



**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COOK COUNTY  
REGULAR PUBLIC SESSION  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024 12:00 NOON**

**ROLL CALL:**

<b>COMMISSIONERS PRESENT</b>	
<b>Wendy Walker Williams – Chair</b>	In Person
<b>Polly Kuehl – Vice Chair</b>	In Person
<b>Nilda Soler – Commissioner</b>	In Person
<b>Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone – Commissioner</b>	In Person
<b>Elaine Kroll – Commissioner</b>	In Person
<b>Eric L. Slaughter – Commissioner</b>	In-Person
<b>Herb Porter – Commissioner</b>	Absent
<b>HACC STAFF PRESENT</b>	
<b>Danita W. Childers, Executive Director</b>	In Person
<b>Zellores Harrison, Executive Assistant</b>	In Person
<b>Bernina Moore, Board Advisor</b>	In Person
<b>Kathleen Grady-Peralta, Comptroller/Treasurer</b>	In Person
<b>Deborah O’Donnell, Director of Procurement</b>	In Person
<b>Sheryl Seiling, Director of Rent Assistance</b>	In Person
<b>Raquel Burnette, Director of Human Resources</b>	In Person
<b>Mark Davis, Information Technology</b>	In Person
<b>Ernest Lofton, Director of Information Technology</b>	Zoom
<b>Chalone Liddell, Regional Director, South</b>	Zoom
<b>Darrick Shafer, Regional Director, North</b>	Zoom
<b>Maria Reyes-Collins, Director of Occupancy &amp; Compliance</b>	Zoom

<b>Legal Counsel</b>	
Jon A. Duncan, General Counsel	In Person
<b>Public Attendees</b>	
Lizzie Kane, Chicago Tribune	In Person
Curt Beckman, USI Insurance	In Person
T.J. Connors, USI Insurance	In Person
Jared Kelly, CEI Media Group	In Person
Don Davis, Bronner Group	In Person

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair Wendy Walker Williams called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners at approximately 12:02 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call:** Zellores Harrison called the roll. Commissioners Walker-Williams, Kuehl, Soler, Salleh-Barone, Kroll, and Slaughter attended the meeting in person and were present for the roll call; Commissioner Porter was absent. A Quorum was established.
- III. **Public Comments:** Based on HACC’s public participation rules, public participants are given three (3) minutes to address the Board. Chair Wendy Walker Williams opened the floor to public comments. No public comments were made.
- IV. **Approval of the Consent Agenda:** Commissioner Elaine Kroll presented a Motion to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2024 Regular Board and Executive Session Meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”
- V. **Presentation:** Don Davis of the Bronner Group presented the Compensation and Benefits Study results. Bronner solicited 20 comparable PHAs located in the Midwest to participate in the survey, 10 entities responded. The survey aimed to assess HACC’s competitive alignment within the market of regional public housing agencies for employee compensation levels and benefits policies. The results indicated that 5 positions were paid below the 25th percentile compared to similar positions in other entities. Recommendations included prioritizing adjustments for those roles. However, work hours and benefits were generally in line with other entities. Commissioner Slaughter requested a detailed copy of the study.

Jared Kelly, president of CEI Media Group, (a boutique agency with a national footprint that helps clients with a variety of communication needs, including strategy, media relations, marketing, and special events), presented the services it will provide HACC

related to strategic communications, including the new three-year strategic plan. Emergency and crisis management capabilities were discussed, highlighting that CEI Media focuses on planned and general PR but can consult or refer specialized crisis managers when needed.

The session concluded with appreciation for the presented data, suggestions for more detailed follow-up reports, and a consensus to address priority areas in compensation and operational policies.

- VI. Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 19 A Resolution to Adopt a Travel Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County:** Resolution 2024-HACC-19 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to adopt the Travel Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County which will clarify the rules for reimbursement of travel expenses and the requirements for authorization for out-of-town travel.

After the presentation by Comptroller/Treasurer Kathleen Grady-Peralta, no matters were discussed.

Commissioner Nilda Soler made a Motion to authorize the Housing Authority of Cook County to adopt a Travel Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County. Commissioner Vice Chair Polly Kuehl seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

**Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 24 A Resolution Authorizing Payment by the Housing Authority of Cook County to the Cook County Treasurer’s Office in Lieu of Real Estate Taxes:** Resolution 2024-HACC-24 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to pay the Treasurer of Cook County the total sum of \$399,760.00, which will be paid as follows: The sum of \$49,539.00 will be paid via the Low-Income Public Housing Operating Fund, and \$350,221.00, will be paid via the RAD Operating Fund, in lieu of real estate taxes.

After the presentation by Comptroller/Treasurer Kathleen Grady-Peralta, no matters were discussed.

Commissioner Eric L. Slaughter made a Motion to authorize Payment by the Housing Authority of Cook County to the Cook County Treasurer’s Office in Lieu of Real Estate Taxes. Vice Chair Polly Kuehl seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

**Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 25 A Resolution Ratifying the Housing Authority of Cook County Benefits Plan:** Resolution 2024 - HACC-25 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to ratify the Housing Authority of Cook County’s Health Plan (“Benefits Plan”) for its employees with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (for health insurance) and Mutual Omaha (for life, dental and vision insurance). Through collective bargaining the Housing Authority of Cook County has secured a technical agreement from Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Local 73, who has agreed to the changes regarding the Benefits Plan, which will go into effect on December 1, 2024.

Director of Human Resources, Raquel Burnette, and Benefits Administrator, Megan Hudson, stated the Benefits Plan was developed in response to concerns that the Housing Authority of Cook County was not able to fully participate in specific plans offered by Cook County. Curt Beckman and T.J. Connors of USI Insurance, further explained that the new Benefits Plan offers several improvements, including the addition of a Difference Card (pre-loaded with monies for medical costs), lower deductibles, lower maximum out-of-pocket costs, and lower co-pays.

After the presentation by Director of Human Resources Raquel Burnette, no matters were discussed.

Commissioner Nilda Soler made a Motion to adopting ratification of the Housing Authority of Cook County's Benefits Plan for its employees. Commissioner Elaine Kroll seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all "ayes."

**VII. Executive Director's Report:** In an effort to keep Commissioners, staff and the public informed, the Executive Director Childers introduced new staff, along with the finalization of the July 2023 Audit Report; it was suggested the auditors should present at the Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. Leasing has commenced at Otto Veterans Square, all 82 units are to be leased by the Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> deadline, upon which the Board took no official actions.

**VIII. Other Business:** Chair Walker Williams discussed the lack of individual committees among the commissioners. Approximately a month and a half ago, an email was sent asking who might be interested in joining the Housing and Community Development, Human Resources, or Management and Review Committees, or in joining Commissioners Kuehl and Slaughter on the Finance Committee. Commissioner Slaughter added that once the committees define their charters – the charters can serve as bylaws for the committees. For those who volunteer, there will be discussions at the December 2024 Board meeting regarding the committees' goals and objectives to establish charters, with plans to launch all committees by January 2025. There is no limit on the number of commissioners who can serve on a committee.

A question was raised about the current vacant seats on the Board. General Counsel Jon A. Duncan clarified that there are three open seats, two of which are designated for residents. He also reminded attendees of a prior inquiry regarding the Open Meetings Act and the definition of a "Quorum – 2 or more committee members discussing Board data." Relevant information was shared, and members were encouraged to review it and reach out with questions.

Additionally, the Board's travel policy was clarified, emphasizing cost efficiency and necessity. 86 employees attended the first Wellness Fair with a variety of Health Wellness vendors.

- IX. Adjournment:** Seeing that there was no further business, Chair Walker-Williams made a Motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kuehl seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all "ayes," and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:57 p.m.



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**Wendy Walker-Williams**  
**Chair**

**November 14, 2024**



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**Danita W. Childers**  
**Executive Directory and Secretary**

**November 14, 2024**