

MINUTES

Homes for Good Housing Agency



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Location of the meeting:

This meeting will be conducted via public video call and conference line (see details below).

Wednesday, January 13th, 2021 at 1:30pm

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 Homes for Good conducted the January 13th, 2021 meeting via a public video call with dial-in capacity. The public will be able to join the call, give public comment, and listen to the call.

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 Comments

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

No Commissioners Response to Public Comments

3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

No Adjustments to the Agenda

4. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

A. Introduction of New Board Members

Chair Reavis: Introduces Laurie Trieger as a New Commissioner.

Laurie Trieger: Says hello to the group and provides a brief background of her experience in relationship to nonprofits and housing in the community and her past interactions with Homes for Good.

B. Election of a New Board Chair

Char Reavis: Explains that the vice chair of the Lane County board is always the vice chair of the Homes for Good Board per the board by-laws. Commissioner Pat Farr is the Lane County Vice Chair this year, and will in turn be the 2021 Homes for Good Board of Commissioners Vice Chair. Char congratulates Pat on this position.

Char Reavis: Calls for Nominations

Nomination for Char Reavis for Chair: **Pat Farr**

Second: **Jay Bozievich**

Michelle Thurston: Expresses interest for the position of Chair.

Char Reavis: Turns the facilitation to Pat Farr as vice chair, being nominated herself.

Pat Farr: Notes that there is one nomination so far, and one expression of interest.

Heather Buch: Expresses that this is the first time in her time on the board that both of the resident commissioners have expressed interest in being chair, she states that she thinks they both would do a fabulous job, but would like the opportunity to hear from both of them.

Pat Farr: Explains a recommended process of which the Board can use to handle nominations during the meeting. The first step would be to gather the nominations, then to hear from the nominees, then for the board to have a discussion with or without the nominees present, and then after that would be to conduct either an open or closed vote. Pat recommends a closed vote through a text message to the board secretary, which is Jacob, who would then tally the vote and announce the results of the vote. Then a motion would be made to elect a chair, and then the motion can be passed.

Nomination for Michelle Thurston for Chair: **Heather Buch**

Second: **Joe Berney**

Pat Farr: Closes nominations.

Pat Farr: In the order of nominations, we will ask the nominees to explain their qualifications or interest in being the chair for the Homes for Good Board of Commissioners for 2021.

Char Reavis: I just want to say what a great honor it has been to serve as chair of this board. To have had the support and confidence of all of you has been amazing, and I truly appreciate each and every one of you. As we start this year. I think of how many burdens and changes our residents, our staff, and our board has had, and the number of traumatic events we have been through, and I think that having continuity on our board is extremely important right now. I am an experienced chair, and I think we need that right now. We will be getting a new board this year, and I would love to serve as chair to help facilitate that with the experience that I have gained with the help of all of you. I really feel like right now is a good time to not change something, because so many things have changed. It is going to be a lot of hard work this year, moving into a new board and having to get all of the by-laws done, and I am certainly up for the job. I would like to say again what an honor it has been, and I hope to continue as chair if you are willing to keep me in this position through the year.

Michelle Thurston: As most of you know, I have been on the board for three years, going on my fourth year, and I have learned a lot over the last couple of year. I have had a great mentor in Chair Reavis, and she has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and experience. I look forward to utilizing that in the future in all thing I do. I have a great respect for Homes for Good and the Board, and I know we are in unique times and I acknowledge the fact that my one hesitation is to put a new chair on the board, and I thought long and hard about this throughout the entire year, and I have no doubt that I am up for the challenge, and that I am willing to put the work in, and that I can contribute to the board, and take on a new leadership role on the Board. I think I am well qualified for the position, and if you think that that is also the case I would love the opportunity to chair the board.

Pat Farr: Points out again that the Vice Chair of the Lane County Board of Commissioners is also the Vice Chair of the Homes for Good Board of Commissioners as per the by-law.

That is up for discussion of whether they should be the same, but as of right now, those are the by-laws we are operating under.

A zoom breakout room is used to have all of the members of the board accept Michelle Thurston, and Char Reavis present for the discussion. A transcript and/or recording of this part of the discussion can be requested by contacting Homes for Good.

All Board Members reconvene after discussion in the main Zoom meeting.

Patt Farr: Asks for the board members to vote by texting the board secretary, Jacob Fox.

Board members have the opportunity to vote via text message. Jacob Fox collects the votes.

Jacob Fox: I have received four votes for Michelle, and three votes for Char, so congratulations to Michelle.

Pat Farr and **Char Reavis** congratulate Michelle.

Pat Farr: Asks for a motion.

Motion to Elect Michelle Thurston as Homes for Good Board Chair for 2021.

Motion: **Heather Buch**

Second: **Laurie Trieger**

This motion is approved unanimously 7/0.

5. EMERGENCY BUSINESS

None

6. ADMINISTRATION

A. Executive Director Report (Estimated 10 minutes)

Jacob Fox: Talks about the Wildfire relief and working with Lane County on the acquisition of a hotel to house wildfire survivors. He talks about the weekly coordination meeting with Lane County, and how it looks like Homes for Good will take on the property management and maintenance responsibilities, as well as being a bridge between residents and case management services.

Since the last meeting Homes for Good has entered into a Letter of Intent to buy a mobile home park that was destroyed by the Holiday Farm wildfire . There is a lot of questions and due-diligence to be done before a purchase and sales agreement is executed.

The other part of my executive director report is the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. One thing to note is the subsidy increases to the Housing Choice Voucher program is significant. We have had to increase our subsidy over \$100,000 per month, which is roughly \$1.3 Million. We did apply to HUD to get some of that offset (through Set-Aside funding), but after we submitted that request, HUD changed the methodology and we no longer qualified to receive an increase in subsidy. We qualified under the new methodology in November, so we re-submitted our application, and were informed last week by HUD that all of the funding is gone and they are not able to process our request. We are hoping

that further stimulus money will increase the amount of Set-Aside funding that is available. But that is a significant impact to the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Jacob also talks about the grand opening of Legion Cottages, and that all four units are now occupied.

Talks about the Landlord Compensation Fund that the state is looking at dispersing through Public Housing Authorities. Homes for Good may be getting up to \$14 Million from the state to distribute. Jacob will talk to the board at a later date about these contracts. He also talks about how other stimulus funds could allocate funds for the Housing Authorities to distribute and how that could require more staffing.

Joe Berney: Asks if the Board of Commissioners can pass something preemptively, in the case that the program does occur, so that Homes for Good isn't held up by not having board approval.

Jacob Fox: I will look into this, what we have heard from the state is that their goal is to have contracts out by February 8th, so it may be ready for the February 10th meeting.

Heather Buch: I think we missed a step in acknowledging our former Board Chair. I think the vote today had nothing to say about your professionalism and your success as chair. I would like to acknowledge that, and say that you are an integral part of our board, and I am very pleased that you are on it, and hope that you continue to be on it, you are very valuable to our board.

Char Reavis: Thank you so much Heather, I really appreciate that.

Pat Farr: Commissioner Buch, thank you for your statement, that is exactly what I wanted to step in and do. I think I missed my opportunity before, but this is the best time in the meeting to do it. Char, under your leadership in your terms as Chair, the Agency has grown so much in terms of property acquisition, and in terms of value of the property. When I say value of the property, I don't mean monetary, but the value to the people we serve. In terms of the difference in services that we provide from when you started to now, they don't even sit in the same room. We are so far ahead of where we were, and we are enjoying success at Homes for Good and taking on new projects on a regular basis, like the one Jacob just mentioned, but also we are about to open The Commons on MLK, all under your watch. We are moving forward with all of the other projects that really make Homes for Good, one of the most effective, probably in the nation, even though there are a lot of large metropolitan areas. So Char, thank you from my heart for your leadership for all of these years, and here's to many more years of service with you.

Michelle Thurston: I was trying to find an appropriate time to bring something up, but I want to say, Char, if it wasn't for you, I would not be where I am in the community as an advocate, and that lies a lot in your mentorship and your leadership. I have no doubt, that that will not change, you are a rockstar in more ways than one, and I can't thank you enough for your guidance.

Joe Berney: Char, all I want to say is, that if you could have heard the accolades that were given in our discussion, you would have felt fulfilled, and know that we all look forward to working with, partnering with you.

Char Reavis: Thank you.

Heather Buch: Now that we have had the ability to thank our former chair, I wanted to say thank you to Jacob for all of his involvement in looking into housing options for the Holliday Farm Fire. I am thrilled that you are in the works with mobile home park, and I would like to keep in tune with this as it rolls out.

Jacob Fox: Thanks a lot. We can't believe all of this is happening, we have so much going on, with new money from the state coming, it is really a time that we are stretched, but it is critical that we are involved in the wildfire affected areas, and we will find a way to help as much as we can.

B. Approval of 12/9/20 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion: **Heather Buch**

Second: **Joe Berney**

Laurie Trieger is abstaining from the vote due to the fact that she was not on the board during the previous board meeting.

These minutes are approved unanimously 6/0 with Commissioner Laurie Triger abstaining.

C. **ORDER 21-13-01-01H** — In the Matter of Authorizing the Formation of a Limited Liability Company for the 1100 Charnelton Project in Eugene, Oregon (Nora Cronin, Project Development Manager) (Estimated Time 5 Minutes)

Aisha McCoy: Talks about the survey that was done to choose the name for project that was conducted by asking neighbors of the property for suggestions, narrowing it down to three, then having the neighbors vote on a final name. With that, the name "The Nel" was chosen, and the project will be referenced as that going forward.

The development will be 45 units of permanent supportive housing to start construction in May of this year, and be completed in May of 2022.

This order will allow Homes for Good to execute the necessary documents to form an LLC for the development.

Motion: **Joe Berney**

Second: **Heather Buch**

This motion is unanimously approved 7/0.

D. **ORDER 21-13-01-02H** — In the Matter of Accepting a Bid and Awarding Contract #20-C-0055 for the Asset Reroofs Project (Steve Ochs, Real Estate Development Director) (Estimated Time 10 Minutes)

Steve Ochs: Explains the bid process and the reasoning for only receiving one bid. Homes for good contacted the others that they were expecting bids from, and found out that the bids that they were planning on submitted were to be over the bid they already received, so they did not put it back out for bid.

Motion: **Heather Buch**

Second: **Char Reavis**

Joe Berney: I am going to suggest that we start looking at things through a Community Benefits Agreement bidding lens.

He talks about his experience in the bidding process with Lane County and would suggest looking at that with Homes for Good.

This motion passes unanimously 7/0.

- E. **ORDER 21-13-01-03H** — In the Matter of Updating the Rent Assistance Administrative Plan for Overhoused, Underhoused and Accessible Units (Beth Ochs, Rent Assistance Division Director) (Estimated 10 Minutes)

Beth Ochs: This has to do with folks that are being housed by homes for good who fall into the category of "overhoused," "underhoused," and clarifying in the plan what happens next. Our current policy states that we will offer up assistance and whatever is available (either project based at the same complex, project based somewhere else, or a tenant-based voucher) is what the tenant is required to take. We want to expand that and provide the tenant options. So we are proposing to change the admin plan, to have the family that falls into one of those categories to declare their top 3 choices: project based at the same complex, project based somewhere else, or a tenant based voucher, and then, whichever of those three comes up first we would move to the next step of having the family take that option. We are required under the regulations to do something when a family falls into that category, and we feel that this language offers more options than the prior policy, which dictates what the family was going to take, which was essentially whatever was available at the time.

Char Reavis: Asks for some clarification about the "Accessible Unit" aspect of the policy change.

Beth Ochs: So in the situation with that, when there is an accessible unit available, and there is not a family who needs the accessible features of that unit, but there is another family, then they can move into that unit after signing a document saying that when a family who needs the accessible features of this unit comes along, we are going to need you to move into another unit. The prior policy had us dictate where that family would move, while the new policy will give them options when that happens.

Motion: **Pat Farr**

Second: **Joe Berney**

This motion is approved unanimously 7/0.

F. **ORDER 21-13-01-04H** — In the Matter of Updating the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan for Removal from the Waiting List (Beth Ochs, Rent Assistance Division Director) (Estimated 10 Minutes)

Beth Ochs: Currently the administrative plan does not speak to dual placement on the waitlist. Now that we have a process where people can apply to the open wait list when we have it open to the public, and there is random selection, and they are placed on the waitlist. That same applicant can later work with a Local Preference Partner and access the waitlist through a referral. We now need a mechanism to address this through the admin plan to remove them when they have dual placement. Why we want to do this, is that when housing is secured, it is an administrative burden, and it confuses the family that is housed with the Section 8 Voucher Program to get a letter that says that they have reached the top of the waitlist to receive a voucher. So it doesn't make sense in that case to have them on the list twice. So we are proposing changing the plan to remove someone on the tenant based wait list in duplicate order when they have obtained housing. We are also seeking to do this on the Project Based Voucher side, but only when it pertains to the project itself. So for example, if you are housed at Sheldon with a Project Based Voucher in a two-bedroom, but you are on the waitlist for both the two-bedroom and the three-bedroom, then you would be removed from the three-bedroom wait list since you are already housed at Sheldon. What it wont do would be remove you from a different Section 8 Wait List you are on, another Project Based Voucher Waitlist at a different development.

Heather Buch: States that normally she would declare a conflict of interest and abstained from the vote, having ownership interest in a property management firm that accepts Section 8 vouchers, but she no longer has this conflict, so she will be active in these conversations in the future.

Char Reavis: Asks about the safeguards that are in place to make sure that when people are being removed that they don't get completely dropped off.

Beth Ochs: We talked about the logistics of when to click that button. In the waitlist system it requires us to click a button to change their status.

Beth talks about different situations in which someone could be working with a local preference, but not actually secure housing, in which staff wouldn't want to remove them from the list if they are duplicated.

We wrote the procedure so that the button isn't pushed until housing is secured, and a HAP contract has been signed. That is the point at which someone has obtained housing, and they can then be removed from the other wait lists. I do agree with you Char that there are too many variables earlier on, in which someone could be in the hunt for housing, and something falls through, the unit passes inspection but the land lord backs out at the last minute, so we made the signing of the contract, which is the last step before we cut payment to the landlord, to be the mechanism for removing someone from the other wait lists.

Joe Berney: Acknowledges the thought and care Beth uses in these decisions.

Motion: **Joe Berney**

Second: **Pat Farr**

This motion is approved unanimously 7/0.

G. **WORK SESSION** — Board Input/Vision for Customer Service Enhancements (Wakan Alferes, Supportive Housing Division Director) (Estimated 30 Minutes)

Wakan Alferes goes through the presentation.

Joe Berney: Wants to introduce Homes for Good to a contact about a Home Share Program

Wakan Alferes: I would be interested to see what our role could be in that type of program, but of course we would love to connect.

Joe Berney: What is the number of people who are on the Homes for Good waiting list who are not currently getting assistance from Homes for Good?

Beth Ochs: The Housing Choice Voucher Wait List has about 3,000 people, and then we have all of the wait lists for the properties that we manage. We have a wait list that is open right now, and 290 applications came in on the first day, but the number of people we have on all of our wait lists I do not have off the top of my head.

Joe Berney: The need is so great out there, and we are doing some really great service, but I think the goal would be to get more people service from this portfolio.

Do we, or can we do anything with developing manufactured home parks?

Jacob Fox: We have not developed manufactured homes, or modular homes, or tiny home villages, we are definitely interested. We feel like the mobile home park could be our first opportunity to test that model.

Joe Berney: As you get into that, I would love to give you some contacts of pilot projects to get those completely off grid.

Wakan Alferes: I did look into our wait list numbers, and we have about 2,500 people across our Public Housing Wait Lists. I would say also that the Section 8 Homeownership program could allow someone to purchase a manufactured home and use their voucher to pay a mortgage on one. So, there are some things within our current programs.

Joe Berney: Are there currently people who are approved for Section 8 Vouchers who can't find a place?

Beth Ochs: Yes, so approximately with our program, if you have 100 people who get a voucher, 77 will be able to utilize it, and the others' voucher will expire and will not be able to use it.

Commissioner **Joe Berney** is excused from the meeting at 3:18pm.

Pat Farr: Commends Homes for Good on the progress that the organization has made in customer services.

Pat talks about a comment in the resident survey about inspections being extremely stressful for residents and hoping that can be improved upon in the future and is glad that Wakan has an eye on it.

Char Reavis: Talks about the annual inspection process and her experience, and areas for improvement. She then talks about the changes that Homes for Good has made in the past couple of years and the improvements that have been positive.

Michelle Thurston: Talks more about the improvements that Homes for Goods has made in her 28 years of living at Riverview Terrace, specifically Resident Services. She appreciates Homes for Good's increasing interactions with the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) in making changes related to customer service and improving resident experience.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Adjourn.