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BHA MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BREMERTON HOUSING AUTHORITY (BHA) HELD AT 5:30 PM ON JANUARY 27, 2025.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Chair Ryan Burton
Vice Chair Jeff Flood
Commissioner Joan Hanten

Commissioner Susie Beil
Commissioner Victoria Hilt

Absent:

Commissioner Diane West

BHA Staff Present:

Jill Stanton, Executive Director
Wendy Westby, Interim Housing Director
Anne Conte, Housing Director
Windy Epps, Finance Director
Carlita Alegria, CMS Director
Tory Quinn, Director of Development and Acquisitions
Lorna Camacho, Office Manager/Executive Assistant/Minute Taker

Also Present:

Haley Rutledge

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comment was given by Resident Haley Rutledge.

4. CHAIR COMMENTS: Chair Burton welcomed the Board members and staff. Chair Burton congratulated Katie Sharp for being honored with the 20 under 40 Leadership Kitsap Award.

5. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: Vice Chair Flood shared that he attended a wonderful meeting last week with Deborah Jackson, Executive Director of Surviving Change. He noted that Ms. Jackson is highly recognized in the community and commended the collaboration between BHA and Ms. Jackson in addressing the challenges they are working to overcome. Vice Chair Flood extended his appreciation to everyone for their continued great work.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: All items listed under the "Consent Agenda" are routine and will be enacted **by one motion** unless a commissioner so requires, in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

- 6.1 Approval of Regular Minutes: November 25, 2024
 - 6.1.1 Approval of Special Minutes: November 14, 2024
 - 6.1.2 Approval of Special Minutes: December 20, 2024
- 6.2 Approval of Cash Disbursements –
November, 2024: \$25,827,503.52
December, 2024: \$23,597,435.34
- 6.3 Approval of Write-offs for Multi-Family/Housing Department -Tenant Accounts Receivable –
November 2024: No Write offs
December 2024: No Write offs
- 6.4 Approval of Write-offs for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program -
November, 2024: No Write offs
December, 2024: No Write offs
- 6.5 Approval of Write-offs for the Landlord AR Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher Program -
November, 2024: No Write offs
December, 2024: No Write offs

☞ **Chair Burton called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Hilt moved for approval of motion. Commissioner Beil seconded the motion. Chair Burton called for question. None opposed. Motion carried.**

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

7.1 Executive:

- 7.1.1 Executive Director's Report: Comments by Ms. Stanton.

Ms. Stanton opened the meeting by introducing Anne Conte, the newly hired Housing Director, to the Board members. Ms. Conte briefly expressed her enthusiasm for her new role.

1. **Residents and Participants:**

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) team has officially relocated to the Norm Dicks Government Center. Ms. Conte and Ms. Westby have conducted a thorough analysis of the HCV programs and customer service, identifying key areas for improvement. Based on their findings, they have outlined a strategic plan to enhance service delivery and achieve several organizational goals, including improved access and responsiveness to clients.

Utilization has been a challenge, but with the new recommendations in place, significant progress is expected.

The HCV team plans to reopen its doors to BHA clients in July 2025, operating as a referral agency. Staff will be returning to the workplace full-time in March 2025.

2. **Partners and Advocates:**

It was announced that two residents have moved into Evergreen Bright Start today, marking an exciting milestone for the project. The team has made significant progress, with all necessary systems and plans in place to ensure the continued success of the project as it moves forward.

The team is in the final stages of closing on Wheaton Landing, although there has been a minor delay. Efforts are ongoing to work out the remaining details. Enterprise will be on-site this week conducting interviews and focus group sessions with community members, partners, and a few Board members. While the outcomes of these sessions are uncertain, the long-term goal for the project is to establish clear progress and track outcome.

3. **Financial Strength:**

It was reported that the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) transaction successfully closed in December. Ms. Stanton expressed pride in the hard work and dedication of the staff throughout the process. Construction work has now begun, and while progress is exciting, it was acknowledged that the process may be difficult for some of the residents. A strong team is in place onsite to support the transition and ensure everything moves forward smoothly.

4. **Organizational Capacity:**

In December, the organization held its annual staff appreciation luncheon, which was a great success. The following day, an all-staff training session was held by ALOHA. This session served as a continuation of the training provided in 2023, further supporting the development of the staff.

5. **Other Reports:**

Ms. Stanton shared that an affordable housing working group from Kingston approached the organization. The group has raised enough funds to purchase a parcel of land where 8 units could potentially be built. Ms. Stanton met with the working group, who are seeking assistance. However, since Kingston is outside of the organization's jurisdiction, we reached out to Housing Kitsap who is unable to assist. While BHA would not make any profit from this project, it presents a compelling story. The working group is at capacity for what they can manage moving forward. Ms. Stanton asked board members if they would be supportive of pursuing a project outside the jurisdiction, noting that there would be no conflict with Housing Kitsap, who expressed no objection if BHA were to take on the project.

BHA would not purchase the parcel as it would result in financial loss, and it was emphasized that this type of situation is rare. Kingston does not have a high homeless population, but Ms. Stanton believes it is worth investigating further. The next step would involve Ms. Quinn and Ms. Stanton pursuing the project without making any commitments until additional details are gathered and further discussions take place among the board members. Chair Burton approved the next steps, allowing Ms. Stanton to gather more information before the board members make a final decision.

Ms. Stanton raised the topic of a Board Retreat, which has been under discussion for some time. She asked for the board members' opinions on holding either a full-day or an overnight retreat, potentially in Port Ludlow, sometime in April or May, or sooner if possible. The proposed overnight retreat would run from Thursday afternoon to Friday afternoon.

Board members expressed their support for the idea of an overnight retreat but emphasized the importance of confirming the date as soon as possible to accommodate their schedules. Ms. Camacho will work with Chair Burton to confirm a suitable date before finalizing the details. Ms. Stanton will prepare a set of questions and topics to guide the discussions, and the outcomes expected from the retreat.

7.2 Finance: There are no Finance items.

7.3 Housing Management: Comments by Ms. Epps, Ms. Conte, and Ms. Westby.

The Housing/Business Solutions Committee discussed the Housing Services Office (HSO) opening plan, which will open on July 1, 2025, to serve BHA clients and applicants. The plan aims to address client requests for more communication and support around Rent Café and will create a one-stop shop to enhance accessibility and streamline services for BHA clients.

Ms. Epps shared a PowerPoint presentation with board members on key metrics and financial performance for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and related initiatives. The presentation covered the following topics:

- HCV Housing Assistance Payment Expenses
- Unit Months Leased
- Per Unit Cost
- HCV Vouchers Issued but Not Under Contract
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
- Port Outs
- Continuum of Care
- Single Room Occupancy (SRO)
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)

7.3.1 Property Vacancy Report (November and December)

A total of 11 unoccupied units were held for repositioning, 11 units were rent-ready for new residents, and 9 units were in the process of being turned. The plan is to expand reporting on unit status in the near future as we become more comfortable with the process.

7.4 Human Resources: There are no HR items.

7.5 Contract Management Services: Comments by Ms. Alegria.

BHA received and executed amendments to its PBCA Annual Contributions Contracts (ACCs) for Washington State, Nebraska, and Utah, extending the contracts through January 31, 2026, with potential for further six-month extensions through January 31, 2028.

The amendments also outline transition responsibilities in anticipation of a PBCA rebid, including HUD's completion of a PBCA Transition Guidebook.

Ms. Alegria noted that these extensions and preparations for a potential rebid reflect HUD's continued efforts to ensure continuity of services while establishing a formal approach to a nationwide PBCA competition.

7.6 Business Solutions Reporting: Comments by Ms. Stanton in Mr. Schanne's absence.

The Housing/Business Solutions Committee met on January 23, 2025, and discussed the ongoing focus on cyber security within the organization. Information Technology (IT) emphasized the importance of maintaining a safe and secure environment for both employees and residents. The recent cyber security testing conducted by BHA revealed a strong cyber security posture, highlighting the effectiveness of the measures in place.

IT has expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff members who have participated in cyber security training, recognizing their contributions to strengthening BHA's security framework.

Additionally, the committee was informed that BHA will be rolling out specialized security awareness training for all staff and board members through the Knowbe4 platform. This initiative aims to further enhance awareness and ensure that all personnel are well-prepared to navigate potential cyber threats.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

10. NEW BUSINESS: None.

11. FUTURE 2025 REGULAR MEETINGS: February 24, and March 24, 2025

Finance/CMS/Personnel Committee Meeting – February 20, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Jill Stanton

Executive Secretary

Ryan Burton

Chair of the Board

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