

MINUTES

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF ABILENE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Meeting of January 17, 2008, 9:30 a.m.

The Housing Authority of the City of Abilene, Texas, met in a Regular Session on January 17, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. in the Cypress Plaza Board Room, 534 Cypress Street. Chairman V.E. Brailsford was present and presided. Other Commissioners present were: Mary Jay Island, Cynthia Horton, Tanya Smith Brice, and Kiddy Boswell.

Staff members present were: Ebony Bond, Programs Coordinator/Interim Director; Megan Santee, Assistant Director Planning and Development; Genette Edmond, Public Housing Manager; Tanya Johnson, Resident Services Coordinator; Stanley Smith, Assistant City Attorney; Paul Falade, Accountant; and Mary Ann Martell, Housing Secretary. Guests present were: Stephanie Baker, Brett Reynolds and former Commissioner Dale Barthelemy.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brailsford called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m.

1.0 Routine Announcements, Recognitions and Presentations

- 1.1. Ebony Bond, Programs Coordinator/Interim Director, introduced new Housing Board of Commissioner Kiddy Boswell with Abilene Board of Realtors and Commissioner Cyndi Horton, a Public Housing resident and an Abilene Christian University student.
- 1.2. She also introduced the new accounting tech, Michele Oerline.
- 1.3. Ms. Bond presented former Commissioner Dale Barthelemy who rotated off the Board in 12/2007, with a pen and pencil set as a thank you for his years of commitment and service to the Housing Authority.

2.0 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held November 15, 2007, and the Special Call Meeting held December 18, 2007.

Commissioner Smith Brice made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting from November 15, 2007, and the special call meeting held December 18, 2007. Commissioner Island seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Smith Brice, Island, Horton, Boswell and Chairman Brailsford

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

3.0 Open discussion for Citizen General Comment and Resident/Landlord Input

No comments made.

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

4.1 Monthly Status Reports

Chairman Brailsford asked if there was any discussion on Agenda Items 4.1 and 4.2. Regarding 4.1, Ms. Bond mentioned that in the past, the HA has requested 100% of the fair market value (FMV) for payment standards be approved, however, after a survey is completed, the HA will be requesting approval of 110% of FMV for several surrounding counties.

Commissioner Smith Brice pulled Agenda Item 4.2 in order for them to be explained to the new commissioners.

Ebony Bond explained the 4.2 (b) report for Low Rent Public Housing is in a format reflecting an overview for low rent's status and financials showing the charges collected from the residents and other charges. Agenda Item 4.2 (c), the CFP report shows money applied for modernization of Public Housing such as new appliances, roofing, etc. There is no new report at this time. There is approximately \$300,000 in CFP funds for completing such things as fencing, roofing, replacing stoves and refrigerators, etc. Ms. Bond further explained that 4.2 (d), is a report on the financials for the Parkridge Place Apartments which is a market-rate apartment complex owned by the Housing Authority. It is managed by Accolade Property Management located in Dallas. She introduced Stephanie Baker, President of Accolade, and Bret Reynolds, Vice-President of Maintenance.

Commissioner Smith Brice made a motion to approve Agenda Items #4.1 and 4.2 on the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Island seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Horton, Boswell, Smith Brice, Island, and Chairman Brailsford

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

5.0 Old Business

At the previous Board meeting in November, the resolution approving changes to the 2007 Administrative Plan was tabled. The Board had requested staff to contact Mark Zachary who had assisted with the current Admin Plan to find out why the monetary amount of a tenant's increase of income before an interim needs to be done was not included in the 2007 Admin Plan since it had been in the former plan.

Staff did contact Mark Zachary who stated in his written reply that he did not recall why the \$100 benchmark was not included in the Admin Plan. He suggested calling Nan McKay who provides the template and discussing with them the benchmark amount.

Ebony Bond briefly summarized the change. When tenants report an income change of \$100 or less, the counselor would not have to complete an interim change. They would document the increase. This cuts down on the interims and the workload for the staff. Ms. Bond elaborated that some housing authorities have even increased the \$100 benchmark.

The other Admin Plan change involved inspections. Currently, the policy states that during an annual inspection, the tenant had to be present or an adult family member. Since inspection hours are during most people's work hours this led to numerous no-shows. The no-show could eventually lead to termination. The new policy would require the landlord and/or tenant or an adult family member to be present. The landlord and tenant would have to establish who would be at the inspection.

Commissioner Smith Brice made a motion to accept Agenda Item #5 reflecting admin changes as written in Chapters 6, 8, and 11. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Horton, Boswell, Smith Brice, Island, and Chairman Brailsford

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

6.0 REGULAR AGENDA

6.1 Approval of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Status/Financial Report for November and December 2007

Commissioner Horton asked about utilization. Interim Director Bond explained that the HA has been issued 1,029 vouchers. For compliance, the HA has to be utilizing 95% of the vouchers or maximizing/spending the budgeted amount. In the past, we were not doing either. HUD recaptured some of the money.

Previously, in 2005, the whole waiting list was put on hold. In the meantime, tenants were being terminated and applicants on the waiting list were not getting pulled, resulting in the utilization numbers dropping. Last March, the entire waiting list was pulled to help resolve this problem which resulted in staff being overwhelmed. Staff has just housed the last of that pull in November.

Commissioner Boswell asked why the waiting list was put on hold to begin with. Ms. Bond replied the HA was unsure of the future funding. HUD is unpredictable in their formula for funding. One year, HUD used the figures from October, November and December. Another year, May, June and July figures were used. The HA did not want to be put in such a position of housing all these tenants if the budget was cut.

Ebony Bond reported to the Board that currently, the waiting list is 18-24 months. When we do pull, 40% of the selected applicants attend the eligibility briefing and another 40% actually get vouchers issued for housing. Out of 100 people, we might get 40 people housed. Also, with having new staff, we have to consider what the staff is capable of handling in terms of a mass pull.

Commissioner Island proposed looking at five other housing authorities similar to our size and to look at their counselor's caseload size. That way we can determine the average of what most counselors do. The Board may need to revamp the Admin Plan. Commissioner Smith Brice made a motion to approve Regular Agenda Item #6.1. This was seconded by Commissioner Horton. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Horton, Boswell, Smith Brice, Island, and Chairman Brailsford

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

6.2 Update on the status of the acquisition of the professional consultant services of Patterson and Associates by the Housing Authority for assistance on becoming a fully independent agency.

Megan Santee, Assistant Director of Planning and Development, distributed a copy of the scope of services for a proposed contract that Patterson & Associates Consulting had provided for the Board to review. Changes or comments need to be in by Tuesday, 1/22/08. The next step would be a Special Call meeting for the Board to vote and authorize the contract. A question arose regarding the price.

The professional services scope lists four phases including the strategic plan with a price breakdown for each phase not to exceed \$50,000, travel and expenses included. It also reflects a ten-month period until completion.

6.3 Update on 8th Annual NELROD Conference

Ebony Bond told the Board the annual conference for NELROD is February 20-21, in Las Vegas. Arrangements have been made for three staff, Genette Edmond, Ebony Bond and Paul Falade, to attend and for two commissioners to attend, Dr. Smith Brice and Mary Island. With that number going, almost every tract offered should be able to be covered. Being a member of the NELROD Consortium, the HA had enough consortium hours to pay for the registration and hotel fees and will only be responsible for the airline costs.

6.4 Discussion of annual Board Retreat

Commissioner Smith Brice informed the Board that according to the by-laws, there is supposed to be an annual Board retreat in February. Officer elections and any restructuring are executed at this retreat.

It was mentioned that some of the commissioners will be at the NELROD conference during the next scheduled February board meeting. Commissioner Island suggested returning from the Las Vegas conference ready to share the training with the group and to tie that into the March Board meeting or Board retreat.

Regarding the Board retreat, Commissioner Smith Brice stated it would be helpful to go through the documents in the Board packet and perhaps refer to it as Abilene HA 101. Another suggestion was to invite someone from Patterson and Associates Consulting for an update, etc.

Spring break is March 17-27, and most people leave during this time and, therefore, we might want to change this date.

A recommended location for the Board retreat was Oakwood Trails at the Abilene State School. It was decided to check with the Abilene State School re: Oakwood Trails and to set a date.

6.5 Discussion and update on loan by Housing Authority to the 800 Mesquite Partnership

Ebony Bond mentioned that previously it was not clear where these funds were coming from nor where they were to be deposited. Later, the staff was informed about the checks being payments for the loan for the Carver Townhome project, from which the loan came from the Parkridge funds. After being informed of the information, the payments received were transferred from Section 8 to Parkridge account. Commissioner Smith Brice interjected that after hearing about this loan at a different meeting, she had contacted the HA in order to obtain a copy of that contract.

Ms. Bond said the loan to 800 Mesquite is in default. They have missed sixteen payments.

Commissioner Island said 800 Mesquite had come to the Board and asked if the HA would forgive the loan. The Board voted and said no.

Commissioner Smith Brice requested a letter be sent to the New York address and the local address expressing the loan is in default since no payment has been made since June 2007, and that being the only payment made in 2007.

Stephanie Baker from Accolade stated the loan was a “cash flow” loan. The Board would have to look at 800 Mesquite’s audited financials and review the cash flow for those periods when there were no payments. Ms. Bond stated they have recently provided the 2005 and 2006 Financial Statements. Ms. Baker continued that originally, 800 Mesquite had originally asked for a grant for the Carver Project, however, it became a “cash flow” loan.

Commissioner Horton asked if this was the only loan or were there others.

Megan Santee responded that this was the first loan and it was a unique situation. There were hopes of the Carver Project becoming a community effort and as a last resort, 800 Mesquite came to the HA for funding. The Board agreed to the “cash flow” loan instead of the grant request.

Ms. Bond said she would prepare the letters and provide the correspondence to the Board.

6.9 Set date for February Board meeting

Since staff and some of the commissioners will be at the NELROD conference for the scheduled Board meeting on February 21, 2008, another date will need to be set. It was decided to reschedule the Board meeting for Thursday, February 28, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. Also, it was discussed that the March Board meeting date falls during the Spring Break, March 17-21, 2008. Several commissioners will be absent. After discussion, the March Board meeting date was rescheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2008.

6.8 Discussion and possible action on Housing Authority’s donation to Hope Haven to

Assist with their challenge grant for the homeless

Ebony Bond relayed to the Board that the HA had received a letter asking for a donation to help with Hope Haven's grant for the homeless.

Discussion followed on whether the HA was a nonprofit and if so, where would the funds come from. The funds would come from Parkridge funds.

Commissioner Island stated she would like to know more about the anticipated expenditures of Parkridge Place.

Stephanie Baker stated that the property is about twenty-five years old. A few years ago the Parkridge Place Apartments were resided for \$650,000. Within the next three years, management will look at the roof's restructure. Flat roofs can create problems. Roofing repairs could amount to \$20,000. Also, approximately, one third of the units will need appliances replaced. Parkridge brings in about \$300,000 annually. Roofing replacement expenses could be \$750,000. Plus, the annual taxes add up to a couple thousand dollars. \$740,000 is in investments. This preventive maintenance needs to be completed. There remains \$210,000 in reserve. It was speculated that we owe HUD money in overpayment and although they have not taken it back yet, they could.

HUD is not funding us the amount that they used to. Instead of \$300,000, we are only being funded at \$100,000. Although we have had to go into reserve funds, we have not used any Parkridge funds yet.

Ebony Bond said HUD has not said they will take the funds back, but they have said they have been overfunding us.

Accountant Paul Falade stated that the 2007 funding has been reduced from 2006. HUD has not come and asked for it back. The HA was overpaid \$1.7 million.

Ms. Bond asked the Board to consider the donation to Hope Haven. Discussion occurred on the appropriate amount for the donation. Since we do serve the homeless and we do network with Hope Haven and use them as a resource, the donation would be inline with our mission statement. It was discussed that it would be good to find out what the average donation is from other agencies, etc. Commissioner Horton recommended tabling the Agenda Item. Commissioner Boswell made a motion to table the donation to Hope Haven until the next Board meeting. This was seconded by Commissioner Horton. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Horton, Boswell, Island, and Chairman Brailsford

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

6.6 Discussion of HUD funding letters

Ms. Bond told the Board that she recently received the HUD funding letter. They are trying to determine a better formula for funding. HUD funds everything in increments. Our funding has increased. Currently, our HAP funding is \$169,000 and \$577,420. HUD will be looking at the entire year and will be verifying the data for fiscal year 2007

which includes the number of people housed and expenses. The HA will be receiving another letter, but it could be in increments also.

Increments are in two-month terms. Currently, the HA has 1,029 vouchers. The amendment to the letter goes back to 2004. Right now the HA has been funded for the first two months.

6.7 Update on HUD's response to 2006 Audit Findings

Ms. Bond told the Board that last summer, David Boring, CPA, reported two findings. HUD required us to respond to these findings. On December 13, 2007, HUD received the Board-approved resolutions regarding the findings and has subsequently closed the findings for the 2006 audit.

7.0 Executive Session

No executive session

8.0 Adjournment

Commissioner Horton made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. This was seconded by Commissioner Island. The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.