

**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COOK COUNTY  
June 17, 2021 2:10 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  
Elaine Kroll, Commissioner

**HACC STAFF PRESENT VIA ZOOM.US**

Richard Monocchio, Executive Director  
(joined with meeting in progress at regular meeting location, after consideration of Resolution 2021- 09)  
Alesia Hushaw, Chief of Staff  
Karl Becker, Chief Financial Officer  
Sheryl Seiling, Director of Rent Assistance  
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

**OTHER ATTENDEES VIA ZOOM.US:**

Joe Targett, of Burling Builders  
Charlie Trotier, of Related Midwest  
Sarah Wick, of Related Midwest  
Curt Bailey, of Related Midwest  
Sarah Flax, of the City of Evanston  
Paul Zalmezak, of the City of Evanston  
David Weiss, of General Capital Group  
Sig Strautmanis, of General Capital Group  
James Dow, of Full Circle Communities

Lynda Schueler of Housing Forward  
Larry Pusateri of Lightengale Group  
Dan Sethness, auditor, from RSM US, LLP  
Joseph Evans, auditor, from RSM US, LLP

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair, Polly Kuehl, called the June 17, 2021 meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Cook County to order at approximately 2:10 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.

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.

General Counsel Jon Duncan noted for the record that the Housing Authority’s General Counsel was physically present at the regular meeting location. Mr. Duncan also noted for the record that he was present at the Board’s regular meeting location, and he also announced that Executive Director Richard Monocchio had recused himself from all consideration of Board Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 09, and that, as a result of Mr. Monocchio’s recusal, the sequence of items on the published agenda is being adjusted so that the impacted resolution will be considered first in order for Mr. Monocchio to join the remainder of the meeting without further interruption after the Board’s consideration of the Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 09 has been completed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Wendy Walker-Williams opened the floor for public comments via Zoom.us.

Joe Targett of Burling Builders made a public comment in which he stated his objection to the Board’s adoption of Resolution 2021-09, scheduled on the agenda later in this meeting, which would authorize the Chief Financial Officer, in his capacity as Executive Vice President of CH Veterans, LLC., to Enter into a Contract with Apex Construction Group, Inc., as General Contractor in Connection with the Construction of Otto Veterans Square in Chicago Heights,

Illinois. Mr. Targett stated his belief that Burling Builders was the lowest responsive and responsible bidder on the Otto Veterans Square project, and that the award for the construction contract therefore should be made to Burling Builders rather than to Apex Construction. Mr. Targett stated that Burling Builders had submitted a bid protest and he stated his view that no contract should be awarded until after Burling Builders' bid protest has been resolved.

Alesia Hushaw, Chief of Staff, responded briefly to explain that Burling Builders did not submit a responsive bid.

No further public comments were submitted.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Saul Klibanow and seconded by Commissioner Nilda Soler for Approval of the Minutes of the April 15, 2021 Regular Board Meeting. The motion carried with all "ayes" by a roll call vote.

## **PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 09**

A Resolution Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer, in his capacity as Executive Vice President of CH Veterans, LLC., to Enter into a Contract with Apex Construction Group, Inc., as General Contractor in Connection with the Construction of Otto Veterans Square. (This resolution was heard out of the sequence that was published in the agenda, due to the recusal of Executive Director Richard Monocchio).

Chief of Staff Alesia Hushaw presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 09. She explained that there were five bids received in response to an Invitation for Bids for the construction of the Otto Veterans Square project in Chicago Heights, Illinois. Ms. Hushaw noted that the Invitation for Bids had specified that bidders were required to submit, as part of their bid package, evidence of completion within the past five years of at least three construction projects of a size and scope that was similar to the proposed Otto Veterans Square project.

The lowest-priced bid was received from Burling Builders, but that bid was rejected because it was determined to be not responsive to the Invitation for Bids. Burling Builders' bid was not responsive because, among other reasons, Burling Builders had not submitted evidence showing that it had completed at least three projects of similar size and scope within the preceding five years.

The second lowest-price bid was received from A.L.L. Construction Group, but that bid was not accepted because it was also not responsive to the Invitation for Bids. A.L.L. Construction did not submit evidence showing that it had completed at least three similar projects within the preceding five years. In addition, A.L.L. Construction Group's previous experience has been primarily as a

masonry subcontractor, rather than as a General Contractor in a project involving new construction, as required for the Otto Veterans Square project.

The third lowest-price bid was received from Apex Construction. The Apex Construction bid was responsive to the Invitation for Bids and Apex was also determined to be a responsible bidder. The Apex Construction bid therefore was the lowest responsive and responsible bidder to the Invitation for Bids. Accordingly, the Housing Authority staff recommended that the Board authorize the Chief Financial Officer, in his capacity as Executive Vice President of CH Veterans, LLC., to enter into a contract with Apex Construction Group, Inc., as general contractor in connection with the construction of the Otto Veterans Square project in Chicago Heights.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Normah Salleh-Barone, and seconded by Commissioner Nilda Soler for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 09. The motion carried in a roll call vote, with five “aye” votes cast (by Chair Wendy Walker Williams, Vice Chair Polly Kuehl, Commissioner Nilda Soler, Commissioner Normah Salleh-Barone, Commissioner and Elaine Kroll, Commissioner). Commissioner Saul Klibanow abstained from the vote.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RICHARD J. MONOCCHIO JOINS THE MEETING**

Following the Board’s consideration and adoption of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 09 from which Executive Director Richard J. Monocchio had recused himself, Mr. Monocchio was asked to join the remainder of the meeting, whereupon there was a brief interruption in order for Mr. Monocchio to enter the meeting.

Upon Mr. Monocchio’s arrival, General Counsel Jon Duncan asked that the Record reflect that he had joined the meeting.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 06**

A Resolution to Adopt a Section 3 Policy and Plan to Comply with 24 CFR, Part 75.

Director of Procurement Deborah O’Donnell presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 06. She explained that recent changes in policy of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development require all public housing authorities to make changes in their Section 3 policies to conform with the new HUD policy. HUD’s changes improve the hiring of Section 3 workers and streamlines the Section 3 reporting obligations of public housing authorities and their contractors.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Commissioner Saul Klibanow for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 06. The motion carried with all “ayes” in a roll call vote.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 07**

A Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Enter into Contracts for Architectural and Engineering Design Services.

Executive Director Richard Monocchio and Chief of Staff Alesia Hushaw presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 07.

Following a discussion, Executive Director Richard Monocchio withdrew Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 07, and no vote was taken for the adoption of the Resolution.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 08**

A Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Enter into Contract for Architectural and Engineering Services for Affordable Family Housing in Evanston.

Executive Director Richard Monocchio and Chief of Staff Alesia Hushaw presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 08.

Following a discussion, Executive Director Richard Monocchio withdrew Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 08, and no vote was taken for the adoption of the Resolution.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 10**

A Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Award Twenty-Four Project-Based Vouchers to Full Circle Communities for the Development of Torrence Place, A Permanent Supportive Housing Community in Lansing, Illinois.

Director of Rent Assistance Sheryl Seiling presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 10, to award project-based vouchers for Torrence Place.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Saul Klibanow and seconded by Commissioner Nilda Soler for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 10. The motion carried with all “ayes” in a roll call vote.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 11**

Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Award Two Project-Based Vouchers to Housing Forward for the Development of Broadview PSH in Broadview, Illinois.

Director of Rent Assistance Sheryl Seiling presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 11, to award project-based vouchers to Housing Forward.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Chair Wendy Walker Williams for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 11. The motion carried with all “ayes” in a roll call vote.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 12**

A Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Evanston for the disposition and redevelopment of properties on South Boulevard in Evanston, Illinois.

Executive Director Richard Monocchio and Director of Development Nancy Guzman presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 12 to authorize entry into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Evanston. The Intergovernmental Agreement notes that the HACC and the City of Evanston each own adjacent properties, and contemplates that they each will transfer their properties to another entity for the purpose of development of replacement family housing in the combined properties. The proposed transfer of the HACC-owned parcels will be subject to further HUD approval.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Commissioner Saul Klibanow for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 12. The motion carried with all “ayes” in a roll call vote.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 13**

A Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Award Thirteen Project-Based Vouchers to General Capital Acquisitions, LLC., for the Development of Union Apartments, a Multi-Family Development in Wheeling, Illinois.

Director of Development, Nancy Guzman, presented Resolution 2021 – HACC – 13, to award project-based vouchers to General Capital Acquisitions for the development Union Apartments in Wheeling.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Commissioner Saul Klibanow for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 13. The motion carried with all “ayes” in a roll call vote.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – HACC – 14**

A Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Letter of Intent to enter into a Joint Venture Agreement with Related Midwest, LLC., for the Development of Age Restricted Housing in Evanston, Illinois.

Executive Director Richard Monocchio presented Resolution No. 2021 – HACC – 14 to enter into a Letter of Intent to enter into a Joint Venture Agreement with Related Midwest for the development of The Emerson Project in Evanston, Illinois.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Saul Klibanow for and seconded by Commissioner Nilda Soler for approval of Resolution 2021 – HACC – 14. The motion carried with all “ayes” in a roll call vote.

## **AUDITORS' REPORT**

Dan Sethness and Joseph Evans, from RSM US, LLP, gave the annual Auditors' Report. They reported finding documentation errors in some of the 60 files audited, but they also reported that the percentage of errors found was reduced from prior years. The auditors recommended that the HACC continue moving to electronic recordkeeping as much as possible.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Chair Wendy Walker Williams to accept the auditors' report. The motion carried with all "ayes" in a roll call vote.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Richard Monocchio presented the Executive Director's report. He described the launch of the new HACC website and he thanked HACC employees Emily Orenstein, Starr Stone and Ernest Lofton for their work on the website, which was launched on June 14.

Mr. Monocchio reported on the status of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, and noted that the HACC leads the nation in getting funds out for the emergency rental assistance.

Mr. Monocchio reported that Congress has appropriated funding for HUD to issue 3,000 vouchers nationally for domestic violence and homeless under the Continuum of Care Agreement.

Mr. Monocchio then introduced Emily Orenstein to give a report on Human Services.

## **HUMAN SERVICES REPORT**

Policy and Communications Specialist Emily Orenstein gave the Human Services Report.

### **Summer Programs at the HACC**

Ms. Orenstein reported that the HACC is bringing summer programming to over 300 of our youngest residents over the next three months.

### **Forest Preserves Experience**

The Forest Preserves Experience, now in its fifth year, will kick off on June 28. Crews will work on projects associated with conservation and restoration throughout the Forest Preserves, while also enjoying a number of environmental enrichment activities, such as hiking, canoeing, and other nature-based educational opportunities. This year we are receiving extra funding assistance from the County and will expand the program to 143 participants, which is an all-time high and nearly double the original size of 72 students. This is a paid program, and all student participants are receiving \$10 per hour.

### **Adults Active in Youth Development**

Ms. Orenstein reported that the HACC is teaming up with Adults Active in Youth Development to launch a branch of their summer camp program at Richard Flowers Community Housing in Robbins. The camp began on June 14, with 23 campers ages 6-12 spending the next 8 weeks exploring this year's theme of engineering and outer space.

In addition to the HACC-funded camp at Robbins, the HACC is sponsoring another 20 campers to participate in the programming at the Harvey and Riverdale camps, for a total of 43 campers. Adults Active in Youth Development camps are also providing employment opportunities for several HACC youth to serve as counselors, and for those who are not hired, AAYD is offering a virtual career training and job placement program in July.

### **Jones Center—Camp in the Park**

Our summer camps in Chicago Heights and Ford Heights also kicked off on June 14. Campers in grades 1 through 8 will spend four mornings a week outside enjoying games and crafts in the summer weather, with healthy lunches served from Top Box. The programs have capacity for 50 students across the two sites.

### **Local Park Districts**

The HACC is providing scholarships to send an additional 66 young people to four weeks of summer camp in their local communities. 40 campers will be attending camp at the Calumet Memorial Park District in Calumet City, 20 will be attending camp at the Hazel Crest Park District, and 16 will be attending camp in the Markham Park District.

### **Promoting Careers in the Skilled Trades**

The HACC and Hire360 teamed up to inform residents about openings in local union chapters, including the Carpenters and the Pipefitters Unions. Hire360 created a special sign-up page specifically for HACC participants to get in touch with recruiters at Hire360. 135 candidates have signed up to work with Hire360. The next challenge is to encourage those candidates to take the next steps in the process, primarily attending an orientation session. HACC is stipulating to contractors on the upcoming Evanston and Chicago Heights projects that each must reserve 5 slots for apprentices, and our goal is to get as many of those slots filled by HACC residents as possible.

A top goal for our team this summer will be working with trade unions, recruiters, and other community stakeholders to improve our outreach to communities who have not historically had access to the skilled trades and the career advancement potential they offer. For our efforts on this front, HACC was recently named as CISCO's Public Body of the Year, and the HACC will be honored at CISCO's annual luncheon on July 16.

### **Connections at Community Colleges**

Summer is a key transitional time for individuals thinking of continuing their education, and we are looking ahead toward planning outreach efforts to offer our residents all the support they may need to enroll and successfully attend college. We are continuing to gather feedback from residents about our barrier reduction pilot.



### **Prairie State College**

The HACC Human Services team met with Dr. Tiffany Brewer, Dean of Equity and Inclusion at Prairie State College, to discuss ways to integrate our barrier reduction pilot with special programs. We will be marketing upcoming Prairie State events to our participants.

### **Harper College Career Course**

Harper College hosted 19 HACC participants in their online career course. All of the participants received a free Chromebook laptop computer. Feedback from the participants was universally positive, and four participants indicated that they were interested in enrolling at Harper College.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination Outreach**

The HACC's Human Services Department developed a survey for public housing residents about the COVID vaccine, asking whether or not they have been vaccinated, and if not, what reasons they had for not being vaccinated. While we did not receive complete responses from all the sites, the results indicated that 83% of respondents had been vaccinated. People who not been vaccinated mostly said that they had no interest in receiving the vaccine. 13% of respondents said they did not want the vaccine, and only 4% said they needed more information or needed help finding an appointment. These results, however, came primarily from senior buildings, and interest at the family sites has been lower.

The Cook County Department of Public Health staged a vaccine clinic at Medgar Evers Elementary School, located across the street from Vera Yates. Similarly, the HACC is exploring opportunities to stage a clinic at Chicago Heights. While we work to increase levels of interest, we are hosting a virtual town hall on June 17 with an emergency medicine physician from Rush Medical College. There will be a short presentation and then residents will be able to share questions and concerns.

### **Fresh Food and Supply Deliveries**

#### **Top Box**

Last spring and summer we teamed up with Top Box Foods to deliver over 1500 boxes of grocery items to our family and senior sites. These boxes were a huge hit, and a lifeline for many families, especially to medically vulnerable residents who were concerned about the safety of visiting the grocery store during the pandemic. Since we are not yet out of the health and financial impacts of the pandemic, we decided to bring the program back for the spring. We started at the family sites on June 3, and will visit all of our public housing and RAD properties by the end of the month. HACC and Top Box staff and volunteers will be bringing boxes of high-quality fresh produce and frozen meat options to residents' doorsteps. Overall, we expect to reach over 1500 families with this initiative.

#### **Cradles to Crayons**

The property managers at the family sites received shipments of children's diapers in various sizes from Cradles to Crayons on June 9. Each of the family sites will be receiving 129 boxes of diapers to distribute to residents.

### **Partnership for a Healthier America**

The Partnership for a Healthier America has received funding for a pilot program seeking to provide low-income families with 12 weeks' worth of fresh produce in free weekly boxes. The HACC surveyed residents with households large enough to participate in the program and over 300 families have expressed interest. We are working with the Partnership for a Healthier America<sup>1</sup> and the Greater Chicago Food Depository to arrange for boxes to be delivered to the family sites in Chicago Heights and Ford Heights.

### **Internet Access**

The Internet Essentials Partnership Program<sup>2</sup> provided a lifeline to almost 150 families who chose to participate this year. While many school districts stepped up to offer connectivity options to families who needed support with e-learning, we were able to help those families who did not receive adequate assistance from their school districts. The pandemic has highlighted that Internet access even in non-pandemic times is a crucial tool for socioeconomic mobility, for accessing healthcare, and for education, and so we have agreed to extend the program for participating families for another 10 months, until April 2022. The program is a relatively low-cost initiative for us, costing roughly \$1,300 per month.

The HACC is also exploring other opportunities to work with Internet Service Providers to bring Internet access to more households through the Federal Communications Commission's Emergency Broadband Benefit program.

### **Increasing Outreach**

Now that the Human Services team has built a diverse network of providers for programming and referrals across the county, the most important challenge is increasing the impact of our outreach. Where we are most looking to improve is on sustained interaction. We currently provide personalized assistance from the beWELL inbox, but need to improve on the proportion of participants who maintain engagement after an initial contact. Similarly, when referred to outside services, residents sometimes do not complete the requisite follow-up items even when HACC staff members or staff at the external organizations try to reach them.

### **Zendesk**

Working with the IT Department, we recently signed a contract for the Zendesk Professional Suite. With this software, the team will be able to organize interactions and conversations with residents between staff members, generate reports on response time and quality of interactions, including whether requests have been resolved. We are also exploring an option for text-based interactions.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Partnership for a Healthier America" is this organization's chosen name. The HACC is not in a legal partnership arrangement either with "Partnership for a Healthier America" or with the Greater Chicago Food Depository. These arrangements instead are contractual in nature.

<sup>2</sup> The "Internet Essentials Partnership Program" is the name chosen by Comcast for its program to quickly connect large numbers of students and families to broadband access at home. The HACC is not in a legal partnership arrangement with Comcast or with the "Internet Essentials Partnership Program." These arrangements are contractual.

### **Teaming up with Mobility and Family Self-Sufficiency**

The Human Services team has begun offering brief presentations at the beginning of weekly meetings that the Mobility and Family Self Sufficiency teams have with prospective participants. We offer a brief overview of the resources that our team can offer families, underscore the importance of our communications and social media to staying informed of the latest opportunities, and provide the means to get in touch with our team immediately.

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

Chief Financial Officer Karl Becker noted the lateness of the hour, and dispensed with a full oral report. Mr. Becker reported that the HACC had reached the end of its fiscal year and he referred the Commissioners to the appropriate sections of the Meeting Book for the detailed financial reports. He invited the Commissioners to submit any questions to him via email or telephone.

Commissioner Polly Kuehl asked whether the decline in the net assets that was described in the auditor's report will be made up this year, and Mr. Becker replied in the affirmative.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Wendy Walker-Williams requested a motion to adjourn the meeting of the Board, which was made by Commissioner Nilda Soler and seconded by Commissioner Elaine Kroll. The motion to adjourn carried with all "ayes" by a roll call vote.

The Meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



---

Richard J. Monocchio  
Executive Director



---

DATE