



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES REGULAR SESSION WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma met in Regular Session via Zoom at 4:45 PM on Wednesday, September 23, 2020.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rumbaugh called the meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma (THA) to order at 4:56 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, those present and absent were as follows:

PRESENT	ABSENT
Commissioners	
Chair Stanley Rumbaugh	
	Vice Chair Shennetta Smith
Commissioner Derek Young	
Commissioner Dr. Minh-Anh Hodge	
Commissioner Pastor Michael Purter	
Staff	
Michael Mirra, Executive Director	
Sha Peterson, Executive Administrator	
April Black, Deputy Executive Director	
Ken Shalik, Finance Director	
	Barbara Tanbara, Interim Human Resources Director
Frankie Johnson, Property Management Director	
Kathy McCormick, Real Estate Development Director	
	Sandy Burgess, Administrative Services Director
Julie LaRocque, Rental Assistance Director	
Cacey Hanauer, Client Support & Empowerment Director	

Chair Young declared there was a quorum present @ 4:57 pm and proceeded.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Chair Rumbaugh asked for any corrections to, or discussion of the minutes for the Annual Meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Wednesday, August 26, 2020. Commissioner Young moved to adopt the minutes; Commissioner Hodge seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

AYES:	4
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	1

Motion approved.

Chair Rumbaugh asked for any corrections to, or discussion of the minutes for the Regular Session of the Board of Commissioners, Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Commissioner Hodge moved to adopt the minutes; Commissioner Young seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

AYES:	4
NAYS:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	1

Motion approved.

4. GUEST COMMENTS

None.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Real Estate Development Committee—Chair Rumbaugh and Commissioner Young

The committee met to discuss several projects. It discussed the Gault School project that would have THA acquire the property. The Committee confirmed the decision not to proceed with the acquisition because of the cost to responsibly secure the property, stop its deterioration, and demolish the auxiliary buildings. Subsequent to the committee meeting, the school district offered to contribute \$1 million. Chair Rumbaugh led a discussion that also confirmed that, although interesting, this offer would not change the decision not to pursue the acquisition.

Chair Rumbaugh recounted the discussion about the acquisition of The Trees. The Committee declined to seek the Board's reconsideration of its prior direction that the Executive Director execute THA's right to purchase. The Committee also discussed the Arlington Drive project and the efforts to preserve the state's funding of its services.

Finance Committee—Commissioner Hodge and Commissioner Young

The committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

Education Committee—Vice Chair Smith and Commissioner Hodge

The committee received an expansive report from Deputy Executive Director Black in August regarding the education committee. The committee then met with Director Black on September 11 and decided to change the structure and protocol of the Education Committee. Commissioner Hodge suggested that it seemed redundant for the Committee to report to the Board on topics that staff cover in their own report. They decided that Commissioners Hodge and Smith as the Committee will serve as a sounding Board for staff, for staff to bounce ideas off them, and to let discuss issues that will be headed for the Board to decide.

Staff are preparing a detailed report about the Department of Corrections (DOC) component of the College Housing Assistance Program. Presently, the 25 vouchers reserved for students coming from DOC remain unused. Tacoma Community College (TCC) and DOC are proposing ways to put those to use. THA staff are considering the proposal. Chair Rumbaugh expressed frustration about how long this discussion has been underway. He noted the original intention: to get women TCC students who started their studies at Purdy prison and to give them the opportunity to stabilize and finish their program. He wants us to preserve some priority to people coming out of prison. Chair Rumbaugh confirms that his discussion with the Secretary of Corrections Stephen Sinclair show that DOC is willing to do what it takes to make this project work. Director Black stated that THA asked TCC for a revision to their proposal. TCC is also interested in making the program work. Per Director Black the proposal lacks a commitment to offer housing search help to students or support during a tenancy. These services are necessary to recruit landlords willing to rent to students coming with a criminal history. Chair Rumbaugh understands the issues but pointed out that landlords do have a community contact to call because many persons coming out on early release from DOC have assigned Corrections officers. Commissioner Purter stated that when the glitches are identified, things may get better. Commissioner Hodge added that maybe THA could serve as a lease co-signer because people usually have problems renting due to lack of background information. Besides having vouchers, perhaps DOC and TCC can think of a way to support the program participants; identify an official to support them and pay the rent. ED Mirra stated that staff will consider the strategies Director Black noted. One would make vouchers available as a priority to DOC population even without support, for the benefit to those coming out of corrections who can find a landlord without support. Even if most of them cannot do it, there will be some who can. He added that there are 10 of these students coming to TCC a quarter so there should be no shortage of clients. Commissioner Young is baffled at how long THA has been talking to TCC about this. Chair Rumbaugh asked if Director Black has a contact in the TCC executive staff. Director Black confirmed that she does, and that person is the one responding with the proposal. She thinks the problem is lack of resources. Both TCC and THA do not have the resources the program should have. Their staff are also stretched to even have these discussions and do the planning.

Citizen Oversight Committee—Vice Chair Smith, Commissioner Purter

Commissioner Purter is scheduled to meet with Vice Chair Smith and will also be meeting with ED Mirra on Friday to discuss the Citizen Oversight Committee

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee—Vice Chair Smith, Commissioner Hodge

The committee has not met and will not be meeting unless there is a reason to do so. Director Johnson confirmed.

6. COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director (ED) Michael Mirra directed the Board to his report. According to ED Mirra, the Federal government will shut down a week from tomorrow unless Congress passes a budget of some sort. If the government shuts down, THA has reserves to last two months. THA will dust off the plan it used when the government shut down last year. Director Shalik confirmed.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Finance

Finance Department (FD) Director Ken Shalik directed the Board to the Cash and Expense reports. THA received a clean audit in operations and received a clean bill of health for the financial portion of the report. The accountability audit will start soon. The REAC submission is usually due to HUD by the end of September. Due to the pandemic, HUD has extended this deadline to March 31 of next year. THA will still get it in by the original deadline. Chair Rumbaugh called attention to the number of years THA has gone through the audit process without any financial findings. It is a credit to Director Shalik and his staff and other departments within the agency that also received a clean audit. When you look at THA's counterparts in the county, the fact that auditors come year after year to THA with no findings is truly remarkable. "It is good not to have to worry about findings and that should make us all proud," applauded Chair Rumbaugh.

Finance has started the budget process for 2021 and staff are using the new software. Finance is including the different departments in entering information in the different expense sheets and helping departments through the 3-stage process. Next year, Finance will focus on streamlining reports. Director Shalik thanked the rest of the departments for their willingness to work with the Finance team, the budget process, and the new software.

THA is in good financial shape. Its cash position is right where it needs to be. As ED Mirra mentioned, even if the government shuts down, THA has the ability to carry out its job for a couple of months. Chair Rumbaugh asked Director Shalik to confirm that if THA has to tap into reserves during a governmental shutdown, it gets the money back when the governmental reopens. Director Shalik confirmed. Also, when the government shut down last time, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sent out advance funding before it shut out the lights. Director Shalik senses that this might happen again this year,

ED Mirra asked Director McCormick for an update regarding our efforts to get what we need from the Department of Ecology (DOE) to recover our \$3 million from escrow for the Renew Tacoma redevelopment. According to Director McCormick, the DOE is making small progress and it looks like they are doing whatever needs to be done. The goal is to have it done by the end of the year, but hoping for October.

Commissioner Young moved to ratify the payment of cash disbursements totaling \$5,181,027 for the month of August 2020. Commissioner Hodge seconded.

Upon roll call, the vote was as follows:

AYES: 4
NAYS: None
Abstain: None
Absent: 1

Motion Approved.

Property Management

The Property Management team has been busy stocking up on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). They have been talking a lot about the reopening and making sure there are enough supplies for staff. THA received another ten thousand masks; they will be useful to staff and clients. Chair Rumbaugh noted that THA received a very nice letter from one of the tenants thanking us for the masks we distributed. Director Johnson just met with her staff who reported that a lot of them are going through tough times home schooling, balancing work life, and partner not working. Director Johnson is trying to provide support to her staff who are scared to go out and who now have serious childcare issues. She has a new employee who is grateful for an organization that cares enough about childcare. If the staff person didn't have that support, she would not know how to manage. Director Johnson wanted her staff to know that what THA is doing is important and them showing up as they do is important, and she thanked them. Notwithstanding these challenges, the morale of her team is "amazing". Her staff asked her to thank the Board and other departments. Chair Rumbaugh inquired about turn time. According to Director Johnson, turn time remains, at 17 days per turn last month. It takes every department to make it work. ED Mirra mentioned how Director Johnson's portfolio is 99% full.

Client Support and Empowerment

Director Hanauer continues to be "awed" by her staff's aptitude and resilience. The team meets every morning and they laugh every day. The group has been "incredible". The Client Support and Empowerment (CSE) team promoted Byron Williams to a supervisory position and hired a replacement for his former position. CSE recently announced that Amy Van from Policy, Innovation and Evaluation will be moving over to CSE. Amy has already started to transition. Arlington Drive has three open staff positions to fill; 60 young people have already been referred. Things are going well across the Board. Chair Rumbaugh asked what Director Hanauer thinks are the primary challenges clients are experiencing due to Covid. According to Director Hanauer "probably home schooling". People underestimate how much work that is for student and parents. Some families have more than one child. Chair Rumbaugh asked what THA is doing to help them. "Anything we can," responded Director Hanauer. Her team is trying to figure out how to get tutors and make sure clients and residents have access to the internet and a computer. The CSE staff are also answering phones and the team is good at that. CSE is trying to find funds to boost community support.

Rental Assistance

Rental Assistance (RA) staff have been "amazing". They just had a skip meeting with close to 30 staff who are home schooling, caring for elderly parents, people whose partners are firefighters and first responders, staff whose family income declined a lot when a partner loses a job. Director LaRocque is amazed that they keep it together, and in

the midst of that, have a good audit and be able to do the entire thing electronically. Staff are able to do this with the help of IT. Another huge project is leasing up The Rise on 19th with people from the transfer list and, in the process, right sizing people to proper size units -- 36 showed interest in moving to The Rise. Staff made personal phone calls, reached out to people and found out what they needed. On top of that, THA is still 100% utilized. Chair Rumbaugh noted how remarkable everything seems to be. According to Director LaRocque, staff feel they have support at THA from the Board.

Administrative Services

Director Burgess was not in attendance. Administrative Services (AS) Department Manager Karen Bunce reported on her behalf. The AS team is pitching in and everybody is doing their part. Cindy Norton is now with the Real Estate Development team with her new role but continues to assist AS. AS hired a new Compliance Auditor, Jase Mesker, who replaced Teri Nollan (now with Property Management). Jase formerly worked in compliance for Amazon and will work with Nicole Thomas who is handling reasonable accommodation requests. AS is seeing 19-20% in rental losses for those who have not paid their rent in June, July and August. This is a 6-7% increase from last year, and is anticipated to continue.

The Emergency Operations Committee (EOC) re-formed a working group led by Aley Thompson and will propose what to do about rent arrearages owed by THA tenants and owed to voucher landlords. Chair Rumbaugh noted that Pierce County allocated CARES funding to address shortfalls. According to Bunce, the team is looking into this as a potential funding source. Chair Rumbaugh said that since THA is the largest landlord in the City, it should be in line for a large portion of the pie. The Per Unit Per Year (PUPY) expenses are under budget.

On Risk Management, Bunce and Director Burgess have been backfilling the Risk Manager position, which is currently vacant. Director Burgess is working with Alliant to renew THA's insurance. Now is the time to renew since the premiums are increasing. AS anticipates a 10-15% increase which is good in comparison to other insurances with 20-40% increase. Bunce did a shout out to IT and the OpenDoor teams that have been busy supporting THA and its work in the virtual world. Staff deployed the IT equipment, which was not an easy task. The teams posted 600 tickets between April and August. Bunce also thanked Jess Thompson from Policy, Innovation and Evaluation (PIE) for her assistance with the deployment of the IT equipment.

AS posted the position for Enterprise Content Manager who will oversee document management. Paul Scott is finalizing the document management work.

Real Estate Development

Director McCormick gave a shout out to her staff. Real Estate Development (RED) hired three new staff and found a cool way to onBoard them. Staff appreciate working with THA and doing innovative work. Chair Rumbaugh is gratified that there is interdepartmental teamwork, resulting in heightened efficiency all around.

Policy, Innovation and Evaluation

Director Black will provide more information regarding DOC and CHAP in October. Policy, Innovation and Evaluation (PIE) staff continue to step up as well. Jess has been helping IT; Amy moved to the CSE team but is working on the Children's Savings Account project; and Ava is working on the Grievance procedures. The EOC submitted a reopening proposal to ED Mirra, which approved. THA will stay at phase 2 and serve customers remotely through January 2021. It will do this even if Pierce County moved to Phase 3. THA staff have adjusted to Phase 2. They do not have the time to adjust to another phase, especially during the holidays. The stress would compound if Pierce County then had to revert back to Phase 2. Rather than risk this oscillation between phases, it is more stable to remain where we are, now that we have adjusted to it. Commissioner Young stated that the proposal sounds great to him and lines up with what Amazon is doing as well. Commissioner Hodge added that THA has essential workers who have to report on site. She asked if there have been any talk about extra compensation. Director Black responded that THA is trying to provide very safe working conditions with Personal Protective Equipment, social distancing, and alternative work schedules. To date there has been no talk about extra compensation for essential workers but she can bring up the discussion at an EOC meeting.

9. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

None.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting ended at 6:08 PM.

APPROVED AS CORRECT

Adopted: October 28, 2020



Stanley Rumbaugh, Chair