

# 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).

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**Wednesday, August 25th, 2021 at 1:30pm**

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 Homes for Good conducted the August 25th, 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:

#### 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.)

*None.*

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

**Laurie Trieger:** I just wanted to thank everyone that helped put the Keystone ribbon cutting and move-in kit building event together. It was really hot, but it was really fun and it was great to see everyone and see the units, and it's really exciting that that project is off the ground. So, thanks so much for that.

**Char Reavis:** I just want to make a quick response to what was on KVAL on Monday regarding Ride Source and that if this is going to be very impactful for anyone who is receiving Medicaid, it said that unless it was life-saving measures or whatever, that they couldn't get a ride, and I did want to say that I let Homes for Good know, and that they are working on letting residents know alternatives. Both Trillium and Pacific Source are also working to make sure people can get rides to their doctor, because it's pretty serious for people, and I just wanted us to be on radar and that if you get phone calls or from residents or whatever, just say call your customer service for your insurance, and some way or somehow we'll get them to the doctor.

**Laurie Trieger:** Are there any resources for folks who don't have the technology? Where I understand most medical appointments whenever possible, are being moved to telehealth, so transportation wouldn't be a barrier, but I'm sure for some folks, they don't have either the actual equipment or the know-how for using it, is there through resident services support for people to do telehealth?

**Wakan Alferes:** Yeah, we have laptops that residents are able to check out and use for those types of purposes.

#### 3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

*None.*

#### 4. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

*Jay Bozievich* is excused for the meeting.

#### 5. EMERGENCY BUSINESS

*None.*

#### 6. ADMINISTRATION

##### A. Executive Director Report (Estimated 10 Minutes)

**Ela Kubok:** For the Executive Director Report, Jordyn put together a few photos of the event that Commissioner Trieger already mentioned, so we did host an opening for The Keystone, which is a 15 home development on 13th and Tyler in Eugene. And during that time, we had all of our partners come together and put move-in kits for the families that are going to live there. So, that was really different. It wasn't like an official ribbon cutting, we really put work in action. We had folks from OHCS drive down and take photos and videos. So, I just want to thank all of you for being there, Michelle, Char, and Laurie.

We've also included just some data on all of the different programs that Beth and her team are working on right now in terms of Rent Assistance support. There's a State program, there's a County program, so we just threw some data to kind of highlight the work that our staff is doing to help get the money out to the community and help folks who are in need of rent assistance or landlords were in need of rent assistance, so it's a different style report this month, but I hope you enjoyed it.

*Pat Far* talks about the history of the Fair Board in relationship to acquiring the property for The Keystone, and expresses joy in seeing that community open.

**Char Reavis:** I just want to say the kudos to all the staff who put this whole thing together, it is an absolutely wonderful building, but I just liked that we didn't do the ribbon cutting and we got to go through and collect all this stuff in a big huge, really nice laundry basket for household supplies and things that you always are looking to have when you first move in somewhere, I thought it was a great idea, and thank you. It was a lot of fun and incredibly good idea.

**Michelle Thurston:** I'm going to state the same thing, I had an absolute memorable time with that opening, it's really neat with some of the ground breaking and the openings, some unique events, whether it's raising a wall or the excavator, and now the basket. And I hope that that is something that will continue when we do future openings because I don't think it's just memorable for the people who are there, but also memorable for the residents who will be moving in and calling it their new home, so I really appreciate the time and effort and creative thought that staff put into that.

##### B. Approval of 7/21/21 Board Meeting Minutes (Estimated 5 Minutes)

Motion: **Heather Buch**

Second: **Joe Berney**

*The minutes have been approved 6-0 with Commissioner Jay Bozievich is excused.*

C. Presentation of Q2 Employee Awards (Estimated 10 Minutes)

*Steve Ochs introduces Victoria Smithweiland, a Project Coordination Specialist in Real Estate Development, as a Quarter 2 award winner.*

*Esteban Montero Chacon introduces Marily Cruz, a Bilingual Intake Coordinator in Energy Services as a Quarter 2 award winner.*

- D. **BOARD ORDER 21-25-08-01H** — In the Matter of Updating the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan, Organization of the Waiting List Project Based Vouchers (PBV) and Selection from the Waiting List (Beth Ochs, Rent Assistance Division Director) (Estimated 10 minutes)

**Beth Ochs:** Thanks for having me this afternoon. So, the board order for updating the waiting list pertains to the local preference selections for The Keystone. The Keystone contains 15 project-based voucher units in an order for local preference in our admin plan to be reflected correctly, we're wanting to modify our admin plan to note that we have a local preference for The Keystone, which is referral from the centralized wait list to ShelterCare, and then ShelterCare to Homes for Good. Once we receive the referral, it is organized by date and time of referral, and then those referrals are then processed by our intake department. So, this Board Order modifies our selection of local preferences within the project-based voucher chapter of our administrative plan and adds in the transitional homeless family preference for The Keystone and those 15 project-based voucher units.

**Char Reavis:** Wouldn't it be good to just do this for any of our projects? I mean, instead of just The Keystone because we have others that are coming up later that are the same type of thing, do we have to do each one separate?

**Beth Ochs:** You do have to do each one separate because the waiting list for the project-based voucher sites are site-based waiting list, and then we need to have the AHAP and the HAP in the works at the HUD level, which has to do with the construction of the property and the completion of the subsidy layering reviews, and the environmental reviews before we can work to enter into the MoUs with the partners.

Motion: **Heather Buch**  
Second: **Laurie Trieger**

*This motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner Jay Bozievich is excused.*

- E. **BOARD ORDER 21-25-08-02H**— In the Matter of Updating the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan, Temporary Policy Supplement, Emergency Housing Vouchers (Beth Ochs, Rent Assistance Division Director) (Estimated 15 Minutes)

**Beth Ochs:** This board order pertains to President Biden and the American Rescue Plan, and as part of the American Rescue Plan, housing vouchers were supplied to PHAs across the nation. And our PHA, our jurisdiction, Lane County received 184 Emergency Housing Vouchers. With the Emergency Housing Vouchers we're required to serve specific populations: persons fleeing domestic violence, persons fleeing human trafficking, persons who are homeless, and as part of that, we were also required to collaborate and enter into a partnership with our local Continuum of Care in the collection of folks for the wait list

and the referral process. In addition to that, the Emergency Housing Vouchers have different application processes and vetting aspects that are really different from the Section 8 Program. So for example, within the Section 8 Program, you cannot owe debts to a Public Housing Agency and receive a voucher, you would have to pay those debts off before you could receive a voucher, and that's for any PHA in the nation, so if you owed money in Idaho and you wanted a voucher in Oregon, you would need to make the payment to Idaho before you could receive housing and Oregon. The EHV vouchers, HUD has stipulated that you can assess debts owed in any other PHA across the nation, it's a regulatory aspect of these vouchers. Another real key aspect to it is it turns the vetting process for income in the opposite direction. So, with a Section 8 voucher, for example, third-party documentation is considered the highest level of verification, so for example, if you have employment, a pay stub from an employer would be a third party form a verification. With an EHV voucher, HUD has flipped that, and self-certification is the highest form of verification, so you would use a written statement from the applicant as the highest form of verification, and the reason for these changes is that with the American Rescue Plan, HUD is very quickly wanting to get these vouchers out into the community, so the structure of these is that they're saying, "Okay, self-certification across the board, once we get everybody housed, then six months or nine months later, depending on the type of verification, we're going to go back as a Public Housing Agency and we vet these folks again, but right now we just want to get the vouchers out there, we want to get them housed and we'll do the follow-up later." So, all of these regulatory changes have prompted us to do an addition to our admin plan, with a supplement that's specific to the EHV vouchers, because the process of these vouchers is really different than a lot of the other housing we provide, and the other aspect of this that's different too, is that with the EHV vouchers, they come with specific dollars for housing navigation, which are other tenant-based vouchers do not. So that's assistance with things like application fees and deposits, utility arrears, and that's also requiring us to put policy and procedure into this supplement so that our staff has guidance on how to get those funds out to our applicants, and then of course, those policies then result in internal procedures within the agency for tracking of such funds and reconciliation and such. So, it's not often that I bring a board order with such a large document attached to it, I recognize that I think it was about 30-some pages for that supplement, so I do welcome any questions or comments anyone has, knowing that it was a lot to review, so my apologies.

**Char Reavis:** Well, I guess what my thought is, is they're self-reporting and let's say scenario, they weren't reporting correctly, you go at the six-months time, what's going to happen? Are they going get kicked out of their housing? Is there going to be, I mean, because there's no housing, and so if we've housed someone and then, yeah, they've made a mistake, whether it's an unintentional or intentional, what are your procedures going to be?

**Beth Ochs:** So it depends what was not accurate, so let's say we go back to the pay example, let's say that they reported they had a job, but they weren't accurate in the amount that they made, and let's say they made more than what they reported. In those instances, we're going enter into a Tenant Repayment Agreement, HUD would require us to do that, and they would have to essentially pay back what they should have been paying all along if the information had been reported accurately. If it's something, let's say it's more extreme, let's say they were not accurate about their identity, and they gave us a social security number that doesn't match up to anything, and they can't supply the documentation six-months after their housed, then we would be looking at removing Housing Assistance in those instances.

**Char Reavis:** So, are they going to be noticed in the beginning, that if they report wrong information, they may have to pay back?

**Beth Ochs:** Yes, the application packets that went out came with a cover letter that explained that they were receiving an application for an Emergency Housing Voucher, and it is explained that self-certification would be used, and then it gave them the specific clocks that would start and when they would start and what would have to be provided later on in the process, after they are housed in order to retain their housing, and then it explained that depending on any inaccuracies, they may owe money back to the housing agency or that their housing subsidy may be removed, dependent on the situation.

**Pat Farr:** I just want to make a quick comment, as opposed to a question, and in listening to Char's questions, that is a type of valuable question that many members of the Board would not be able to ask because Char has the experience, the deep experience, knowing how to ask that question, we get the answers that we wouldn't otherwise wouldn't get, what a tremendous value you provide to this board Char, thank you so much.

Motion: **Pat Farr**

Second: **Char Reavis**

*This motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner Jay Bozievich is excused.*

F. **DISCUSSION** – Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Work Session (Jeff Bridgens, Finance Director)  
(Estimated 30 Minutes)

*Jeff Bridgens goes over the presentation slides for the Financial Overview FY21*

**Joe Berney:** So, the 16 million assets a few years ago, they've increased in value because of the real estate market, does that factor in?

**Jeff Bridgens:** No, no, that really isn't a factor. We don't do a lot of fair value types of adjustments to our assets, and so this is growth in new money coming into the organization, a lot of it in Real estate development for new tax credit properties, that's where we've seen just a tremendous amount of resources.

*Jeff Bridgens continues to talk about the Financial Overview FY21 slide, including talking out the HUD held reserve that makes up the difference between the total expenditures, and the total revenues and resources which are lower for FY21. He then goes through the presentation slide for personnel services*

*Laurie Trieger clarifies with Jeff Bridgens that the 8.4M is the total, and equals the 5.6M in wages plus the 2.8M in fringe benefits.*

**Laurie Trieger:** What percentage of our employees are represented?

**Jeff Bridgens:** I think I have that number on a later slide.

*Jeff Bridgens goes through the presentation slides for Rent Assistance noting that this doesn't include the County CARE or the State Landlord Compensation Fund that the Agency distributed in FY 21.*

*Beth Ochs talks about Rent Assistance Budget considerations for FY22 including an increased per-unit cost. Beth also talks about the Fair Market Rent study and how that will affect the payment standard in Rent Assistance, per-unit cost, and funding received from HUD. Beth talks about Project Based Vouchers, and the process of setting aside vouchers to wait until projects come online, and the administrative fee that is not earned as those vouchers are being held. Beth also talks about the addition of a management position within Rent Assistance, which was in the FY21 budget, but was not hired for.*

*Jeff Bridgens goes through the presentation slides for the Supportive Housing Division.*

*Wakan Alferes talks about Supportive Housing Division considerations for FY22 including the effect of rent loss and resident debt due to COVID-19. Wakan talks about the addition of a supervisor to provide additional support to PSH projects, and the additional of more Resident Services staff.*

*Jeff Bridgens asks Wakan to give an update on resident debt and rent loss.*

**Wakan Alferes:** We definitely are seeing folks paying rent on time at a much higher rate than they were prior, so that's a positive improvement, we have around \$40,000 in outstanding balances still for past due rent, many of those are in the current application process for rental assistance, and so we're hopeful that much of that debt can be wiped out through the current assistance programs that are available. So that's our hope. We have had folks leave with rather large balances, so there are going to be folks who are more challenging to engage with that are going to leave these bad debts that we're going to have to eat in some way, but I think otherwise, the supports that are available for rent assistance are really critical here, and I think throughout the course of the next six months anyway, we'll help us whittle that amount down.

**Jeff Bridgens:** It's my understanding that if someone's not able to get that assistance to help with that back rent, they're going have an opportunity to enter into some sort of a repayment agreement that would allow them to spread that out over time. Is that correct?

**Wakan Alferes:** The current moratorium mandates this kind of repayment through February of 2022, and we've extended that through July of 2022, so it's a voluntary repayment agreement through February, and then we would work with anybody who hasn't been able to get that paid off to establish a more formal payment arrangement, and then support them in still continuing to access resources that they might be eligible for.

**Char Reavis:** So, you said you're going reduce staff, but then you're going to add staff, and it's kind of confusing.

**Wakan Alferes:** So, with the 100 scattered site homes that we sold, that supported three maintenance FTE as an example, and so we've already reduced one FTE just through retirement and just not re-hiring that position. Our goal is obviously never to lay anyone off, and so we've really just been shifting. We brought on BOB, or the Bridges on Broadway project, which we've been able to shift some maintenance staff in there. We've had vacancies other teams, like the fee for-service team, where we could have a site team member, if we don't have the funding at that site, we can shift them to a different site or to our central maintenance. So, we have a lot of flexibility there, but it's the lost revenue of those hundred units that we no longer have the funding at those sites to support those three FTE, so it's really more of a shuffle than a reduction.

**Pat Farr:** It's remarkable, the progress that's happened in the agency in the last couple of years alone, let alone the last nine years since I started working with you all, but the one bullet point that really stood out to me is an addition of the PSH supervisor and additional FTE in Resident Services, which you explain to be a supervisor for supported MLK and The Nel, etc.. to make those facilities, and what I wrote down is "more like the way we want to see them", I'm not going to ask you to elaborate on that, but we know some of the difficulties, the growing and birth difficulties on that topic, particularly with MLK, and my simple question, without elaboration on the answer is: Do you have a job description for that position at this point in time? Do they know what they're stepping into because there is some difficulty that's going to be involved in that I would expect.

**Wakan Alferes:** Yeah, and that's still a piece that we're ironing out. I would see this role as supporting Bridges on Broadway, which is more in line with our property management team as an example, where our work at Permanent Supportive Housing sites is more in the Resident Services realm. We need to work on forming essentially a merge job description that highlights the roles across both of those fields, and we don't currently have a job description that captures that. So that is the work that we're doing right now with the hope of hiring in the fall.

**Pat Farr:** And you said predominantly Bridges on Broadway. I understand that's a big facility with some immediate needs at this performing the right service, but you did mention MLK and The Nel, so some work will be done in coordination of our staff there?

**Wakan Alferes:** Oh yes, absolutely. So, what I mean is that for Bridges on Broadway, the role is a little more property management, so you're going to be kind of supporting the functioning of that site, not that that would be the majority of their role. But really, I think a lot of it is that on-site support for the different teams at our PSH sites, so at The Commons on MLK, that means someone that can, which I'm doing right now but don't have capacity to do, is to be on-site at staff meetings, make sure that teams are working together, problem-solve, and be able to apply those lessons across all of our PSH properties. So that's really the goal with this position.

**Pat Farr:** Thank you, that is all I need for right now, I can see tremendous value in that position.

*Steve Ochs goes through the Real Estate Development budget considerations for FY22 including the affects of RAD and a revolving Pre-Development fund. Steve also talks about the addition of a Project Developer who will specifically focus on rural development, as well as additional administrative support in the department.*

**Joe Berney:** On the bullet point where you say, "continuance of operations planning" are you talking about disasters?

**Steve Ochs:** Yes.

*Joe Berney talks about energy net positive development.*

"Acquisition of existing affordable housing" is that manufactured home parks? What exactly does that mean?

*Steve Ochs talks about partnerships with the Energy Services Division about net zero and better eco building processes.*

For, "acquisition of existing affordable housing" it could be potentially mobile home parks, but also going on discussions with Olive Plaza and the potential management of that building which has traditionally been run by a non-profit.

*Joe Berney asks about the formula for developer fees.*

**Steve Ochs:** In essence, for new construction projects, you are allowed to build a developer fee into your budget. As in the case of Market District Commons we put \$1,050,00 into the budget, which is 15%. We try to be conservative knowing that there are limited funds out there for everyone, but we also need to be able to re-coup some of the cost. When you start construction you normally get about 20% of that fee, and then when we finish, we get another portion of the fee, then once we have been leased up for 3-months we get another about 25%, then once everything is done and paperwork is all turned in, we get the remainder of the fee.

**Joe Berney:** Is the fee normally a percentage of the project, and if so, what is that percentage?

**Steve Ochs:** Typically, the maximum fee that OHCS will allow us to use is 15%, but where we typically land is somewhere between 10-12%.

*Heather Buch asks if the "beginning balance reserves" is where the developer fees go.*

*Heather Buch also talks about her past experience with Real Estate development and different considerations in taking funding.*

**Jeff Bridgens:** That 13 million is sitting in a restricted account and that represents proceeds from the sale of homes, from the RAD conversions, and so I'm not sure how far into the home sales. We are, Steve, maybe 50%, 60%? So, for the RAD II sales, a good portion in that portion of sales that's happened so far is dedicated and restricted for the RAD to LLC units that are being concerned for that project.

**Heather Buch:** But it says beginning unrestricted reserves. So, if it was restricted to be in a different bucket?

**Jeff Bridgens:** Yeah, and I think if it would be in a different bucket, you're right, and the unrestricted reserves. We're not sitting on 13 million in unrestricted reserves. To give you a better sense of what Homes for Good has as its operating account, generally it fluctuates between a million and 2 million dollars depending on where we are in the development, different development life cycles. As money comes in just as quickly as going out in pre-development costs for new projects.

**Steve Ochs:** So, Jeff, am I correct in saying that the RAD proceeds, really are in a restricted line item, and then there's about 1 to 2 million typically that we sit on as an unrestricted.

**Jeff Bridgens:** I think what that 2021 budget reflects in terms of that unrestricted piece, was contemplating all of the home sales being completed in fiscally year 2021, that's not really the case here, like Steve said. We're only about halfway through those home sales. Now that we've reached that goal,

or close to that goal of 13 million that has to be restricted, the rest of it will come through and it is now, I don't want to say unrestricted, but it can be used on any "Affordable Housing purpose". So, from here on out, those home sales will be going to an account that I guess is that unrestricted reserve that can be used for any affordable housing purpose, and so it's out of those funds that a revolving fund of pre-development costs could be used for.

**Heather Buch:** Where does that project development fee lay in this budget in front of us?

**Jeff Bridgens:** In terms of the fee revenue, it would be in the "revenue line" line item.

*Jeff Bridgens talks more about the development account and how developer fees and pre-development costs go in and out.*

**Heather Buch:** Will it remain in the way in which we see it here as unrestricted reserves?

**Jeff Bridgens:** If we were to establish a pre-development fund, like a revolving fund, it makes sense in my mind to have it on its own dedicated account that would solely be used for project development, and then when it comes back and pre-data close it would be put right back into that account. The way we set it up, at least just a way it's kind of evolved is that real estate development has its own operating account where all of their costs are paid out of, and so, for instance, when it comes time for payroll, we pull payroll costs for the department from that bank account for their payroll. But it's a good question because of all the resources coming in, and I think it's really important to know that the RAD home sales that will be completed, or hopefully completed in FY 22, are going to be a significant amount, and where those resources show up and how they're divided I think is really important.

**Laurie Trieger:** My concern for the long term is the funding stability and the funding stream for the services that we provide residents, because I've had this conversation with several people in the community, some of whom, and this is a direct quote, think "Housing is housing, is housing," and we should just build more and that will help take care of folks who need it, but we know that's not so. For example, the specifics of the trauma-informed design that went into The Commons on MLK, and some of those elements that were rolled into The Keystone, and that will be part of what's required for people to stay successful and stay housed. So housing isn't housing, isn't housing, and not every person who needs to home can succeed in any home, and so those ongoing operational costs, how we are planning for as an organization and as a community for all the other organizations, some of whom we contract with to deliver those supportive services, so that people can succeed and stay housed? And how we express that as part of the sort of "return on investment", the retention rate of somebody staying housed is saving the community money is something I'm very interested in, us really honing in on both how we talk about that to the general public in the community, but what we're doing as an organization to position ourselves to make sure that those resources are in place so that people who are housed can succeed and stay housed, whether it's in one of our programs or moving on somewhere else in the housing ladder.

*Jeff Bridgens goes through the COCC budget considerations.*

*Esteban Montero Chacon goes through the presentation slides on the Energy Services Budget Considerations.*

*Jeff Bridgens goes through the presentation slides on staffing levels and talks about the increase in staffing.*

*End of presentation*

*Jeff Bridgens talks about the upcoming budget approval process for September.*

**Char Reavis:** I would like to see some more information about Energy Services, and our goals for heating and cooling.

**Pat Farr:** I would like to hear a little bit more about how it came to be that we are the only Public Housing Authority in Oregon to have an Energy Services Division.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Ela Kubok:** Gives a update on the potential of in-person board meetings. Homes for Good will be testing the hybrid board meeting capacity

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Adjourn.

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