

# FAYETTEVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

## Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 25, 2021, 5:00 pm

Via Zoom

### **I. Call to Order**

Commissioner Bensingher called to order the regular meeting of the Fayetteville Housing Authority Board of Commissioners at 5:00 pm on Thursday, February 25, 2021 via Zoom.

### **II. Roll Call**

Commissioner Bensingher conducted a roll call. All Board members were present. Additionally, in attendance various members of the public.

### **III. Old Business**

#### **A. Agenda amendments**

Commissioner Breashears wanted to amend wording on Resolution #1257.

There was discussion regarding where to place approval of meeting minutes within the agenda, and the reasoning behind a consent agenda.

Justin Lee presented a prepared statement demanding the resignation of Executive Director Belford. He was redirected to use the procedure in place regarding personnel issues.

Rose Bybee presented grievance with Executive Director Belford, issues with smoking in the building and the three strikes rule, placement of the office at Hillcrest.

There was discussion regarding the volunteer policy and the policy approval process in general.

Othman Hamad spoke about a letter he sent to Commissioner Bensingher.

The formal complaint process was reiterated for the public.

Commissioner Terry requested a wording clarification to Old Business – Food Collaborative Committee Member Selection. She also clarified that there is no Executive Director Evaluation process, and where/when to discuss staff and resident complaints.

#### **B. Approval of minutes from previous regular board meetings November 30, 2020 and January 28, 2021, and special board meetings January 22, 2021 and February 2, 2021**

Commissioner Breashears motioned to table January 28 2021 Minutes. Commissioner Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to approve the regular board meeting minutes November 30, and the special board meeting minutes January 22 and February 2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion passed unanimously.

**C. Resolution #1257 – Resolution for FHA to provide next unoccupied Hillcrest Towers apartment as Resident Council office space**

Commissioner Breashears discussed the role of a Resident Council and HUD recommendations and paperwork.

There was discussion regarding the scope of the Resident Council, as well as possibly renovating current community spaces as an office space. There was conversation about the need for privacy and confidentiality regarding Resident Council matters.

A discussion arose concerning the possibility of a space created during the Hillcrest renovation project.

Commissioner Breashears requested a friendly amendment to the resolution to provide the laundry room as a dedicated office space for the Resident Council. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Food Collaborative Committee Co-Chair selection**

Commissioner Terry led discussion regarding the role of a Co-Chair for the Food Collaborative Committee officially designated from a member of the FHA Board.

Commissioner Jones was nominated as Co-Chair, and Commissioner Terry was nominated as the Board Representative. The motion passed unanimously.

**E. Resident Council Policy Input**

Commissioner Bensinger reviewed the discussion thus far regarding when policy changes should go to the Resident Council and the Board. Jen Cole recommended that the Resident Council see policy after the Board.

The Board agreed to reverse the current process and go back to the original process where policy goes to the Board first and then to the Resident Council.

**F. Update on Resident Council Printer**

Executive Director Belford reviewed the technology currently available to the Resident Council. Commissioner Jones clarified the request as specifically for a printer for Resident Council.

There was discussion regarding paying for printer supplies and getting it through specific funding allocated by HUD.

**IV. New Business**

**A. Resolution #1258 – Resolution to Establish FHA Volunteer Policy**

Director of Housing Butler reviewed the need for volunteer management policy in terms of liability and opportunities for growth and presented a first draft.

There was concern regarding a potential disregard for current resident volunteers and possible exclusivity, highlighting the need for resident input via the Resident Council.

There was discussion on having a separate volunteer agreement for residents given the uniqueness of the population.

Executive Director Belford clarified the types of liability the FHA could face that a volunteer policy would help alleviate.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to table the current policy indefinitely, seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion passed four to one.

A 15 minute break was motioned by Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bensinger motioned to come back into session, seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bensinger suggested a motion. to disable the chat due to the inappropriateness of what is being said, and have all comments recorded via audio discussion. There was discussion regarding the accessibility of the chat, and keeping the meeting on focus.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion passed three to two.

#### **B. Discussion: FHA Resident & Public Complaint Policy**

There was discussion to table this discussion for the next meeting. There was a request for clarity regarding this discussion, and the topic was reframed as making clear to residents the current policy in place to address personnel issues.

Currently, personnel complaints and Human Resources issues are under Deputy Director Berry who was unavailable at this time during the Zoom meeting.

Discussion was opened up regarding to the order of progression. Justin Lee commented on the lack of policy regarding issues between employees. Jen Cole brought up a specific sexual assault issue from an employee upon a resident.

The specific policy documents were brought up and examined. There has been some frustration in terms of not getting a response after a resident has filed a complaint.

There was clarification between resident issues and employee personnel issues.

Executive Director Belford requested bringing this discussion back next meeting.

#### **C. Resolution #1259 – Authorization to apply for additional ERA grant funds**

Executive Director Belford discussed the current state of the ERA program and the amount of need presented by the number of applicants. She requested authorization to apply for the additional funds anticipated.

Detail reports were requested. Executive Director Belford went over current spending from Admin fees. There was discussion as to the availability of the positions that have been filled, referring back to discussion from a previous meeting.

There was discussion regarding the requirements from the Treasury on how to administer the grant and determine eligibility.

The importance of having agenda sessions before meetings was emphasized.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to adopt Resolution #1259. A friendly amendment was requested that the information would be provided at next week's special meeting. Commissioner Terry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Resolution #1260 – Authorization to Issue Letter of Intent to purchase Grandview Apartments**

Executive Director Belford requested tabling this resolution due to the lack of a detailed pro-forma.

There was discussion regarding this project being a good fit or not for FHA.

The purpose of a Letter of Intent was clarified.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to table resolution #1260, seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion passed unanimously.

**E. Resolution #1261 – Authorization to issue RFP for Internet for Public Housing**

Executive Director Belford went over recent HUD guidance regarding funds for Internet access freed from CARES Act funding.

There was discussion if Morgan Manor would be eligible for this program, and the location of current city Wi Fi locations. Types of Internet were also discussed.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to adopt the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Terry. The motion passed unanimously.

**F. Resolution #1262 – Authorization to add case manager for ESG Grant and approve amended salary schedule**

Executive Director Belford reviewed the current status of the ESG and the advantage of having a case manager to receive the next set of ESG participants.

Commissioner Breashears motioned to table the resolution until next monthly meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**G. Discussion: Strategic Planning Retreat**

There was discussion on how to plan it to accommodate COVID safety protocol. A doodle poll will be sent out to determine dates.

**V. Consent Agenda**

**A. Resolution #1263 – Authorization to issue short term loan to FHA Development for cross-program accounts receivable**

**B. Approval of November 2020 FHA Programs’ Balance Sheets & Income Statements**

Commissioner Jones motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Breashears. The motion passed unanimously.

**VI. Staff Report**

**A. Deputy Director Berry**

Highlighted milestones for the staff- anniversaries, maintenance work. He reviewed the COLA procedures, and that the raises have already been paid.

There was discussion regarding the exit interviews and the lack of return this time around. There was a question about the turnover rate of staff members.

**VII. Executive Session: Resident Complaint & Sexual Harassment Complaint**

There was discussion to clarify the purpose of the Executive Session and the procedure for dealing with sexual harassment complaints.

There was confusion as to whether or not discussing the evaluation in Executive session would be FOIA compliant. It was decided to remove it and focus on the resident complaint and sexual harassment complaint.

Rose Bybee expressed frustration about the lack of procedures regarding the sexual harassment complaint. Jen Cole affirmed that statement. Holly Perry also commented about the sexual harassment complaints.

Commissioner Jones motioned to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Breashears seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Jones motioned to return to regular session. Commissioner Terry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Terry motioned to formally request documents pertaining to the sexual harassment complaint to reconsider during next month’s board meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Bensinger motioned to suspend the Executive Director for one week with pay pending the Board’s investigation of misconduct. Commissioner Breashears seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. Final Comments & Announcements**

Public comment was opened once more, but due to the time there were no members of the public to comment.

**IX. Adjournment**

Commissioner Bensinger adjourned the meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 4:17 am.