

FAYETTEVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
Board of Commissioners Regular Session
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24th, 2022, 5:00 PM

Via Zoom

I. Call to Order

The Regular Session of the Fayetteville Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was called to order at 5:05 PM.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Terry, Jones, Breashears, Henry, and Morgan were in attendance, forming quorum. Additionally in attendance: Interim Deputy Director Butler, FHA staff members, members of the public.

III. Review and Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

IV. Consent Agenda

Minutes January 13, 20, and 27 of 2022 were unanimously approved as amended.

V. Reports

A. FHA

Chair Terry reviewed the progress report meeting with HUD State Field Office regarding the corrective actions proposed in the audit findings.

FHA legal counsel is currently engaged with the Washington County attorney to resolve issues presented with application discrepancies.

The work with GCM regarding a Board shared drive has been paused and Chair Terry will be setting up a standalone Gmail account for Board Chair that will host all Board files.

Interim Deputy Director Butler will review the Hillcrest Towers sidewalk easement update with the City of Fayetteville in her report.

B. Staffing Committee

Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed the recent hire for the Community Engagement Specialist position and will later discuss the security contract. There was discussion regarding the two current security employees and their options regarding internal hiring moving forward.

Commissioner Breashears asked about hiring a financial employee and Interim Deputy Director Butler stated that it was her understanding that it would wait until the Executive Director was in position and to finalize what level that financial position would be defined as.

She reviewed the current vacancies: Occupancy Specialist, Maintenance Specialist.

C. Financial Committee

Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed the Security Service Contract for approval of the Board. There was a discussion regarding how it would fit into the budget and if this contract would cover patrols at the other Public Housing sites. There was a question about holidays and coverage.

Chair Terry made the motion to approve the expanded security services contract as presented. The motion was seconded and passed with four Ayes (Breashears, Henry, Morgan, Terry) and one Abstain (Jones).

The Audit services contract will need to be reviewed and put out for bid; best practice is to refresh contract bids after 3 cycles. This will be brought back to the full Board at the next regular session.

Commissioner Jones led discussion on current practice regarding bid tracking and refreshing, with the recommendation to review contracts sooner rather than waiting for the financial position to be filled. Commissioner Breashears asked about the financial thresholds and to note annual amounts over \$25,000. Financial Committee Chair Terry will work with staff to create a spreadsheet of existing contracts and relevant dates.

D. Hiring Committee

Commissioner Jones stated that an offer letter was sent to Executive Director candidate Marc Starling and accepted with anticipated start date of March 14th. Attorney Crouch is working on finalizing the work and relocation agreements.

There was discussion regarding his onboarding process. Committee Chair Jones contact Miss Cauley and come up with a draft for recommendations for the Board to consider.

Chair Terry requested a draft of the work agreement for the Board and HUD.

There was discussion as to actions the Board could take to expedite hiring a finance person. Chair Terry suggested the Board review the salary study, the Staffing Committee update the job description, and then to advertise it.

E. Staff

Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed the hiring of Mr. Kolten Long to the position of Community Engagement Coordinator, gave a highlight to the Hillcrest Resident Council, and went over training plans for all staff.

She gave an update on Public Housing and PBRA leaseings and vacancies. She requested quotes from Nan McKay regarding MTW planning and support. She reviewed current Housing Choice Voucher progress along with TBRA, VASH, and specialty vouchers.

Commissioner Jones opened discussion on progress as it related to HUD's deadlines and how voucher pulls work. Interim Deputy Director Butler highlighted the need to determine utilization rate and the current housing market to inform an ongoing voucher plan. She clarified that part of it is dependent on team size and burden and part of it depends on the housing market.

She reviewed Supportive Services activities and community engagement.

She will be meeting with an expeditor for Section 18 applications regarding the sidewalk easement to review the application and ensure it is ready to go.

F. Hillcrest Resident Council

President Brown gave an overview of the current work the Hillcrest Resident Council is doing to promote new programs and activities as COVID eases. They will be looking into upcoming elections in June. She expressed appreciation for the staff that have attended their monthly meetings – Property Manager Robertson, Community Engagement Specialist Kolten, and Social Services Manager Gardner.

Commissioner Breashears noted that there are funds the Resident Council can use for expenditures and activities.

Interim Deputy Director Butler gave an update on the mold abatement plan with the need to issue a closed bid for full building cleaning with the possibility of using current Capital Funds, and reissuing bids for pipe insulation due to lack of response the first time. Commissioner Breashears requested that the bid for pipe insulation be put out by the regular March session.

G. FHA Development Chair

FHA Development Chair Terry has been in contact with the City of Fayetteville regarding American Rescue Plan Act funds and has been working on the application with Interim Deputy Director Butler. There was discussion as to if FHA Development would be able to utilize this grant given that the current grant stipulates the funds as reimbursement.

Chair Terry is working with FHA Staff per Section 4a. of the Management Agreement to resolve ERA issues with contacting the Department of Treasury and legal counsel working with the County Attorney.

VI. Old Business

A. Update: Budget

Chair Terry reviewed the meeting with the HUD Field Office and will be sending them the working draft of the budget with the caveat that the formal ratification will be at the regular March Meeting.

B. Employee Evaluation Process

Interim Deputy Director Butler went over the drafted employee evaluation plan. There was discussion as to if the Executive Director was included in the plan, with the clarification that the plan focused on Housing Authority employees rather than the Board's singular employee.

Currently there is no space for the Executive Director to sign off on the evaluations, but it can be added to the evaluation as well as performance improvement plans.

Commissioner Breashears recommended replacing CEO with Executive Director in the document.

It was recommended that employees should be with the organization at least 12 months before being eligible for a performance-based raise.

Commissioner Breashears initiated discussion on the language between the Employee Policy and Employee Evaluation Process. It was recommended that both use the same language and add it as an appendix to the Personnel Policy.

C. Update: Salary Study

Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed the salary study completed by NAHRO. She went over how COLA raises could be implemented in relation to the salary study.

Commissioner Jones requested authorization to attend one of the compensation trainings as a board to ensure complete oversight. Interim Deputy Director Butler will share upcoming training information with the Board on this topic.

There was discussion regarding the finance position, with a focus on language and budget.

Commissioner Henry asked about the incoming Executive Director's salary as it related to the salary study's recommendation. Chair Terry stated that the salary had already been determined.

There was a recommendation to set the range for the finance position salary from \$65 to \$72 thousand. Chair Terry proposed to finalize the position title as Finance Director starting at \$65,000, and work with TPC to update the position description and post it within the next 7 – 10 business days.

There was discussion as to who would be supporting the financial position.

Interim Deputy Director Butler recommended updating maintenance pay as reflected in the salary study, which recommends \$17.79 as an hourly starting pay in order to be competitive.

There was a proposal to authorize staff to work with the fee accountant to evaluate feasibility of pay increase from the proposed salary study numbers within the current budget.

D. Request to approve: Updated Personnel Policy

This item has been tabled until the March regular session to review all proposed updates at once.

E. Request to approve: Procurement Policy Update

Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed the only major change – adjustment of the micro-purchase limit to \$10,000 as directed by HUD.

There was discussion regarding the procedure for policy amendments.

Interim Deputy Director Butler recommended approval of the policy as presented with the caveat for an annual review within the first quarter of each calendar year. Chair Terry made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Morgan. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Tru by Ideals Grant Application Update

Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed a discussion she had with the Ideals Institute regarding application qualification. They recommended amending the application for the TRAIN cohort.

There was discussion regarding the differences between the UPLIFT and TRAIN cohorts—there are similar time dedications with the main difference being that the TRAIN cohort does not come with funding.

There was discussion regarding the staff and commissioners who would be in attendance of that training. It was recommended that both the incoming Executive Director and Interim Deputy Director Butler attend. It was confirmed that Commissioners Morgan and Henry would be attending.

VII. New Business

A. Financials

Interim Deputy Director Butler is waiting on the fee accountant to create a dashboard or other simplified format for the Board.

Commissioner Breashears requested Payroll records dating back to August 2021. Interim Deputy Director Butler will upload those to the Board drive.

B. Interim Executive Director Exit Letter recommendations

Chair Terry reviewed the recommendations made in Ms. Cauley's Interim Executive Director Exit letter. Interim Deputy Director Butler reviewed the current changes made to align with some of those recommendations.

Chair Terry focused on the recommendation to research and evaluate establishing a Central Office Cost Center to enable each property to have stand alone inspections and in the context of Moving to Work.

VIII. Final Comments & Announcements

Holly Perry, Hillcrest resident, made a public comment suggesting that the security contracting for Hillcrest be trained in de escalation and crisis management training. Interim Deputy Director Butler will reach out to the contractor to discuss what measures are already in place and possibly be included with in house staff training.

Commissioner Breashears initiated discussion regarding status of St. James' funding request to Washington County.

Commissioner Jones inquired as to the status of cashing the CD that was approved, if needed, for annual Insurance premium payment. Status report is that the insurance provider agreed to give FHA a grace period, so the CD was not needed and remains intact.

Interim Deputy Director Butler will send a comp time status update to the board via email. There was a request to add the Comp Time Policy to the March session agenda.

E. Chair Terry will be meeting with Fayetteville School District Superintendent, Dr. John L. Colbert, and School Board Member Keaton Smith regarding the FHA Commission's unanimous vote in support of reopening Jefferson Elementary as a neighborhood public school.

Commissioner Morgan requested a facility tour, as well as Commissioner Henry. Interim Deputy Director Butler will be in contact with suggested dates.

Commissioner Jones requested 2 minutes of silent reflection in compassion for 2 Fayetteville residents experiencing homelessness who lost their lives due to inclement weather and lack of access to safe warming centers in our City this week.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 pm.