

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF RENO
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 21, 2021

The special meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Reno (Agency) was called to order by Executive Director Jones at 8:09 am on Thursday, January 21, 2021. Pursuant to Governor Sisolak's March 22, 2020 Declaration of Emergency Directive 006, the requirement contained in NRS 241.023(1)(b), that there be a physical location designated for meetings of public bodies where members of the public are permitted to attend and participate, is suspended in order to mitigate against the possible exposure or transmission of the COVID-19 (Corona Virus). This meeting was held by video/telephone conference.

Commissioners Present

Mark Sullivan
Mayor Hillary Schieve
Dave Aiazzi
Barbara Wilhelms

Commissioners Absent

Staff Present

Amy Jones, Executive Director
Chuck Zeh, Legal Counsel
Mishon Hurst, Deputy Executive Director
Samantha Arellano, Information Technology Manager
Kathy Merrill, Executive Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent

Others Present

None.

There being a quorum present, the order of business was as follows:

- **Call to order and roll call.**
- **Receive introduction of guests.**

There were no guests present.

- **Public Comment. Public comment, if any, must be limited to any item on the Agenda which is listed as an item for action by the Board. Comment from the public is limited to three minutes per person, under these items.**

There was no public comment.

➤ **Approval of agenda (For Possible Action)**

Commissioner Wilhelms moved to approve the agenda posted on January 15, 2021. Commissioner Aiazzi seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Commissioner Sullivan called for the question. The vote was all ayes, no nays. Commissioner Sullivan declared the motion carried and the agenda approved.

1. Nomination and election of officers. (For Possible Action)

It was moved by Commissioner Schieve nominate and elect Mark Sullivan as chairman of the Reno Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Aiazzi seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Executive Director Jones called for the question. The vote was all ayes, no nays. Executive Director Jones declared the motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Schieve nominate and elect Dave Aiazzi as vice chairman of the Reno Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. Chairman Sullivan seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Sullivan called for the question. The vote was all ayes, no nays. Chairman Sullivan declared the motion carried.

2. Receive department updates from the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director. (Discussion)

Executive Director Jones and Deputy Executive Director Hurst gave a brief overview of the departments indicating that many departments have unfilled positions. The departments are understaffed due to the implementation of additional housing programs, difficulty in finding experienced employees, as well as the loss of institutional knowledge of long-term employees that have or will be retiring soon. The unfilled positions are creating stress and strain on the departments especially in Asset Management with maintenance positions being the hardest hit. These vacancies are occurring, most likely, due to a competitive job market in building trades coupled with the pandemic. Commissioner Schieve offered the suggestion of advertising open positions on the City of Reno's (City) job board for additional exposure.

3. Review and discussion of previous Strategic Plan approved through Resolution 17-01-03 RH and the Agency's Mission Statement. Discussion may include re-evaluating the existing priorities to determine if they remain valid and thereby assess their prioritization, if applicable. Consider whether to add to, subtract from or refine and prioritize the elements of the strategic plan and mission statement. (For Possible Action)

Executive Director Jones reviewed the Agency's Mission Statement and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the Agency. Chairman Sullivan stated the Agency is high performing and the MTW status allows for flexibility in disbursing funding to various activities.

Vice Chairman Aiazzi brought up discussion of increasing the number of seats on the RHA Board in order to garner more community support. He further indicated that having a Master Plan for the Agency could pinpoint Agency growth, as well as receive buy-in from the City and Washoe County (County). Staff would also benefit from strategic direction.

Chairman Sullivan agreed to a regional approach. An advisory board may be an approach that could be considered in leu of expanding Board seats.

Legal Counsel Zeh stated the Board is statutorily limited to five members.

Commissioner Schieve advised to implement quarterly and biannual meetings with regional officials.

Executive Director Jones stated that over the last six months, she has created a relationship with the City of Sparks (Sparks) and the County. Both jurisdictions believe in the benefit of working together.

Vice Chairman Sullivan indicated the direction of “all things housing” is beneficial to all of the parties. He further suggested that RHA staff start with department staff of these agencies asking how the RHA can assist them to further that relationship.

The Board and staff agreed the RHA could be the lead Agency for housing who could bring together the community players that are passionate about affordable housing, which would benefit the whole community.

Discussion ensued regarding the Fourth Street/ Wells Cargo property. Agency staff will be touring Our Place and Crossroads for a greater understanding of the campus model under consideration for the site. Future discussions are being planned with Washoe County, the City of Reno, and the City Sparks. Staff will also reach out to other housing authority’s that have a transitional housing model within their agency.

The topic of future development was discussed. It was agreed that the Fourth Street/ Wells Cargo property is a big undertaking, but staff will continue to look for development opportunities within the community. The Development committee has valuable experience and knowledge that will be beneficial to staff and the Board. Motels in disrepair could be a good opportunity for the RHA to acquire and improve their substandard conditions. There are individuals and families that have no other choice for housing and rely on the motels. The RHA could make improvements to the motels for a better living environment to serve this population. The Board and staff discussed setting certain criteria to make property acquisition decisions. It was determined that each individual property will be assess based on several factors at that time.

Discussion further included the Scattered Site properties and their value to the Agency. Many were purchased for a nominal cost and with the current market conditions, the revenue generated from selling them could provide more affordable units to the community. A lease to own option to the current tenants is another possible avenue discussed.

Vice Chairman Aiazzi introduced the idea of exploring a bond rating for the Agency. Starting the process now could be beneficial to future development. Staff will look further into this process.

A recess was called at 10:11 am.

The meeting was called to order at 10:36 am and roll call taken. All staff and members of the Board were present.

Discussion ensued on the Fourth Street/ Wells Cargo property. Chairman Sullivan indicated that the motor home storage units may be a good source of income for the RHA. The Board directed staff to explore this option. This could also be a potential opportunity for Workforce Development (WFD) to gain work experience. Deadlines for funding for the property were discussed. The HOME Funds application is due in May and the tax credit application is due in September. This would leave six months to close the funds.

The Board and staff discussed the 8th Street property. Due to its size, it was agreed to contract with an outside developer to develop the site. The site will require Project Based Vouchers (PBV).

Executive Director Jones gave an overview of the future freeway expansion NDOT project and

its impact on the Mineral Manor site. The freeway expansion will eliminate 22 buildings, consisting of 44 units. Ninth Street will be reconfigured to end at the freeway. An available option could be to convert the site to the Rental Assistance Program (RAD) through HUD. Concepts considered were eminent domain, and exchanging property with NDOT and other entities such as the school district. Further discussion ensued regarding the conditions of other Public Housing (PH) sites as to the implementation of the RAD program to assist with repairs or to rebuild with more density within the sites. A cost benefit analysis was suggested to be completed at all of the PH sites being considered for the RAD program. Criteria to be considered would include cost, efficiency, savings on utilities by 25 percent, cost vs. density, infrastructure (transit), and amenities.

4. Discussion to identify three to five Agency goals to address and support housing needs in the community. The Board may establish short-term and long-term goals. (For Possible Action)

Vice Chairman Aiazzi recommended using 2021 to get ready for 2022. Suggested goals were summarized as determining the best use for the Scattered Sites properties, acquiring a bond rating, the Fourth Street site, and an Agency Master Plan.

Executive Director Jones asked the Board for direction on the number of units they would like to see the Agency input into the market. The discussion concluded that there should be no such limit as there are several variables to consider.

Executive Director Jones brought up the WFD program stating she would like to expand the opportunities for participants. The Board indicated that no direction is necessary and for staff to continue to fill the needs of the program as deemed appropriate. The Board will support the staff's direction of the program.

Executive Director Jones stated Oakland Housing Authority has a transitional housing program who has partnered with Health and Human Services Agency which could be replicated for the Fourth Street site. It could be possible to assign PBV's or shallow subsidies to the site thereby offering a tiered housing approach to support the units. Funding received from Continuum of Care can be applied to the site.

Executive Director Jones summarized the discussion that has taken place so far as; (1) organization restructure, (2) Scattered Site assessment, (3) Mineral Manor/ NDOT site assessment, (4) RAD assessment of all PH sites, (5) Master Plan.

The Master Plan would need to layout a needs assessment, current capacity and demand, what and where to build. This would be a 30,000-foot view hand in hand with the need.

The Board was in favor of bringing in outside expertise to assist staff.

Vice Chairman Aiazzi further narrowed the goals into (1) the CARES Campus/ Fourth Street site to decide what will be built there by the end of the year, (2) create more affordable housing by acquisition and development, (3) implementing finance options that include acquiring a bond rating, (4) a Master plan giving a four-year timeline to create. These goals are in addition to the normal operation of the Agency, which will need to continue.

5. Direction to staff to develop action items generated from the previous discussion of Agency goals (item 4). Discussion may include identifying specific steps, timelines, and challenges in order for staff to attain designated goals. (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Schieve motioned replace the 2018 priorities, and to set the Agency goals as follows; (1) determine the concept of the CARES Campus/ Fourth Street site by the end of 2021, (2) create more affordable housing by acquisition and development, (3) acquire a bond rating for the Agency, (4) develop a Master plan for the Agency by 2025. Vice Chairman Aiazzi seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Sullivan called for the question. The vote was all ayes and no nays. Chairman Sullivan declared the motion carried.

6. Additional items:

- i) General matters of concern to Board Members regarding matters not appearing on the Agenda. (Discussion)

Chairman Sullivan thanked the staff and the Board for their dedication to affordable housing. Vice Chairman Aiazzi asked about the COVID-19 vaccine for staff. Executive Director Jones stated she has been in contact with the County and believes the agency will be placed on the Tier II list.

Executive Director Jones thanked the Board for their direction and support. The Agency is excited for the future and the opportunity to bring more affordable housing to the community.

- ii) Reports on conferences and trainings. (Discussion)

There were no reports on conferences and trainings.

- iii) Old and New Business. (Discussion)

There were no Old or New Business to discuss.

- iv) Schedule of next meeting. The following dates have been scheduled in advance but are subject to change at any time: January 26, 2021; February 23, 2021 and March 23, 2021. (For Possible Action)

11. Public Comment. The opportunity for public comment is reserved for any matter within the jurisdiction of the Board. No action on such an item may be taken by the Board unless and until the matter has been noticed as an action item. Comment from the public is limited to three minutes per person.

There was no public comment.

12. Adjournment. (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Wilhelms moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Aiazzi seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Chairman Sullivan called for the question. The vote was all ayes and no nays. Commissioner Wilhelms declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:56 am.