

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, July 21st, 2021 at 1:30pm

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 Homes for Good conducted the July 21st, 2021 meeting via a public video call with dial-in capacity. The public was able to join the call, give public comment, and listen to the call.

Michelle Thurston: Welcome to the July 21st, 2021 Board Meeting. This meeting will be recorded for public record.

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS – 20 Minutes

Kevin Cronin: Thank you very much, Chair Thurston. My name is Kevin, I represent ASFME 3267, I'm the president. We're just coming today to thank the Homes Good Board: Chair Thurston, Commissioner Berney, and Mr. Fox for supporting, and their work in the Filbert Co-Op in the Patrician Mobile Home Park. We've been following this for two years now, and this is the type of story that really makes me proud to work at Home for Good. So, thank you very much for your work on that. We also wanted to say that we are really excited about the equity strategy team and that we strongly support it. Thirdly, we support community benefits agreements. In 2019, a poll of Lane County voters showed that voter support community benefits agreement by 67%. The Equity Strategy Team report mentions asking voters for a bond, and AFSME is all in to help pass the bond. In 2018 when Home Forward went out for their bond, Kathy from AFSME was the campaign manager for that campaign, and so we want to be engaged at the earliest possible stage, and help do boots on the ground work to help get the bond.

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

Joe Berney: Thank you Mr. Cronin

Laurie Trieger: Thank you. I just wanted to appreciate having public comments, we at our Board of County Commissioners often don't, and so it's great to hear from someone, and I appreciate that when, Mr. Cronin, you come to us speaking on behalf of many, many workers, and not just as an individual from the community. I don't want to put a 'just' in front of that, not as an individual from the community, but on behalf of, and representing our workforce. I appreciate that, thank you.

3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None

4. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

Jacob Fox: I don't think we need to figure it out today. But I just want to plant the seed around in person board meetings at some point in the future. Our vision for those meetings is that they would happen in our new administrative building at 100 West 13th Ave. I haven't been tracking closely what Lane County Commissioners are doing on that front, so if anybody would be willing to educate me quickly.

Joe Berney: August 31st is when the County Board of Commissions will have their first in person board meeting. We were debating between all the 10th and the 31st, but staff required time to create a hybrid opportunity for presentations.

Number two, I just want to call out, just in case anyone doesn't know how significant the decision that Jacob made, that he and I were involved in every step of the way. But he risked \$50,000 of non-refundable money for security deposit to keep the escrow for the Patrician alive to give tenants time to form their cooperative and give CASA of Oregon time to come together with the money. And I don't want to make too much of this, but now that \$50,000, the financing will come back to Homes for Good, even though it was at risk, it enabled tenants and CASA of Oregon to cobble together 36 million, that price tag would not have been quite as high had the Springfield City Council, had not decided to rezone the property about a year and a half earlier.

It also points out that this agency's impact, ability to move quickly, and ability to take risks on behalf of our clients is pretty significant, and I saw that first-hand, and I lobbied like hell for it, but that was what I saw first-hand. I [also] saw the inability of governments to move. I really want to give a hand every member of this body that enabled our Executive Director to make that decision and help those families, and I think we will create a template moving forward. Thank you.

Laurie Trieger: Thank you, there on the topic of meeting in person, I know we don't want to be making decisions by email, but would it be helpful take up to you and your team to maybe put out a poll via email and ask people to respond, not reply all, about their appetite for doing that and what, if any parameters they would need to feel okay about it: as in a requirement that everyone's vaccinated or that it's only the board in the room. I also don't know if you have the capacity to virtually include staff for presentations, and what some of those options are. It might speed our process along a little bit for our conversation, if you have a baseline temperature read on the will and comfort level of the Board in that regard.

Jacob Fox: Staff will take follow up action, and coordinate with Lane County Staff as well.

Joe, thanks for the kind words. I was honored to work with you, and I think housing authorities are created to be nimble, it's really important to have that flexibility. So, it was just a super rewarding experience for me, and I was not at the celebration on Saturday, but I know Joe you and Michelle attended. I just appreciate you both being there on behalf of Homes for Good.

Pat Farr Leaves during the Discussion on Community Benefit Agreements to attend another meeting.

5. EMERGENCY BUSINESS

None

6. ADMINISTRATION

A. Executive Director Report (Estimated 10 minutes)

Jacob Fox asks Steve Ochs to talk about Lazy Days Mobile Home Park.

Steve Ochs talks about the due-diligence that is happening on the Lazy Days Mobile Home Park site and some of the considerations that will need to be weighed in the coming months about actually purchasing the property if that is the will of the Board once all the site information is summarized for the Board.

He then talks about interactions with the Blue River school district and the amount of children who went to that school district who lived at Lazy Days and are now out of district.

Jacob Fox: So just a couple other things related to Lazy Days and wildfire recovery, more generally. We also have a million-dollar Congressional Directive Funding Request that's being deliberated on by Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden. I was getting lots of questions from them about a week ago, and that point for me was a good sign, no assurance by any stretch, but they were very seriously considering that. And then the wildfire recovery for Lane County was approved by the Governor as the Oregon Solutions Project, that project team kick off was this week, and I know there's interest from a principle of leading that effort to have Lazy Days be a fundamental goal of the Oregon Solutions Work. So, we'll keep the board posted. We're also very interested in securing more property, our vision would be to buy property in Blue River, we want to be a part of building back community, we think one of our apartment communities or cottage cluster communities could be community hubs that are built, and that they could just support more community synergy around the rebuild and community building more broadly, so we will keep you posted on our work.

Char Reavis: Well, I had discussed this with you by phone or Zoom or something, anyway, but is there a way that we can help? Has there been any more information on the way we can help the kids who have survived the fire?

Char asks about a camp that is happening for kids who have specifically experienced Wildfire trauma, and if there is any way to help or connect with that camp.

Jacob Fox will follow up about the status of the camp.

I would also say that in the context of Bridges on Broadway (BOB), which I'll touch on momentarily, there's a lot of supportive work that we're doing specific to the kids that are living in the BOB as well. We love kids and will help in way we can.

In speaking of Bridges on Broadway, the ultimate goal is to convert that building from a lodging facility into a permanent supportive housing apartment community. We recently selected an architect and we're gearing up to RFP for CMGC. The reason for that is, that this fall there'll be local funds that we can competitively apply for, HOME funds specifically, which if received would allow us to pursue State funds early next year.

And project we haven't talked a lot about is a project with Sponsors, this is on Four Corners directly across from Roosevelt Crossing, which is the what I call kind of a "bridge housing community" and their organizational headquarters. Lane County owns the Four Corners property, and we've been in conversations with Lane County Leadership and Paul Solomon from Sponsors

about partitioning a piece of that property and building affordable housing on it. We've also selected an architect for that apartment community, and we're in the same position of needing to go through a request for proposal for a CMGC this fall.

On the land acquisition front, there's a parcel that we think has potential viability in Florence. Steve and I are working through as submitting an offer for that parcel. Steve, Char was wondering where that parcel was, and I didn't do great enough job of telling her, so if you could help me, I would appreciate that.

Steve Ochs: Yes, so it's on Quince Street. So, if you're coming into Florence, it's on the left. The City went through an RFP process for a parcel on the left side of Quince Street, right when you turn onto it, and we were unsuccessful in that, but this one is the parcel, just off to the right. It looks like it used to be part of the school or has some ball fields on it, and so that's the parcel that we're interested in

Char Reavis: Okay, yeah. That was the old junior high school back in the day. On the right, on the left was the high school, and I was worried that it was that property, because I would think there would be a lot of people that would fight that, even though it's a perfect piece of property for housing. But that is really exciting, and my other thing when Jacob told me, he's like, "Well, it's by the Marina", and I'm like, "How close to the Marina? Because that's all tsunami zone." Anything below where this property is on the east side of Quince is floodable.

Steve Ochs: Yes, the way we're hoping to structure it is to get an option agreement that gives us about a year in order to get through all those questions right there to make sure it's a suitable location, get through the environmental reviews and things like that.

Char Reavis and Jay Bozievich continue to discuss the parcels in Florence, and the need for housing in Florence, both Workforce and Affordable Housing.

Jacob Fox: We're also pursuing a parcel and Cottage Grove, it's not for sale, so we're just trying to get an audience with the owner and have a conversation about Affordable Housing, so we'll keep you posted on that. And obviously, we're in an active land acquisition phase. So certainly, for Board Members, if you're a hearing of parcels or seeing parcels that you think would be good for Affordable Housing, please let us know. We're not desperate, but we need land.

Jacob gives an update on State and County Rent Assistance programs that Homes for Good is distributing rent assistance through.

And then another reason why we're stretched as we did get an allocation of Emergency Housing Vouchers. We have had a dynamic partnership of Lane County and a number of non-profits around town, and we've actually started issuing vouchers this week for the Emergency Housing Voucher. It works very similar to tenant based vouchers, but it comes with additional funding to help with housing navigation, application fees, fees for holding units, so it really come with a robust array of additional financial support to help recipients of those vouchers lease up. The target population is people experiencing Homelessness, or people that are experiencing domestic violence. Those are the two broad categories, and then under those two broad categories are a number of more focused categories.

Jacob talks about the struggle to get the FY 19 Audit approved by HUD and the ramifications that has on getting the FY 20 Audit approved.

B. Approval of 6/24/21 Board Meeting Minutes

Pat Farr: I would like to move approval of the minutes, and I would like to speak to the motion if I get a second.

Motion: **Pat Farr**

Second: **Joe Berney**

Pat Farr: Just a quick, I think it's just a single word, correction, it's toward the end. It's the fourth paragraph from the end,

Commissioner Farr: Commissioner Trieger seems to be jumping to conclusions...

at the end of that sentence is,

I'll provide exactly the testimony as to what I think is inflammatory in is not what Commissioner Trieger has stated.

It should say "it is not," not "in is not". Just a single word. So, I would like to submit that for a change before the vote.

The minutes are approved with the proposed modification, 6-0 with Commissioner Bozievich abstaining.

C. **DISCUSSION**—Strategic Equity Plan Overarching Goals (Jacob Fox and the Equity Strategy Team) (Estimated 40 minutes)

Jacob Fox goes through the presentation slides, starting with a description of Homes for Good's DEI journey thus far. Jacob also introduces the Equity Strategy Team to the board. He discusses the decision to create a 3-year plan versus a 5-year plan. He also talks about the 4 main themes for the overarching goals. He also talks about how a goal will morph and build over three years.

Laurie Trieger: I just want to put a plug in also for doing everything we can around family definition within the constraints at the federal level, and the reason I think that's important, specifically as part of an equity plan. Particularly in LGBTQIA families, people are often have what's called chosen family, basically, they are ostracized from their family of origin or their blood relation families because of their sexual orientation or identity or gender expression, and have built families for themselves that do not follow the traditional, air quotes, definition of family and the other is many racial and ethnic cultures that are non-white, multi-generational family or extended family, and particularly immigrant families who may have cousins, aunts, uncles, etc, that don't often qualify as a family member under a lot of state and federal law. So, as much as we can, within our ability to have the most expansive definition of family. The language and some bills I've worked on the state level uses the language "family by blood or affinity", and that puts the definition of a family member on the people who identify as one another's family, whether by blood or affinity.

Joe Berney: Personally, I think that everyone, it doesn't matter, everyone has redefined what family means in our society, we all have families of choice in economics of force people together. I really like those words, Commissioner Trieger, "your family by affinity," but I don't know, I grew up in a time where people didn't want to be put in boxes, and now it seems like we're in an era where people like to create boxes. I just want to respond and say that opening it up and the definitions that Commissioner Trieger stated, I personally agree with, but I don't know about the analysis of how we get there. I think across society, the whole notion of family has changed, so I came the same place from a different perspective, that's all.

Jacob Fox continues to go through the presentation slides, going through the FY22 goals for "listen to our community," "tell the human story," and "create pathways to self-sufficiency."

Laurie Trieger: Are you basically talking about IDA accounts or is this somehow different?

Jacob Fox: Talking about this program, Laurie, there's actually a HUD version of the IDA called an escrow account. So, let's say that someone signs up for the program and when they sign up, they pay \$500 a month [in rent]. If they get a job and they share the rent increases to \$1,000 per month, this isn't the best example, but let's say it increases to \$1,000, that difference between their \$500 when they started and the \$1,000 now, goes into a HUD funded account for them. Then we partner with DevNW and CASA of Oregon for additional IDA accounts on top of that.

And it's really common for me to see \$7,000, \$10,000, or \$15,000 escrow account disbursements when people graduate from that program, so from a wealth-building perspective, it's very significant.

Jacob Fox continues to go through the presentation slides, going through the FY22 goals for "create pathways to self-sufficiency," and "leading and growing ethically."

Laurie Trieger: I think the written language proficiency accommodations are helpful also just to folks with lower literacy levels, even if English is their first language.

Char Reavis: I think that it's amazing, this document, and thank you and to all the staff that worked on this and is working on this.

There's a couple of things that I wanted to clarify. And Jacob, I already talked to you about this "client" thing, Michelle and I talked about it as well, and somehow it's just not sitting right with us and trying to figure out if maybe it's something we can discuss here to think about what might be more appropriate. I know, Jacob, like you said, it would be great if we had one way to describe our residents that goes across the board with Affordable Housing and Section 8, we're more comfortable with "residents" or "customers" than "client," I don't know why. And hopefully, Michelle, say more about how she feels about it because we both don't like it.

The other thing I just wanted to clarify, the automatic enrollment in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program: so that means that people who were work capable would have to do it, they wouldn't have a choice anymore, or is that part of the moving to work or, I just wanted to clarify that a little bit.

Jacob Fox: So, two things, I hate the word "client" as well, I have struggled to find what the right word was. What I was trying to do is, we refer to people on the Housing Choice Voucher Program as "participants" and people that live in housing that we manage as "residents". So, there's always that terminology that kind of gets confusing, so anyway, we didn't do a great job of it, but that's what they're trying to do, so we should definitely process that more.

My vision on Family Self-Sufficiency is that it's an opt-out program, not opt-in, we did that with our retirement program handful of years ago, where people are automatically enrolled and then they don't want to do it, then they can opt-out, and that's the dream.

Joe Berney: It's really difficult for me to know where to begin here. First of all, I want to commend you and your team. It's very clear to me, your hearts and your intent is absolutely wonderful. Right, there's no doubt about that. And I know the next item on the agenda, I won't belabor this, we can talk about it, but all I will say is the whole notion of a Community Benefits Bidding Protocol and Contractor Pre-Qualification relates to very specifically to two of the items in this. One is pragmatically reaching out and recruiting women, minorities, and veterans, that's the building trades terms, we could add others, but none the less. Two, apprenticeship programs, units of government can't do that. You're not a unit of government or we won't be, I guess the partnerships with other groups can do that. So that's number one. Number three, I'd be very interested in a spreadsheet on, just so that we know what we're talking about, 2018 and now what the diversity of the Homes for Good employee base, so that I can see what you're talking about in the boxes you've created. It's very clear, you want to reach beyond the organization in addition to the organization, so when you follow the money, you look at employees, you look at vendors you purchase services from, and what their internal policies are and priorities, if it's that's the will of the body, just like you can with bidding for building, and I know we'll talk about some of the issues you've run into there.

This is to me, it's two-fold. I look for guidance on this because I live a lifetime fighting for equal opportunity and equality, but equity in terms of internally with public institutions is new for me.

It's amazing to me in terms of the words that have been used, and the time frame in the process, how detached this process is from some of the immediacy of social justice issues, but nonetheless, I guess it's the process that could be employed internally as best as you can with this organization, so I totally support it, and if I have the ability to help you in any way, I would love to. Both internally and externally, for maximum impact.

Michelle Thurston: I think Char pretty much spoke to the point of the term "client". It just doesn't sit right. But you're working on it, so I appreciate that. The only thing that kind of got me a little bit was the preference and priority list and partnerships. I am starting to have great concern over the amount of priority and preference lists we have going on, and it seems like we keep adding to this preference and priority list. That list is getting bigger, how do you perform that preference and priority on a preference priority list, and how does that affect those not on a preference and priority list. It just seems like we're adding more and more and more, and I'm concerned that you say, "Okay, we're going to break out another priority list for the BIPOC community", are we going to be able to handle that priority preference list? If that makes sense. I just have concern on that.

Jacob Fox: It does, and so I think there's two issues: one is a huge issue, and that is that we open our wait list to the public, we get an enormous amount of applications in a short period of time, so we have these large waiting lists that take a long time for people to get through. We

have increased priorities and preferences over time, and basically that means that certain people that meet certain qualifications for priorities and preferences bypass the folks that are on a waiting list that don't have those priorities and preferences. This is actually, it's a very deep conversation that we do need to have as a board, because where staff are at is that our housing resources should be targeted at people in the community with the greatest need and who face discrimination and/or are marginalized. What that could look like is: we don't open our wait list to the general public anymore, we only serve people that are experiencing poverty and have additional challenges, so we have a partnership with Sponsors for people that are returning to Lane County, after completing a prison sentence, can go around a general waiting list and receive housing.

So, do know that we'll come back to process that more deeply. Because I think that's what staff is probably going to recommend is that we partner with agencies and have a lot of intentionality about who is prioritized to get into our housing and the days of opening up for anyone to apply, it might not be the best way for us to utilize our resources.

Char Reavis: I think one thing that bothers me, and I have expressed this before, but, so you have someone that's been on the waiting list for many years, and how do you know that that they might not be someone that is needing that preference, if when they apply it, they may not have met that criteria, but they could meet it now, and so we have all these thousands of applications for all these different housing, and how do we make sure we're not missing someone who could really need help.

Melanie Church: There are pre-screening methods that we use when we assess people at the top of the waiting list. There is an additional layer beyond the pre-application that we look at. But in terms of priorities, we're going to take a very data-driven approach to it, and one of the things that we can look at are things like the Eugene Springfield consolidated plan, which already outlined populations disproportionately impacted by housing affordability or housing challenges, housing quality, things like that, and we need to be nimble to some extent, things like wild fire preferences, they come up unexpectedly, and then we have to respond to the most well-vulnerable parts of our community. And so, we're working with intake to establish the processes for fair, and consistent assessment of those individuals as they come to the top of the list, and in some cases, in your example, say there's somebody that's been waiting on a list for two years, but then they've been affected by a wildfire. They would get another referral to the list and then receive that priority at that time, the same thing could happen with other individuals working potentially with the VA or other referring bodies like Sponsors, and so somebody on the wait list doesn't just get the one spot that they've had they would get other opportunities to move up in priority on an existing list.

Jacob Fox: What we wanted to do today was just get this in front of you. We can get this out to everybody. It'll obviously be uploaded on the website. But really what the EST team wants to be next, is to start meeting with teams across the organization to basically figure out how we're going to achieve these overarching goals, and how we're going to measure progress against these overarching goals. The vision was that we would do that more granular work as a staff team, we will come back to the Board. Review that again, like we're doing today. It's going to be more detailed in nature, and then the idea is we actually go into the community and get broader community feedback, and then come back to the Board for sort of final approval, and then we can basically start implementing the Strategic Equity Plan. Many of these things were already working on and implementing, but in terms of the development of the Strategic Equity Plan, that is the goal.

Joe Berney Comments on the importance of providing dignity and belonging through words, regarding the use or non-use of the term "client."

Much of what you're doing, if you do it right, Jacob, is very consistent with what a guy named Darren Walker, who is the Executive Director of the Ford Foundation, which is giving away unbelievable amounts of money, looking for communities that in fact are dealing with class. Not talking about race, class is the subsuming, but class is what we're dealing with here too, so there are also other sources of funds which may give Homes for Good and other members are a community a little more discretion in achieving social and economic justice, and I just wanted to point that out to you. I think that's an area that staff may want to research and would love to help if there are some intersections there.

Laurie Trieger: I appreciate all of that. I just something that you just said, and in all fairness, Commission Berney, maybe I wasn't paying full attention, but when you said that class is what we're dealing with, above race, I don't want to misrepresent what you said, can you clarify that for me?

Joe Berney: We may disagree on this. I think that consistent with John McWhorters book *Woke Racism*, I think that the class, class, yes, you're hearing me correctly, is the independent variable here, it doesn't deny or diminish the role of racism and structural and institutional racism has played in our society, but yes, my personal opinion is that class is the big issue here.

Laurie Trieger: So I'll just offer a counter, which is that class is embedded within race, and if you don't lead with race, the solutions to classist repression can continue to leave certain racial and ethnic groups out, whereas if you lead with race, you encompass the issues around class because of the vast disproportionate impact on communities of color on issues around class rather than the other way around.

Joe Berney: And publicly here we will agree to continue the discussion, I think we come to the same place, but our analysis might not be exactly the same.

DISCUSSION— Community Benefits Agreements (Steve Ochs, Real Estate Development Director) (Estimated 20 Minutes)

Steve Ochs goes through the slides on Community Benefits Agreements giving a background and local examples of other agencies in Lane County. Steve then talks about prevailing wage requirements that are in place including Davis Bacon and BOLI on certain projects depending on funding sources. He also talks about exemptions from prevailing wages.

Heather Buch: I had a question. The exemption, one of the differences, the exemption from Davis Bacon, I've seen those projects before, I'm pretty sure they have a dollar threshold for being able to be exempted, and if that is the case, is that possible to still have the Community Benefits Bidding Protocol, but at a certain threshold that wouldn't interfere with that particular application?

Steve Ochs: That would be something that we could definitely look at that. That would be something where if that exemption applies, the CBA wouldn't in that case, or bidding process.

I'm not familiar with a dollar threshold. But I do know, for example, in Market District Commons, because we went over four stories of residential, the exemption didn't apply anymore. So, there are definitely a lot of nuances to that exemption.

Nora Cronin: So what triggers us to do the Davis Bacon prevailing wage, would be federal funds of certain amounts, or for the Project-Based Vouchers in the project over a certain number of units, and/or HOME funds that are over a certain number of units. What would trigger to be not exempt from BOLI is a variety of factors, one of which is if it's construction over four stories, if it has some commercial component to it, or is it receiving public funds over a certain dollar amount, so there's a bunch of different things factored in. I think the example Steve gave for the last two times Homes for Good was exempt: The Oaks at 14th-- there were no Project-Based Vouchers or HOME funds, there's no real federal funds in the project, and because Homes for Good was a General Partner, it didn't kind of fall in under requiring us to do BOLI prevailing wage, and I think that's the same thing with Bascom Village II.

Heather Buch: Those are what I'm recalling, but it's been a while, so I couldn't remember them all. There's a list of things that actually qualify you for exemption, a project may or may not fall into that, depending on the things that you mentioned, but what I'm trying to get at is a way in which we can still be competitive for contracts, if we need to use that exemption, but also be able to incorporate this in this community bidding project and make it work for Homes for Good.

Steve Ochs goes through a spreadsheet of contracts regarding The Nel. Steve points out contracts over \$50,000 that could fall into a CBA bidding process.

Joe Berney: One, I appreciate that you're learning about this, I really do. It's not as difficult as you say. Actually, Lane County guided Lane Community College on every step of the way. And what the Lane County has, I want it to be really specific, it is a Community Benefit Bidding Protocol and a Contractor Pre-qualification Process. It's very prudent and conservative to achieve the community goals that are set for it. When you said you're going to see how that affects your contractors, let me just share, Lane County has three projects now, not one that are guided by this, one of them is Developmental Services building and, guess who the contractor is on that who is abiding by all of these criteria: Essex construction. Here's what's interesting about this to me, and I only learned this from Steve and Jacob earlier this week, I for one, strongly advocate that where and when it can be applied, we should direct staff to do that research to embrace the concept, obviously, not to make us ineligible in areas where this could hurt us from competing, but what are those areas I learned? I learned the criteria that often times Homes for Good is competing with others for, it's the game. It's not the player, it's the game. And Oregon Housing Community Services, I learn has as part of their criteria, especially for the tax credits - low bid. So that put housing agencies in a situation where they're going for a low bid and exempt from prevailing wages, and that's a problem. So, Jacob and Steve and I discussed how we perhaps could change the game a little bit, but until the game has changed, obviously this is something, in my opinion, that is a positive. The reason for units of government, this really doesn't increase costs is because prevailing wages are required, and consequently labor costs won't increase in contracts now for Homes for Good, those few where prevailing wages are not required, their exempt and OHCS requires low bid. That's a problem, and that's a problem we need to fix with the whole state, frankly, but I just wanted to point out, it's not that difficult, LCC and Lane County have really paved the way, and I thank the Commissioners for allowing that to occur.

Steve Ochs: I was on a call yesterday with OHCS, and there were complaints from others and non-profits about that, and the way it is set up is that they provide points for the developers asking for the lowest per unit cost. And so, what is happening also, is there's developers that are for-profit developers that provide Affordable Housing and they have more capital behind them, so they are able to buy down the amount they need of the LIHTC subsidy to get points in that area. So that was a complaint I heard. I heard also, that the scoring process is governed by a qualified allocation plan, and OHS is starting a review process for the next one this fall, and so that timing could be fortuitous as far as if we were to look for something to even the playing field when it came to that.

Steve talks more about working with OHCS on this and CBAs.

Jacob Fox: I guess the thing that I'm trying to run my head around as I look at the list of all of those sub-contractors, is what are the benefits that those companies provide? If they provide full family healthcare, then we're looking at the potential of no net cost increases, but if they don't, then in order to bid on our projects, there's no way that they can provide the same bid. So that's what we have to figure out from a values perspective or organizational priority. Living wages and paid healthcare is absolutely something that we support, but I think that's going to increase project cost, I really do. And I don't have a real problem with that, but we do have some caps on tax credit allocations and how much money that we can get, and we may have to make some choices around what kind of finishes are in apartment communities. If labor and benefit costs go up, there's going to be trade-offs in that, in my opinion, and that's why we need to do the due diligence, what those trade-offs mean for the development of Affordable Housing and the low-income people who live those units.

Heather Buch: I appreciate the due diligence, and we absolutely have to do that as a responsible Board for the community and the housing that we provide. I think, just as a contrast to that last statement is, a Community Benefit Bidding Protocol is the way in which we are making a statement to the community and employers at large that they need to provide living wage jobs, they need to provide full benefits for healthcare because we're trying to get people out of poverty, and this is one of the ways in which we can help do that, so it feels like a double-edged sword sometimes, but how do you implore the companies out there to help the broader picture of trying to lift people out of poverty. So, providing a Community Benefit Bidding Protocol with folks, it is a statement to the community at large about our values, what we expect of others, we provide these things, we want everybody to provide the same level of employment and benefits that we do find.

I find the larger policy decision to supersede some of these arguments, and the more that we do, and more that it catches on, the more other companies will start ensuring that there's competitive wages and benefits out there as well, clearly, we should find the triggers where it could apply for us in instances in which it would not, so that we can customize this to the way in which it's most appropriate for Homes for Good, similar to the way LCC needed to do it for themselves. I just wanted to make a point that this is a values statement. It is something I personally am very supportive of, but also appreciate the background and work it takes to make it work in different settings.

Char Reavis: I just had a question. Adopting something like this with modifications or however it would work with our funding and financing, how would that affect people other than different

contractors, like people who come in and do the floors after in a new unit or in an empty unit, people who clean, the smaller businesses that work for their own self, but us, to get apartments ready for re-renting and that, I mean, how would that affect it?

Steve Ochs: Currently, this is just for construction contracts, there are service contracts once buildings are built, both as an Agency and as these LLCs, that would need to be something separate that we need to look at, and something that is on people's minds for sure the amount that folks are making as property managers and cleaners and such. But that isn't part of this scope currently.

Laurie Trieger: What I'm hearing is it is really important, and I completely agree, that as an organization, we make a value statement and express those values basically or put our money where our mouth is and express those values. I do not see the need for that being terribly in conflict of how we are currently operating. In other words, I don't see this being a huge pendulum swing operationally, but from what we're already practically doing, and as Commissioner Buch said, we have to be responsible stewards of the organization, the resources with the contractors we historically, have worked with are in compliance with the essences of what this would do, and so I think my question to get more information on, since this is not a decision item, for staff is to think about bringing to us: How would look different, and what's the runway that you need to make this policy? Because I'm really not hearing a lot of resistance, and already I'm not hearing a lot of operational conflict with the goals of a policy like this, I am hearing a timing and on-ramp and the adjustments that we have to make to customize a policy like this to work for this organization. So, I think it is just important that I'm hearing most of us agree, this is a value that we hold, that there's good fair contracting and that part of the way we do business and invest also lifts workers in our community, but we don't want to rush into it in a way that then has us delivering services that are not at the standards that we've achieved.

So, I'm hearing this as much as an operational and a timing issue, not really as a policy or a value or a strategic direction issue.

But like you Char, I need to learn a lot more too.

Joe Berney: If wages had not stagnated over the last 40 years, there wouldn't be as much demand for Homes for Good's services.

This is one piece of creating livable wages and having an entity make a statement and follow it up operationally, that's point one. The details are the details, but at that point, point two is partnering with labor also allows Homes for Good to achieve pieces of its equity plan in the most pragmatic way possible. Number three, we now have created state legislation, which is permissive, it means everything is customized. Lane County did it one way, all entities will customize it, but the point is, you can do this now, and this also for Lane County has environmental attributes which really, to what I heard was the Homes for Good equity plan. The environmental acres relate to very specific details on the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in ways that don't add to financing, which these days is very doable, so I want to push, because Homes for Good is not leading here, but as a Housing Agency, it could be, especially as it sees how to appropriately make the fit and move forward and we can change the game too with OHCS, thank you for letting me speak so much.

Jay Bozievich: I just wanted to come on real quick to make it clear that I don't support moving ahead with this. Prevailing wage has been long shown to increase the cost of Public Construction.

This whole conversation has been without good economic theory balance, of what increasing wages and cost will do to inflation, what you're doing is asking to do something that's going to increase the cost of providing housing for low-income people, which mean we will build less of it in the long run. So, it's a vicious circle, it's without taking into full impact of what you're trying to do, and I believe it's misguided, and I can't support moving ahead with it. If we do move ahead with it, I want to have projects bid and dual ways, so we can see what it's really costing us, not whether it's below and estimate.

Michelle Thurston: I just want to make one quick statement before we go, my one and only concern is, this value statement that Homes for Good needs to make, is it going to come at the cost of, as Commissioner Bozievich said, is it going to come at the cost of housing more people in need. And, is it also going to come on the backs of the residents in the form of what most people would call "amenities" like heat and air? Not proper construction, but just things that a lot of people think is an "amenity," and we've learned in Portland, a lot of people died because they didn't have air and heat. Are we going to do this bargaining agreement at the cost of the residents overall, if that makes sense? I like the idea overall, but I still have that hesitancy that it will raise the cost, are we going to lose housing in the long run to make this statement, and are the residents going to pay the price for that? So that's all I have to say.

Steve Ochs: I did want to say, just for transparency sake, that is with this discussion, there's also two development projects that are moving forward that are going to require us to hire a CM GC to keep moving, the Bridges on Broadway conversion as well as the Four Corners development. So, I think a lot of more communication to come with the Board about that, but just to be transparent, we probably have to put an RFP out pretty quickly, how the timing works with that and adopting anything like [a Community Benefits Agreement] we'll have to discuss.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Char Reavis: I just would love us to really think about the fact there is an incredible article I can send to Jacob that talks about the people in actual Public Housing in Portland died because they had no heat pumps or air conditioning, and a lot of the other people that died were in a poverty-stricken area that was older, and so I would just really like us to think about that because I think we've destroyed that's enough, that it's going to take a while, a long time, to get it back where it needs to be, and in the meantime, I would just like to see us make it a priority to make sure when we're building housing that we find a way to make sure people can cool and heat efficiently, and like the heat pumps that we put in lowered so many peoples bills, and it's also better on the footprint. But in our newer projects I didn't see that, I saw something different. And I just want to make sure that we think about that. The horrific tragedy that happened because of this, not having air conditioning

Heather Buch: I just want to whole-heartily support that. I think this is actually a conversation that's happening all over the West Coast. At the County, of course, we're talking about an All Hazards Respite Plan, not just for cold, but heat, and for that air. And all those things are similar issues that we're going to have in our buildings, especially our older buildings, that need retrofitting, but as our climate changes and these things happen more often and more severely, it is a discussion that we all need to have. Here locally at Homes are Good, but also all of the State about standards of housing in order to just ensure the safety of our folks.

Adjourn.
