

# FAYETTEVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

## Special Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 13, 2021, 5:30 pm

Via Zoom

### I. Call to Order

The special meeting of the Fayetteville Housing Authority Board of Commissioners was called to order at 5:30 pm on Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The stated purpose of this meeting was 1. Removal of Melissa Terry as Chair, 2. Determination of a Plan for Leadership and Staff Workload Balance, 3. Resolution 1271: Cash Public Housing CD and deposit into Public Housing Operating Expense at Bank of Fayetteville

### II. Roll Call

All Commissioners were in attendance, forming quorum. Additionally in attendance: Director of Housing Butler, Attorney Crouch, FHA staff members, members of the public.

### III. Announcements: Review of meeting decorum protocols

### IV. Review and Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved as amended, unanimously by quorum.

### V. Public Comment

Jen Cole, Hillcrest Tower resident, expressed her concern about the removal of Ms. Terry as Chairperson at this time.

### VI. Special Meeting Agenda Items

#### A. Determination of plan for Leadership & Staff

Gerald Turner, HEAL Collective, reviewed the next steps and overall stabilization strategy. There was discussion regarding a possible board retreat. There was a recommendation that Mr. Turner speak with Sheila Posey of OnPoint Solutions regarding her data.

Mr. Turner reviewed last Friday's conversation with HUD regarding continuity of operations, especially with Section 8, with a recommendation to bring in a neighboring Housing Authority, third-party partner, or hire an interim Director. There was discussion of institutional knowledge and internal staff stabilization as it related to the three options.

Commissioner Scott expressed concerns regarding the limits of cross-training. There was further discussion regarding a staffing committee and procurement policy. There was a discussion regarding neighboring Housing Authorities and their programmatic understanding.

Director of Housing Butler brought up her concern with the lack of immediate leadership steps. There was discussion regarding the competitive job offering for leadership positions.

Jennifer Cotton, FHA Section 8 Housing Specialist, shared Ms. Butler's concern, and offered her help for cross-training and/or transitions. She clarified the caseload and work that HCV staff members are responsible for.

Cassie Snider, FHA Section 8 Housing Specialist, gave a statement about the diminished operating capacity of Section 8 without a supervisor.

Jasper Logan, FHAD Property Manager, asked about the hiring process for the current vacancies and for the Executive Director position. There was a discussion of the staffing committee that was created.

Commissioner Breashears led discussion regarding operational maintenance and payroll, with Mr. Turner clarifying his responsibilities. There was discussion of staff compensation due to the increased workload.

Ms. Cotton stated that Ms. Butler had the skillset and training for payroll and that she was willing to help, as well as clarifying the total number of vouchers. She also expressed her concern about the health of the board given that five staff member resignations listed the board as the reasoning.

Ms. Butler spoke about the workload she would take on once Interim Deputy Director Dempsey left, and requested a clear plan of authority for specific tasks.

Jim Crouch, Attorney, suggested giving the Board Chair broad authority to work with Mr. Turner to delineate tasks by remaining employee.

#### **i. Executive Session**

There was discussion of the typical procedure for placing an Interim Executive/Deputy Director. A motion was made to move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. The motion was seconded, passed unanimously. The Board moved into Executive Session.

After returning to the Special Session, a motion was made to appoint Audra Butler to Interim Deputy Director, effective September 15 at close of business until November 1, 2021, with the following conditions: employment matters such as hiring, internal interim promotions, and terminations shall be in coordination with the Staffing Committee; and budget and finance decisions shall be in conjunction with the Budget and Finance Committee. The motion was seconded.

Commissioner Scott opined that the position should be Interim Executive Director rather than Interim Deputy Director.

Ms. Butler asked for clarification as to who the point of contact for the committees would be. There was discussion regarding delegation, with a request for maximum transparency by CC'ing and BCC'ing the Chair, Board members, and Mr. Turner in HUD communications.

A recommendation was made for Tara West to be promoted to Director Housing.

Holly Perry, Hillcrest Towers resident, asked if the Hiring Committee was still considering someone from Peace at Home or 7Hills.

Ms. Butler will be speaking with Victoria regarding separation of duties and compliance.

Chair Terry stated that she would be present at the end of day Wednesday to secure keys and administrative items from Ms. Dempsey when she leaves.

Victoria Dempsey, Interim Deputy Director, made a statement regarding the lack of an immediate plan for the operation of Section 8.

The vote was called, with the motion passing with four Ayes from Commissioners Terry, Jones, Breashears, Paxton and one No from Commissioner Scott.

**B. Resolution 1271: Cash PH CD into PH Operating Expense at Bank of Fayetteville**

Commissioner Breashears led discussion of the resolution discussed during the previous agenda meeting, focusing on CARES Act funding. Director of Housing Butler reviewed the working data regarding that funding.

Ms. Butler expressed a concern that there will not be enough cash flow to cover payroll if this was tabled until the regular board session.

There was discussion regarding the timeline of cashing a CD and payroll.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 1271, the motion was seconded. The vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

**C. Removal of Melissa Terry as Chair**

Vice chair Jones presided over this portion of the agenda. Commissioner Scott shared her concerns with Melissa Terry's actions as Chair, citing lack of communication, information, and transparency with HUD communications and FHA Development financial issues. She made a motion to remove Melissa Terry from the Fayetteville Housing Authority Board Chair position.

Chair Terry reviewed her actions as Board Chair and went over her accomplishments with ERA, with discussion regarding the nature of the correspondence. There was discussion regarding the presentation of the budget to the Board.

Attorney Crouch spoke about the letter from John Cloyd.

Ms. Cole stated that this seemed like a simple misunderstanding between Commissioner Scott and Chair Terry.

Christopher Y., Fayetteville resident, commented that Chair Terry needed to take responsibility as leadership for both Boards, and recommended that a commissioner call the question immediately as to her removal.

Ms. Snider made a statement asking the Board to listen to staff and their needs, with a focus on lack of leadership and issues with Chair Terry.

Mike Emery, Fayetteville resident and former FHA Board Chair, gave his full support for Ms. Snider's statement and shared her frustrations.

Christopher pointed out the downplaying of HUD's investigation of FHA and FHAD.

Commissioner Breashears stated that there were not complaints from the resident regarding Chair Terry. There was discussion regarding possible conflict of interest in the same person as Chair for both FHA and FHAD boards.

Ms. Butler gave a reminder that the board had discussed sustaining separate leadership for each board, and that currently there is not a path forward for staff-board reconciliation with the current Board leadership.

Chair Terry stated that there have been more resident complaints than before. She also expressed her support for the suggestion of more frequent regular board meetings to

avoid going late into the night. She encouraged board members to meet with Mr. Turner Friday, between 1pm and 4 pm.

Vice Chair Jones called for a second to Commissioner Scott's motion and, hearing none, the motion failed.

## **VII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 AM, September 14 2021.