

**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COOK COUNTY**

April 15, 2021 2:00 p.m.

**Held remotely via Zoom.us without a central meeting location, due to a declared public health emergency.**

**ROLL CALL**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM.US:**

Wendy Walker-Williams, Chair  
Polly Kuehl, Vice Chair  
Nilda Soler, Commissioner  
Saul Klibanow, Commissioner  
Normah Salleh-Barone, Commissioner

**COMMISSIONER PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE:**

Elaine Kroll, Commissioner

**HACC STAFF PRESENT VIA ZOOM.US:**

Richard Monocchio, Executive Director (present at regular meeting location)  
Alesia Hushaw, Chief of Staff  
Karl Becker, Chief Financial Officer  
Deborah O'Donnell, Manager of Procurement  
Jon Duncan, General Counsel (present at regular meeting location)  
Monica Slavin, Director of Compliance and Occupancy  
Darrick Shafer, North Region Manager  
Nancy Guzman, Director of Development  
Emily Orenstein, Policy and Communications Specialist  
Debbie Kyker, Executive Assistant  
Phyllis Johnson, Paralegal

**OTHER ATTENDEE VIA ZOOM.US:** Adrienne Brown, HCV Participant, via Zoom.us

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair, Wendy Walker-Williams, called the April 15, 2021 meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Cook County to order at approximately 2:11 p.m.

**ILLINOIS OPEN MEETINGS ACT COMPLIANCE  
PROTOCOL FOR REMOTE MEETING**

Jon Duncan, General Counsel, read the following statement as required by the Illinois Open Meetings Act: “The Governor has issued a disaster declaration as it relates to public health, and all of Cook County is covered by the disaster area. The Executive Director has determined that an in-person meeting is not prudent or practical because of the disaster.”

The identity of all Commissioners who were participating in the meeting via Zoom.us were verified. All Commissioners participating in the meeting via Zoom.us or by telephone confirmed that they could see and hear the proceedings. Mr. Duncan noted for the record that the Housing Authority’s Executive Director and General Counsel were physically present at the regular meeting location.

An oral motion was made and seconded to approve the participation of all Commissioners in the meeting by Zoom.us or telephone. The motion carried with all “ayes” by a roll call vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Wendy Walker-Williams opened the floor for public comments via Zoom.us. No public comments were submitted.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Commissioner Saul Klibanow for Approval of the Minutes of the February 25, 2021 Regular Board Meeting. The motion carried with all “ayes” by a roll call vote.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Executive Director Rich Monocchio reported that the HACC is very close to reaching an agreement with the developer Related Midwest Company to co-develop the Emerson Project in Evanston, Illinois. The HACC anticipates submitting a letter of intent to the next Board Meeting for the Emerson Project. The final agreement that the HACC will execute will be better than the previous proposal that the previous Developer had offered.

Both the HACC and Related Midwest Company are applying a significant amount of equity into the Emerson Project and will receive the same rate of return. There will be four-percent credits from the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the four-percent credits will be for the Low-income units of the Emerson Project. The Emerson will have 168 units. 34 units will be for residents 55 and older, 34 priced for people with incomes at 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and 17 units priced for people with incomes at 80% to 120% of AMI.

## HUMAN SERVICES REPORT

Policy and Communications Specialist Emily Orenstein reported that the HACC has received a Resident Opportunity Self-Sufficiency Coordinator Grant for our family sites at Bergen, Mackler and Sunrise. On April 6<sup>th</sup>, HUD informed us that we were awarded the \$239,250 grant to hire a service coordinator for the Chicago Heights family sites. Service Coordinators provide case management, assess residents' needs, and work in partnership with local service providers to fulfill those needs. Service Coordinators provide a critical service to residents by helping to remove barriers that can stand in the way of progress. They also work with seniors and people with disabilities to ensure they receive the medical care and social supports required to age and remain in place, thereby avoiding costlier forms of care. The grant term is June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2024.

Emily Orenstein also reported that the Human Services Department is piloting the use of a new general intake survey to collect information from residents who are interested in getting connected to social services in their areas. The survey asks residents about several areas of interest, including childcare and enrichment, higher education, workforce development, and disability services.

The Human Services staff members respond to every survey response received with a personalized list of recommendations based on a respondent's location, household composition, and stated interests. We respond to surveys personally in order to build rapport with residents and affirm our ability and willingness to serve as liaisons to social services organizations. We are building a network of staff contacts at organizations countywide, so that we can connect residents to services as quickly and efficiently as possible, and to aid residents in resolving questions or concerns.

In addition to introducing residents to the Human Services team as a resource, the survey responses allow the Human Services team to build up a database of residents' needs and interests, so that we can conduct additional outreach to residents who have expressed interest in a given service when we find new opportunities. Going forward, these responses will inform us regarding what services are most needed by our residents.

Given the labor intensity of providing high-quality client service to every resident who responds to the survey, we piloted the survey rollout to a small group of recipients: Family Self Sufficiency participants and families of last year's Forest Preserves Experience youth participants. These residents are already familiar with HACC as a provider of resident services. Going forward, we intend to expand the surveys to the larger HACC population.

Emily Orenstein also reported that The Human Services Department launched free credit reporting services for residents in our managed properties. We are working with a third party, Rent Dynamics, to facilitate the reporting of residents' rental payments to TransUnion and Equifax. With their RentPlus program, Rent Dynamics uses rent payment information from our Yardi system to send information directly to the credit bureaus.

The Human Services Department is working with Rent Dynamics to determine how to open participation up to residents who receive tenant-based subsidies, a process that will involve coordinating with landlords.

Poor credit or lack of a credit history is a major barrier to finding housing for HCV residents. Since the passage of laws establishing source of income as a protected class in Cook County, landlords have increasingly used credit scores as one of the few legal avenues to reject low-income tenants.

The program launched on March 30, 2021. So far 19 residents have signed up to participate in RentPlus, and we are working on physical handouts and other means of marketing the program to increase uptake.

Emily Orenstein reported that Prairie State College is currently a host site for the Opportunity Works Initiative, launched by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. Opportunity Works runs intensive cohort-based programs that introduce unemployed young adults from suburban Cook County aged 16-24 to careers in manufacturing, information technology, transportation, distribution and logistics, and other high-growth, high-demand sectors. Participants receive stipends, subsidized internships, and career coaching.

HACC Human Services met with the Prairie State team in the winter to discuss prioritizing HACC students for the March cohort. After February recruitment, the Prairie State team received over 70 applications for a 10-person cohort.

## **PRESENTATION OF A RESOLUTION**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 05**

A Resolution to Ratify and Authorize Enforcement of a Senior Housing Policy for Project Based Voucher Properties.

Executive Director Rich Monocchio reported that the Housing Authority of Cook County does not tolerate discrimination of residents who are raising their grandchildren in the PBV Properties. There are some senior housing properties that are subsidized by the Housing Authority of Cook County through the Project-Based Voucher Program. There has been an increase in the number of households that are led by grandparents or older persons who are responsible for the care of grandchildren, or disabled persons. There are some residents who are at least 55 years of age reside with a companion or a spouse who is under the age of 55.

General Counsel Jon Duncan reported that the resolution to ratify and authorize enforcement of a senior housing policy for project-based voucher properties were amended in response to some of the feedback that the HACC staff has received since it was sent to the Commissioners. The changes started at the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, in which the HACC staff has added the language “effective May 1, 2021, proposals with age restrictions for all occupants and properties utilizing project-based vouchers will not be considered.”

The next modified paragraph reads, "Housing Assistance Payments Contracts. An agreement to enter into Housing Assistance Payment Contracts will not be executed for properties utilizing Project-Based Vouchers where age restrictions are imposed on all occupants of the unit. Additionally, those with expiring HAP Contracts will not be executed where age restrictions are imposed on occupants of the unit."

Director of Rent Assistance Sheryl Seiling reported that it has been the policy of the HACC to not exclude these households from potential senior housing in Project-Based Voucher developments which are serving people 55 years of age and older. The existing HACC policy is that operators of senior housing in Project-Based Voucher properties may not require that all members in a voucher unit household must be at least 55 years of age or older.

It has recently come to the attention of the HACC staff that some landlords in senior properties that are subsidized through the Project-Based Voucher Program have been requiring that all members of the voucher unit household must be seniors. This excludes senior who may reside with younger family members, in violation of the existing HACC policy.

The HACC staff has prepared a corrective policy memorandum for publication to landlords of senior Project-Based Voucher properties to remind them of the existing policy and to assist in the enforcement of the policy, a copy of which is attached to this resolution and the HACC staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution to ratify and to enforce the attached corrective policy memorandum.

Following the discussion in which a consensus desired postponement of the Resolution, Chair Wendy Walker-Williams requested a motion to approve the deferment of Resolution 2021-HACC-05 to a later meeting. The postponement of the resolution was agreed to by roll call vote with all "ayes."

### **CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

Chief Financial Officer Karl Becker reported that Public Housing has a year-to-date loss of under \$200,000. Karl Becker reported that the loss is due to the unexpected snow removal that required the HACC to hire outside contractors to remove the excessive snow from each property in both north and south regions. Karl Becker also reports that this Public Housing loss is covered by the HACC's reserves.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program has a surplus of approximately \$1,000,000 in the budget. This is due to the number of vouchers that the HACC has leased and other programs that the HACC is working on.

The HCV Restricted Funds shows a loss of \$3.1 million dollars, and this is because the HACC has not yet received our HUD-held reserves.

The Central Office Cost Center has a surplus of \$2 million. The HACC has also received a developer's fee of approximately \$966,000.00 that will be added to the HACC's budget for the year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

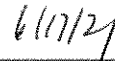
Chair Wendy Walker-Williams requested a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Board, which was moved by Commissioner Saul Klibanow and seconded by Commissioner Nilda Soler. The motion carried with all “ayes” by a roll call vote.

The Meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



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Richard J. Monochio  
Executive Director



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DATE