



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

March 28, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting In-Person & Via Zoom

| <u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u> | <u>STAFF PRESENT</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Bruce Dickinson | Molly Rogers |
| Renee Brouse | Jes Larson |
| Gena Briggs | Jill Chen |
| John Epstein | Michael Clark |
| Nina Stafford | Liz Morris |
| Dave Bachman | Melissa Sonsalla |
| | Bianetth Valdez |
| <u>ABSENT</u> | Jacob Boyett |
| Melinda Bell | Leslie Johnstone |
| Fernando Lira | Nikki Musser |
| Ryan Cain | Tatiana Gammett |
| Nina Sparr | Nadia Mohammad |
| Carine Arendes | Aaron Babbie |
| Eric Schmidt | |
| Narendar Sahgal | <u>GUESTS</u> |
| Hayley Purdy | Jacquilyn Saito |
| Deena Feldes (Castrejon) | Carly Sylva-Gabrielson |

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – 9:05 a.m. A quorum was not present.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS – ATTENDEES (INCLUDING ONLINE GUESTS)

None.

III. DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES

None.

IV. ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee will vote to approve the February 2024 minutes at the April 2024 meeting if a quorum is present.



V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Molly Rogers wanted to honor the late Tom Cusack, former Field Director at HUD, who worked in affordable housing as an advocate for more affordable housing resources. She announced the celebration earlier in the month of the opening of a Project Turnkey Hotel, Bridge to Home Shelter, in Tigard. It is owned and operated by Family Promise of Tualatin Valley, and they will start by serving 70 families there. Bridge to Home offers important amenities to program participants including meals served onsite, a dedicated dining hall, a food pantry and clothing closet operated by dedicated volunteers, and individualized case management and housing navigation services aimed at addressing barriers and achieving long-term, stable housing. Ongoing operation of the shelter is made possible by voter-approved Supportive Housing Services measure resources provided by Washington County.

The Rental Assistance Division (RAD) has had a high use of vouchers, so that we received more VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) vouchers (increasing from 247 to 272 new vouchers for veterans) thanks to an award of \$301,998.00 on February 26, 2024, in a joint effort between HUD and the VA. In addition to more voucher support, we have an opportunity to apply for more federal grants through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and are currently working on a joint application to bring in \$50 million in Energy Efficiency and Resiliency upgrades for up to 900 affordable housing units. Staff will receive approval for submission of the grant from the Board of County Commissioners at their March 19, 2024 meeting. If awarded funds, the County will work with each Housing Authority to determine rehab and procurement scopes of work and will then distribute the funds.

Lastly, we are proceeding with pre-development activities for the final Metro Housing Bond site, Aloha 209th & Alexander property, which will be the twelfth and final Metro Housing Bond project in the County’s pipeline. Metro acquired the property using their Site Acquisition Program funds in January 2024 and is working with Housing Authority of Washington County (HAWC) development staff and Unite Oregon to facilitate a community-engagement process. The project team plans to utilize the feedback from the various committee members (including Aloha-area neighbors, service providers that serve residents of affordable housing, community participants from the TV Highway Corridor Equitable Development Strategy, a Portland State University student, and a volunteer from the Muslim Educational Trust) to inform decisions on development programming, community space, populations the project intends to serve, and open space programming.

There were no additional questions for Molly.

VI. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS

None

VII. ONGOING BUSINESS

None



VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Introduction of Jill Chen

Jill Chen served at the Portland Housing Bureau as the Housing Investments & Portfolio Preservation Manager for 7 years before coming to Washington County. She worked on the team that implemented the Metro Housing Bonds and Portland Housing Bonds with a sizable budget. She is thrilled to be here to continue working with Molly Rogers and the Washington County team. She wants to look at the whole spectrum of housing (from homelessness to home ownership) and the integration of services, rental assistance, transitional housing, recovery housing, and access centers in a whole-needs approach to address the issues of the community. Jill also worked a couple of years at the Portland Development Commission working with new market tax credits for the City of Portland. Before that, she worked a couple of decades in international development from large capital-intensive projects (power plants, toll roads, hotels) to small lending opportunities (such as micro-financing \$200 loans) for individual citizens around the globe. She is hoping to bring a very wide range of perspectives to our work here, and she appreciates the opportunity to join Washington County.

B. Legislative Update

Carly Sylvia-Gabrielson presented:

She is a Government Relations Manager at the Washington County Administration Office and has been here 7 weeks. She spent her former career working both on Capitol Hill and for Oregon's 4th congressional district Congressman Peter DeFazio for over a decade. She managed his campaign, served as Director of Outreach in Oregon, and then served in Washington, D.C. as Congressman DeFazio's Deputy Chief of Staff. Most recently, she worked for a Congresswoman from Hawaii and led her Communication's Department. She is thrilled to be back in Oregon and serving in Washington County for Housing as well as LUT (Land Use and Transportation). She shared some slides about the exciting things that came out of the recent short session at the Oregon Legislature.

Carly discussed the Omnibus Housing Bill (House Bill 4063) that focuses on incentivizing development for housing production within the Metro region and includes other technical fixes to the Oregon housing needs analysis process to clarify the roles of cities, counties, Metro, and State regarding housing development. She also discussed the Housing Investment Package from Senate Bill 1530/House Bill 4128 that provided \$122 Million to Oregon Housing and Community Services, \$90 million to the Oregon Business Development Department, \$30 Million to Department of Administrative Services for affordable housing development, and \$29 Million to the Oregon Housing Authority. The main focus of the session was for affordable housing development. Senate Bill 1537 (The Governor's Housing Bill) creates the (HAPO) Housing Accountability and Production Office and ability to pass a one-time UGB (Urban Growth Boundary) expansion.



IX. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Strategic Framework Presentation

Jes Larson and Melissa Sonsalla presented an update on the strategic framework for Housing Services. They first presented the new Vision Statement, and then explained the Equity Statement that consultant, Kris Smock, helped them develop. This was developed in collaboration by the DIBs (Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging) Council in conjunction with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

Vision

We envision a Washington County where everyone has an affordable home with the supports and opportunities they need to thrive.

Next, they requested feedback on a proposed new Mission Statement, and presented two options for the committee's consideration and feedback. Members discussed the pros and cons of the wording in the two options and made suggestions for edits.

Mission

Option A: Washington County Department of Housing Services advances equitable access to housing stability and promotes community vitality through a diversity of affordable housing solutions and supportive services.

Option B: Washington County Department of Housing Services provides a diversity of affordable housing solutions and supportive services to advance equity and build community strength.

The Mission Statement discussion included the following comments:

- Nina Stafford believes the phrase "housing stability" is really important (in Option A).
- John Epstein likes "build community strength" (in Option B) or to have that phrase combined into Option A.
- Gina Briggs likes Option B because it's to the point, strength-based, and has fewer words. She commented that the more words (the longer a statement), people tend to not read them as much. She later suggested the following wording: "Washington County Department of Housing Services provides a diversity of affordable housing stability, solutions, and supportive services."
- Renee Brouse likes Option B also because it's not as wordy. She also suggested that a good mission statement should be short enough to memorize easily and have a good flow. She suggested to perhaps add "housing stability" after the word "advance" in Option B.
- Jes Larsen liked the suggestion of "strength-based" and less words. Molly also agrees that fewer words are better.
- Bruce Dickinson likes the words "community vitality" in the Mission Statement or Values and to emphasize the importance of both recognizing existing members of a community as well as new, incoming members.



Lastly, five Guiding Values were presented and discussed (Equity, Responsiveness, Collaboration, Accountability, and Sustained Impact) and how these are represented in the work that the Housing Advisory Committee does. John Epstein stated that he thought these looked good and didn't have any suggestions for changing them. He believes they parallel what the committee has been talking about and doing. Bruce Dickinson suggested adding the phrase "results oriented" under "sustained impact" or another heading of the Values.

B. FY 2023-24 Quarter 2 Financial Summary

Michael Clark presented the Quarter 2 Financial Summary for FY 2023-24 (07/01/2023 – 12/31/2023). He discussed program expenses and stated they are currently higher than they had planned for and budgeted, and they will take that into account as they plan and propose their budget for next year. For public housing (244 units), the overhead costs were higher than last year, and they are working on getting a replacement manager for that site. For local fund operations, they acquired Woodspring (172 units) in July for a little over a \$1 Million, which incurred some associated debt payments.

Questions and Comments for Michael:

John Epstein:

1. What is the role of the HAC members regarding the Budget/Financial presentations?
2. Are both Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) and Public Housing primarily over-budget due to personnel costs?
3. There's been a lot of growth for new projects and staff additions. When resources have dropped, will we still get sustainable funding? Is there a budget shortfall coming?

Jill Chen responded by saying the committee's role is to provide accountability and ask the hard questions. The deficits in Housing Choice Vouchers and Public Housing are primarily personnel and overhead. There is a plan to dispose of some properties to address the deficit and balance things out. Regarding sustainable funding, she commented that as a housing agency, we need to determine how to compete for money at the state and federal level. Molly Rogers suggested having a quarterly discussion with the committee regarding finances. Michael Clark added that next month there will be an orientation on budget, and he asked for feedback on how the committee would like his budget presentations to be formatted and what kind of timelines used.

C. Additional/Written Department Updates

Additional department updates can be found in the March 2024 HAC packet.

X. MEMBER SUGGESTED FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

No other committee members had suggestions, but some of the staff had some announcements and reminders.



Jill Chen made some introductions of new staff members. Leslie Johnstone is our new Asset Manager who joined us on March 11th. We are in the process of hiring a Portfolio Manager (a replacement position) to work with public housing. A job posting for Real Estate Division Manager (a new position) has also been made. Please forward any names to Jill Chen of people you could recommend for this role.

Leslie Johnstone shared that she spent the last 23 years in affordable housing. She started out as a compliance manager and trainer, and then transitioned to an asset manager role. She's been in property management for 30 years. She worked for some of the larger management companies in town. She said it's a real pleasure to be here and to have the opportunity to make changes in the community that she lives in.

Bianetth Valdez shared a reminder about an overview training for HAC and Solutions Council members to talk about public meeting law and it will be **Wednesday, April 3rd at 2:00-3:00pm**. The next one will be **Wednesday, April 17th at 1:00-2:00pm**. You don't need to attend both. If you want a refresher, please attend.

Jacob Boyett shared a reminder that **Thursday, April 25th** is the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner Celebration and invitations have been sent out. He encouraged all to attend that are able.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: John Epstein
Second: Gena Briggs
Vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Molly Rogers
Secretary / Executive Director