

# MINUTES

## Homes for Good Housing Agency



### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

#### Location of the meeting:

Board of County Commissioners Conference Room, Public Service Building, 125 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, OR, 97401

Phone: 541.682.2506

The meeting location is wheelchair-accessible. Anyone needing special accommodations (deaf, people with hearing loss, language translation, chemical sensitivity needs, and large print copies of agenda), please make your request at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

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### Wednesday, November 13th, 2019

(1:30 p.m.) Board of County Commissioners Conference Room, Public Service Building, 125 East 8th Avenue, Eugene, OR, 97401

#### 1. PUBLIC COMMENTS – 20 Minutes

(Maximum time 20 minutes: Speakers will be taken in the order in which they sign up and will be limited to 3-minutes per public comments. If the number wishing to testify exceeds 10 speakers, then additional speakers may be allowed if the chair determines that time permits or may be taken at a later time.)

No Public Comment

#### 2. COMMISSIONERS' RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS AND/OR OTHER ISSUES AND REMONSTRANCE (2 min. limit per commissioner)

**Pete Sorenson:** Jacob Fox has been forthcoming with some information with the possible change in governance for the board and we should be getting more information in the next month or so. I am really interested in some of those options. Pete talks about the laws about the board composition.

**Jacob Fox:** To give a status, with the real estate development activity, I have not been able to front-burner governance. Jacob talks about the research a temporary employee has done in the past on the topic. Over the next couple weeks I will be bringing those materials up to speed to my expectations and then bring them to the board. They should be coming to the board in December or January to have a robust discussion. I do want to be meeting with all of the commissioners individually to talk about what they have to say and what they would like to see in that presentation. I would never come and ask for a decision right away, I have opinions, but ultimately you all would be making the decision and shaping what that looks like.

#### 3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

#### 4. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

#### 5. EMERGENCY BUSINESS

#### 6. EXECUTIVE SESSION- Estimated 15 minutes

On November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the Homes for Good Board held an executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(d), "To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations."

**7. EXECUTIVE SESSION-** Estimated 15 minutes

On November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the Homes for Good Board held an executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(e), "To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions."

**8. ADMINISTRATION**

A. Approval of Minutes: 10/16/2019

Motion to Approve: **Jay Bozievich**

Second: **Michelle Thurston**

**Minutes are approved unanimously 7/0**

B. Executive Director Report (Estimated 10 minutes)

**Jacob Fox:** Introduces Beth Ochs to talk about the opening of the Section 8 wait list.

**Beth Ochs:** Gives an update on the opening of the Section 8 wait list which opened the previous day. She talks about some of the data points from the opening day.

**Jay Bozievich:** What was that first number you gave of the amount of people who signed up for the wait list on yesterday?

**Beth Ochs:** 1,767- Pre-applications that will then go to lottery. We anticipate selecting 3,000 families that will then go onto the actual wait list.

**Pete Sorenson:** So, you have no more units, this is just to get a wait list.

**Beth Ochs:** Correct, and this is for Section 8, the tenant-based voucher.

**Pete Sorenson:** Are these numbers higher or lower than the last time?

**Beth Ochs:** These numbers would be higher than the last time so far. In total that is difficult to say, we will find out over the next week.

**Pete Sorenson:** Do you have other examples of this, have you done this before?

**Beth Ochs:** Yes, we have done this many times. The data collection is more robust than it has been in the past. For examples we are tracking the number of phone calls. We didn't have a phone system that was sophisticated enough last go around to tell us how long someone had been on hold, so all of those data points are new. But the number of daily applications received and the daily count of applications we do have those numbers from 2017.

**Pete Sorenson:** Do you have an estimate of how many people will go on the wait list?

**Beth Ochs:** The actual wait list we will select 3,000.

**Pete Sorenson:** Asks about what the predicted total of people applying for the wait list will be.

**Beth Ochs:** Comments that that number is hard to predict, potentially 5-6,000. She talks about the more robust outreach and communications about the wait list this year. She talks about the outreach and communications to partner agencies and to rural areas.

**Pete Sorenson:** When was the last time you did this?

**Beth Ochs:** 2017

**Pete Sorenson:** Requests for Beth to bring a comparison of the 2017 and the 2019 wait list numbers to the board to present.

**Beth Ochs:** This is part of the plan, and we plan to have the data points by mid-December, and someone will bring that back to the board.

**Patt Farr:** Asks about the current housing situation and demographics of the applicants applying to the wait list.

**Beth Ochs:** We will have some data points of the demographics when the wait list closes like homeless status...

**Pat Farr:** Employment status?

**Beth Ochs:** Not employment status, we will have some information about income, but we don't consider that a valuable data point because at that point nothing is vetted. Some of the demographics we are collecting are: homelessness status, demographics about the number of people in the household, etc. Not so much about employed or unemployed.

**Pat Farr:** Expresses interest in seeing these data points.

**Beth Ochs:** We can definitely pull together the data points we do have to compare. But for this one the data points are more robust, and if we go back to prior to 2017, the data is pretty much lacking.

**Joe Berney:** Asks if the board will be able to see a list of the data points that are being collected. Clarifies that there are some data points that are being collected now that weren't in the past. Do you feel that the data points that you have now are solid enough that we will be able to have some consistent comparisons and not have to change them in the future? Or do they change all the time that makes that difficult?

**Beth Ochs:** I think that it is both. I think that we are going to have some consistent data points that will remain throughout the opening and closing of wait lists, and some that are born out of what we are focused on as an agency at a point in time. Like a suspect that homelessness status is a point that we are going to want to collect over a variety of wait list openings in the future, I don't see that going away. But focus on rural development, or working within school districts, I

think as we go down those paths that we will want to collect additional data points that we aren't thinking about today.

**Joe Berney:** Requests some sort of color coding of the data of which Beth thinks will be consistent and which are more topical.

**Joe Berney:** Is the reasons you are opening the wait list is because all of those families, around 5,000, who applied in 2017 have found homes?

**Beth Ochs:** Its not that simple, so no, not all those people found homes or received subsidies. But what has happened is that the 3,000 families that were selected for the 2017 wait list have been served in one way or another. And when I say that: some of them have received a voucher; some of them we mailed a top of the list letter to asking if they want to stay on this list, and we never heard back; some of them we sent an application to and they didn't return it. So, they left list in a variety of measures, but all of them were touched upon during that timeframe.

**Joe Berney:** So, are you able to provide data points about how each person was touched from the last list?

**Beth Ochs:** Yes, we can provide those.

**Pat Farr:** I would like to see those cross-compared with the demographic information.

**Joe Berney:** Does the board have the opportunity to look at data and provide points of input on what is collected?

**Beth Ochs:** I think the board can definitely has an opportunity for feedback and input. But I think we would just want to be very thoughtful about that, because the application process is difficult for those who are applying and making it a very long cumbersome process I would push back against. Because unless you really want it for a purpose I would be reluctant to collecting data just for the sake of collecting data.

**Michelle Thurston:** What determines the lottery?

**Beth Ochs:** So, it is really simple- it is just like any lottery. Think about putting everyone's name in a hat and pulling out 3,000. It is a randomized selection of who applied.

**Jay Bozievich:** Just a clarification: this is just for those trying to get a new voucher, if you already have a voucher you don't have to get back on the wait list?

**Beth Ochs:** Correct

**Jay Bozievich:** When we get the numbers about how many people from 2017 got vouchers, how many people got a letter and didn't respond, can we also get a number of how many people were maintaining their voucher to give us a bigger picture of the Section 8 Program?

**Beth Ochs:** Yes

**Jacob Fox:** Acknowledge the Commissioners' interest in the Section 8 program. Jacob will follow up by bringing the data points requested by the board to the board at a later date.

**Pete Sorenson:** Is there a reason we have a 3,000 family wait list? Why not 6,000? Is it a certain percentage, or how is that based? Do we have flexibility in that?

**Beth Ochs:** HUD regulates that a PHA should have a wait list that takes about 2 years to serve. So, the idea is that you use your history to determine how many people you are going to serve in a two-year timeframe. Based historically we have served about 3,000 families in two years, so that is what we base that number on.

**Jacob Fox:** Talks about the soon coming retirement of Susan Ban, executive director of ShelterCare. He also talks about the PSH cohort and the interest in the Fairgrounds as a potential PSH site.

**Pat Farr:** Talks about Fair Board meetings that have been scheduled in which they will talk about the PSH proposal.

**Joe Berney:** Do you have any status on potential sites for the PSH if not the Fairgrounds?

**Jacob Fox:** Yes, there is active search and analysis of a couple of different sites. Some of that is happening through the work we are doing with our real estate brokers, and some of that is happening between lane county and the city of Eugene.

**Steve Ochs:** One thing that the county did was sending an email to the city actually requesting that they use that site for permeant supportive housing. We have gotten several interesting sites from our real estate broker that they are all priced not to sell at this point, so if we would have to go private market it would take quite a bit of negotiation at this point. So, the county is really looking at the fairgrounds, and the Serbu Campus to really see if there is something we can make work there.

**Jacob Fox:** I can say that Lane county staff are being very proactive and helpful, and we appreciate them a lot.

- C. **ORDER 19-13-11-01H** In the Matter of Submitting Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) Fiscal Year 2019 Certification (Beth Ochs, Rent Assistance Division Director) (Estimated 15 minutes)

**Beth Ochs:** Explains "SEMAP" the Section 8 Management Assessment Program a way HUD requires a PHA to self-audit, and how a PHA must submit their status to HUD every year. She talks about the process and the random sampling that takes place to make the assessment. After the assessment Homes for Good would like to submit themselves as a "high performer."

Motion to approve: **Michelle Thurston**  
Second: **Jay Bozievich**  
**Approved unanimously 7/0**

D. **ORDER 19-13-11-02H** In the Matter of Approving the Recommendation for Homes for Good Appointed Commissioner (Ela Kubok, Communications Director) (Estimated 10 minutes)

**Char Reavis** recuses herself from the vote as a conflict of interest. **Heather Buch** will act as chair for **ORDER 19-13-11-02H**.

**Ela Kubok:** Explains the process that Homes for Good has gone through the application and interview process. She talks about the outreach to let people know of the opportunity, and that three people submitted applications. Two accepted interviews, and after interviews the selection committee recommends Char Reavis.

**Pat Farr:** Clarifies that when approved, this will be then presented at the Lane County Board meeting for Char to be appointed to the board.

**Heather Buch:** This was my first time in the interview process, and there was a lot of great opportunity for people to apply. The other women who interviewed was a good selection for the Resident Advisory Board, so we are trying to connect her to those resources and hopefully that will come to fruition. So, it is not like there wasn't a place for input in the organization for anyone who applied.

**Ela Kubok:** So, one of the reasons we wanted to run a process was to see what people in our population of who we serve are ready for a leadership role. The Resident Advisory Board is really a stepping stone for them to have a place for their voice to be heard, but also their I an Oregon Resident Network being created at the state level so residents in Lane county can participate and really contribute to the advocacy surrounding Affordable Housing. So we were hoping in running this process that we would be able to find people who are interested in these extracurricular activities, and engage them. Ela talks about how the other candidate has been referred to the staff who organize the Resident Advisory Board.

**Michelle Thurston:** I would like to state that there are a lot of opportunities for residents both within Section 8 and Public Housing to get involved in their community, whether it is their own community: McKenzie Village, Riverview Terrace, Laurelwood, etc- most of them have their own resident groups themselves, but also RAB and there are lots of opportunities for residents to get involved. I know some of the work we have been doing is to engage residents in all facets of Homes for Good and let them know that they are welcome and we love to hear their voice. Get them in and get more engagement from the broad field of residents.

Motion to approve: **Pete Sorenson**

Second: **Michelle Thurston**

**Pete Sorenson:** I think it is important that we get residents on the board who are knowledgeable, and who bring their perspective as residents- people like Char that have been in various growing opportunities for advancement. That's who I would consider for advancement into this position. As Ela mentioned, there are different ways to start out in your building, and different ways of participating like showing up for meetings, see what the work is, make public

comment, participate, and I think Char has done that and I think that is why we should move forward with this recommendation.

**Joe Berney:** I have a question: In the attempts of trying to create a feeding system of engagement, is it a concern that only two people got to the interview stage of the process? Does it concern you about the profile of the board or the organization or does that not concern you at all?

**Heather Buch:** Some of the feeling that I got from the other interviewee is that we are really intimidating and trying to get over that intimidation factor even just to interview is quite a hurdle when you are talking with residents and the dynamic with the landlord, being able to feel comfortable enough to be able to communicate on the same level. That's a challenge that I think we as a board have to try to figure out how we can make that a more balanced effort.

**Michelle Thurston:** I would agree with that 100% that it is a very intimidating thought. Affordable housing has been thought about and labeled as "last chance housing" and many people are afraid that if they get too involved and say the wrong thing that they could jeopardize your spot in affordable housing and the next step is homelessness. So, does a person really want to put that out, even though that's not the reality, but when your in a situation when you need affordable housing it actually is a reality. I think that is one thing with the RAB, that we are trying to let people know that it is ok, that you can have a voice, its ok to voice your concerns, your questions, get involved, and there have been more and more opportunities to get involved. Michelle talks about "ROC" Residents Organizing for a Change, and how that will help with future advocacy and engagement. She talks about RAB and Homes for Good staff spreading the message that this engagement is ok and encouraged. She talks about the initial causes for some people to get involved and how some stay involved, and some don't.

**Pat Farr:** Talks about being in the interview process two years ago when Michelle was selected. Asks Michelle to share some of her motives in applying to be commissioner.

**Michelle Thurston:** Talks about her experience and why she chose to step forward and try to be on RAB and then eventually to the Board.

**Pete Sorenson:** I think the lack of interest should be seen in the context of the lack of civic engagement in public office. He talks about the lack of opponents that the Lane County Commissioners have had in elections, and a decline of civic engagement.

**Michelle Thurston:** Michelle talks about some other factors such as the time of the Board meeting being in the middle of the day, and some of the other obligations that residents have. Talks about engagement that she has seen from residents and her experience with DEI. She talks about the idea that some people work or have children and they pick and choose where they want to put their energy and where they think their voices will be heard.

**Jacob Fox:** For us as the selections committee, one of the things that we found really impressive is that Char didn't take the process for granted. Her application was excellent, it included letters of support from Trillium, and some other certifications of leadership trainings that she had been to. So for me, I really appreciated it.

**Jacob Fox:** One other thing is that we should have someone on our board who is a resident with kids, who has a family, I think that is an important perspective to have, and as Michelle astutely pointed out, that getting off work to come to a meeting like this isn't a possibility, so most Housing Authorities that have a diverse board meet at night.

**Ela Kubok:** I would just add that last time we ran this process, we only got emails from 3 people even asking about the application, and this time we got double that number. So, even though we are making smaller steps to get a diverse board because we haven't changed the time of our meeting we are definitely trying to reach our residents more. Ela talks about the Resident Services Specialists and their role in talking to residents, and about potential changes in meeting times or governance models that could increase resident participation. Ela also talks about the 4-year term length being a large commitment for residents.

**Michelle Thurston:** Commends Char on her mentorship that she has given her in the Commissioner process and for other residents.

**Motion passes unanimously 6/0 with Char Reavis abstained from the vote.**

- E. **Order 19-13-11-03H** In the Matter of Updating the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) Reexamination Policy. (Wakan Alferes, Supportive Housing Director) (Estimated 10 minutes)

**Char Reavis** comes back to act as Chair for the remaining items.

**Wakan Alferes:** Explains the existing policy and the affect on the residents and the need for the change. Currently a resident is required to have an income review when transferring units, the new policy would have the annual recertification done at the annual, not upon transfer.

**Michelle Thurston:** Explains the frequency of people's transfers of units, and why a resident might need to transfer to a new unit: family going down or up in size, mobility issues, etc. Michelle expresses support for the elimination of this step.

**Wakan Alferes:** I think Michelle captured it right, we get a lot of transfers for reasons outside of peoples' control: reasonable accommodations, family size/composition changes. So, we may have someone who transfers within a few months of a previous transfer. So, for us it does not make sense for us to perform a full re-examination if someone transfers.

**Heather Buch:** Expresses her previous administrative experience with this being an administrative nightmare.

**Char Reavis:** Asks about how the annual date works with transfers currently and with the new policy.

**Wakan Alferes:** Explains that annual dates used to line up with the transfer/residency date in the old policy, but Homes for Good has found that the financial benefit and the administrative burden associated really doesn't make sense.



Motion to approve: **Heather Buch**

Second: **Joe Berney**

**Motion is approved unanimously 7/0**

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Pat Farr:** Talks about the previous week's City Club at which Wakan was a panel member. Pat commends Wakan for her answers. He would like to do a similar panel in Bethel and would like to request for Wakan to be on that panel.

**Char Reavis:** Talks about the Residents Organizing for Change, and the upcoming meeting on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Adjorn.**