked about staffing with HARK NW A, as well as working with nonprofit partners and the communities they work with.

Beth Coger asked if people who are undocumented or have felony charges would be eligible.

Commissioner Breashears wanted to know how quickly the program needs to move to ensure housing stability and if there is enough information to pass the two resolutions.

Commissioner Jones initiated a discussion on application availability and accessibility to ensure funding is being applied fairly. There was further conversation on the roles HARK NW A and FHA would have in this process. Commissioner Bensinger clarified the question as who determines eligibility.

Executive Director Belford reviewed a rolling lottery system to ensure fair distribution. A discussion was initiated about reaching out to marginalized populations and nonprofit communities that serve these populations. Former Commissioner Evelyn Stafford commented on the transparency of this process.

Executive Director Belford reviewed starting points identified for the MOU between FHA and HARK NW A, detailing the responsibilities of each organization. Commissioner Bensinger asked about success metrics.

Commissioner Terry shared a primer/checklist of basic questions regarding grant administration, direct vs indirect costs, and discussed the differences between the processes other counties have set up. Executive Director Belford discussed how indirect costs are currently handled within the FHA.

Commissioner Breashears wanted to know if HUD had any issues with the FHA being a part of this program.

Commissioner Jones wanted to ensure that communities such as artists and business owners are not left behind in terms of income limits, as well as using HARK's current database of organizations that were serving marginalized communities. She shared concerns about serving rural communities in Washington County. Suggestions included reaching out to school districts and mayors.

Commissioner McMahon asked if there was a precedence for the organization system being proposed. Commissioner Bensing asked for clarification regarding internal processing for application.

Commissioner Jones reflected on ways community liaisons communicate to applicants, and ensuring data is verified. She asked who makes final decisions regarding how much rental assistance to give.

Commissioners Bensing and Breashears discussed prioritization and hierarchy of applications. He recommended including an outreach coordinator to the staffing listed on the MOU document.

Commissioner Terry commented on the importance of clarifying indirect costs.

Commissioner Bensing asked about demographic information collected on the application..

Commissioner Jones initiated discussion on eligibility of the homeless population. Sarah commented on defining homelessness in a way that doesn't overlook vulnerable people.

Commissioner Breashears asked how much money could be spent on direct costs if the process is stretched out over years.

**B. Resolution #1249– Authorization for Executive Director to negotiate and sign MOU with Excellerate Foundation**

Commissioner Jones discussed combining the MOUs and if that meant that data had to be combined. Commissioner Breashears wanted to know when the MOUs would be finalized.

Commissioner McMahon requested an organizational chart for the program.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to adopt Resolution # 1249. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Resolution #1250– Authorization for Executive Director to negotiate and sign MOU with Washington County and Excellerate Foundation**

Commissioner Jones motioned to adopt Resolution # 1250, and Commissioner Breashears seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**II. Final Comments & Announcements**

Commissioner Breashears did not initially see the September financials, but that was moved to be accessible.

**III. Adjournment**

Commissioner Bensing adjourned the meeting at 2:56 pm.