

MINUTES

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

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

The Housing Authority of the City of Abilene, Texas, met in a Regular Session on April 17, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. in the Cypress Plaza Board Room, 534 Cypress Street. Housing Chair Dr. Smith Brice was present and presided. Other Commissioners present were: Mary Island, Cyndi Horton, Kiddy Boswell and Larry Holmes.

Staff members present were: Jon James, Director Planning and Development; Megan Santee, Assistant Director Planning and Development; Ebony Bond, Interim Director/Programs Coordinator; 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 included: Stephanie Baker, Brett Reynolds, Celia Pierce, Linda Franklin, and Gregg and Danielle Swisher.

CALL TO ORDER

1.0 Routine Announcements, Recognitions and Presentations

Ebony Bond, Interim Director, introduced and welcomed new Board Commissioner, Larry Holmes who works at Dalzell Realtors.

Chairperson Smith Brice called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m.

2.0 Approval of the March 13, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Boswell made a motion to accept the minutes of the regular meeting from March 13, 2008, as written. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Island, Boswell, Horton and Holmes

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

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

Celia Pierce, a current Section 8 tenant, and her daughter were in attendance and addressed the issue of having a live-in.

These matters were discussed:

- Medical conditions and doctor's orders verifying need for live-in
- Treatment at Housing office
- Underreported income of granddaughter who was living with Ms. Pierce
- Having her son as her live-in and his past criminal background

Discussion occurred on denying a person services if their criminal background check reveals a drug-related or violent crime. The CFR doesn't allow anyone to receive services with a drug-related or violent crime for three years after the charge. The AHA's Admin Plan's policy is

five years. The Board discussed live-ins and whether an applicant can be housed if charges are dismissed. There are situations that have to be considered case-by-case.

The Board directed staff to review the CFR and to send this issue to the Legal Department. After this review, the Board directed staff to have a resolution for Celia Pierce by April 24th. Ms. Pierce and the Board should be notified in writing.

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

Chairperson Smith Brice asked to pull Consent Agenda items 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

4.1 Resolution approving appointment of Resident Advisory Board Members

Commissioner Smith Brice asked Tanya Johnson, Resident Services Coordinator, about 4.1. Ms. Johnson explained that the Resident Advisory Board consists of Public Housing tenants and one Section 8 tenant. Any plans or changes regarding policies and procedures are provided to the members to review and make comment. During this past year, the Board lost several members; therefore, this resolution is to approve the new Resident Advisory Board Members. The Board tried to meet once a month which did not work out; therefore, meetings are held quarterly. Commissioner Island made a motion to approve the resolution approving appointment of the Resident Advisory Board Members.

Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Horton and Holmes

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

4.2 Resolution approving changes in the Housing Authority 2007 Administrative Plan

- a. 4-ID: Placement on the Waiting List – Ineligible for Placement on the Waiting List
Ebony Bond, Interim Director, told the Board that she added a statement that if it was found that the applicant falsified application or knowingly withheld information, it would make them ineligible. Discussion followed on making changes in the Admin Plan and checking the CFR on these specific issues. Commissioner Holmes made a motion not to accept the change in 4-ID. This was seconded by Commissioner Boswell. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Horton and Holmes

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

- b. 3-IIIC: Other Permitted Reasons for Denial of Assistance – Previous Behavior in Assisted Housing

The purpose of this amendment to the Admin Plan is to remove “damages to the unit” from the section on applicants reimbursing other PHA’s for monies owed. Discussion followed on reasons for denying persons. If an applicant owes money to any HA, they are denied assistance until it is paid. Currently, the applicant has to pay 50% when they turn in their application and the remainder when they reach the top of the waiting list. Ms. Bond relayed to the Board that HUD says an HA cannot deny services to a person for unpaid damages to a unit under the Section 8 program. It was addressed that if tenants are held responsible for damages to Public Housing units, then why would they not be accountable for damages to units in the Section 8/HCV program? The Board

requested to have the CFR wording available when amendments to the Admin Plan are requested by staff.

Commissioner Boswell made a motion to leave 3-IIIC as it was written. This was seconded by Commissioner Holmes. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell and Holmes

NAYS: Commissioners Island and Horton

Chairperson Smith Brice voted in favor of the motion to break the tie.

The motion carried. However, more discussion occurred and several commissioners were uncomfortable with the decision. The Board directed staff to consult with Mark Zachary on 4.2 b, 3-IIC and to place this on next month's Board agenda with supporting documentation from the CFR.

4.3 Monthly Status Reports

- a. Low Rent Public Housing Status/Financial Report for March 2008
Genette Edmond, Public Housing Manager, reported on the Low Rent Public Housing Status/Financial Report for March 2008. When asked about lease-up, she responded that lease-up is at 93% with 7% vacancy. Discussion followed on inspections of the units at Public Housing.
- b. Report on Capital Fund Modernization Programs (CFP) for March 2008
Ms. Bond informed the Board that the CFP funds are to make improvements at Public Housing. The annual plan is currently being completed so a "wish list" is being made to help with the modernization of the units. Bids will be placed for roofing at Earl W. Williams.
- c. Parkridge Place Apartments Status/Financial Report for March 2008
Stephanie Baker, President of Accolade Property Management, summarized the status/financial report for March 2008 for the Parkrdige Apartments. The latest copy of certification for Parkridge Place was distributed. Occupancy is at 97%. There are 170 apartments at Parkridge with low availability.

Commissioner Holmes made a motion to approve Agenda Item 4.3 a, b, and c.

Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Horton and Holmes

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

5.0 OLD BUSINESS

- 5.1 Resolution approving a change in application intake to the Housing Authority of the City of Abilene 2007 Administrative Plan

Discussion had occurred regarding Chapter 4, The Application Process, in submitting applications by mail, fax or in person. Since HUD regulations do not prohibit faxed applications, returning applications by fax will remain in the policy. Instead of accepting applications on Tuesdays and Thursday, the HA will accept applications Mondays through Fridays. Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the resolution amending the application intake process. Commissioner Island seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Horton and Holmes

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

- 5.2 Discussion on Ross Grant for FSS program and other grant opportunities
Commissioner Horton discussed examples of grant initiatives that other housing authorities have undertaken. The Ross grant pays the salary for an FSS Coordinator. Board directed staff to find out the deadline date for 2009.

Commissioner Island make a motion for the Board to recess. This was seconded by Commissioner Holmes. The Board recessed at 11:42 a.m. The recess ended at 11:56 a.m.

Chairperson Smith Brice stated that since three people would be gone for the May meeting, the date needs to be changed. The Board set the May meeting for May 22, 2008.

6.0 REGULAR AGENDA

- 6.1 Discussion and possible approval of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program Status/Financial Report for March 2008

Ebony Bond updated the Board on the Section 8 status/financial report for March 2008. Last year at this time, we had 696 vouchers issued. Currently, we have issued 823 vouchers. 91 applicants have also been pulled from the waiting list. There was discussion regarding the Section 8 terminations, new contracts, waiting list, etc. Since lease-up is at 80% when it needs to be at 95%, staff needs to look at strategies and the processes to determine what could be stream lined to shorten the process. Policies and procedures still need to be adhered to in the Admin Plan. Board directed staff to look at the timeline and process through the Admin Plan. For the May meeting, the Board requested to see the process broken down into steps. Commissioner Holmes made a motion to accept the Section 8/HCV Program Status/Financial Report for March 2008. Commissioner Island seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Holmes and Horton

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

- 6.2 Report and discussion on Tex Pool Investment account

Commissioner Horton made a motion to table Agenda item #6.2. This was seconded by Commissioner Boswell. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Holmes and Horton

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

- 6.8. Report and discussion on loan by Housing Authority to the 800 Mesquite Partnership

Commissioner Island made a motion to table Agenda item #6.8. Commissioner Boswell seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Holmes and Horton

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

- 6.3 Report and discussion on HUD's 2008 Renewal Funding Allocation

Ebony Bond reported that HUD used 2007 data to calculate 2008 funding. Since 2005, HUD has been overfunding the HA. For 2008, they have come back with \$1.5 million for funding with an offset of \$1.7 million. HUD has prorated the next six months of funding at \$75,000 a month for HAP payments, plus, HUD expects the HA to use money in its reserves for the remainder of the HAP payments. Discussion followed on increasing lease-

up and striving for 95%.

6.4 Report and discussion on HUD's Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) Evaluation of PHA

Ms. Bond clarified the letter from HUD asking for a response for the 0 rating on lease-up. She supplied a copy of the corrective action plan to HUD to the Board explaining to increase lease-up, the HA will go through the waiting list and aggressively pull more applicants. The current purge of the waiting list will also increase participation since the purge will remove those applicants who have not checked in within their time limit.

6.5 Discussion and possible approval of a lease addendum to waive the security deposits for qualifying residents of Low Rent Public Housing

Genette Edmond told the Board since lease-up is at 93%, she was trying to come up with an incentive to draw people to the complexes. She reviewed the ACOP and called other HA's to see if they implemented an incentive which they did not. Ms. Edmond said she is asking for approval to waive the security deposit for eligible working families until lease-up is at 97%. She summarized the lease addendum to the Board. Discussion followed. Commissioner Holmes made a motion to approve the lease addendum. Commissioner Island seconded the motion. The Board voted.

AYES: Commissioners Boswell, Island, Holmes and Horton

NAYS: None

The motion carried.

6.6 Report and discussion on Direct Deposit

Ms. Bond reported that the tests were successful and direct deposit for HAP payments was implemented for three landlords. Letters were mailed out regarding direct deposit and requiring landlords to have their banking information to the HA by June 1st. A question arose if it is going to be mandatory. Policy has not been set.

6.9 Report and discussion on 2008 Annual Plan

Ebony Bond relayed to the Board that the 2008 Annual Plan schedule is in the packet. This is an extensive process which has begun. The five year/annual plan is due in July to HUD.

The Board took a short recess at 1:10 p.m. The Board came out of recess at 1:30 p.m.

6.7 Report and discussion on the assessment from Patterson and Associates

Gregg and Danielle Swisher presented the draft assessment from PAC which consists of 41 pages that were reviewed by Mr. Patterson, CEO of PAC. They summarized the executive summary which expands into the viability of the HA to go independent from the City. The proposed new organizational structure is also in the executive summary with a new recommended organizational chart.

The steps in the process of the transition were outlined by Mr. Swisher. The draft needs to become finalized after Board review. Steps in the process include implementing the transition plan, providing assistance and training to staff, and addressing the strategic plan. Issues such as IT, HR, software, accounting were discussed. The position of the new executive director was also discussed.

Annual expense charts were illustrated.

It was determined by PAC that the Abilene Housing Authority is financially viable to make the transition to separate from the City within the next six months. The keys to this transition include:

- the solicitation for HR/personnel employment organization,
- hiring a new executive director under contract directly with the Board,
- adopting the City of Abilene's personnel policy until the HA has their own,
- updating job descriptions with adoption by resolutions which will provide clarification.

There would be an additional personnel position of Chief Financial Officer. More discussion followed on personnel issues.

7.0 Executive Session

The Board went into executive session at 1:55 p.m. The Board came out of executive session at 3:48 p.m.

8.0 Adjournment

Commissioner Boswell made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. This was seconded by Commissioner Holmes. The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Kiddy Boswell
Kiddy Boswell, Board Secretary

Dr. Tanya Smith Brice
Dr. Tanya Smith Brice, Board Chair