



**JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF COOK COUNTY
REGULAR PUBLIC SESSION
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024 12:00 NOON**

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSONERS PRESENT	
Wendy Walker Williams – Chair	In Person
Polly Kuehl – Vice Chair	In Person
Nilda Soler – Commissioner	In Person
Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone – Commissioner	In Person
Elaine Kroll – Commissioner	In Person
Eric L. Slaughter – Commissioner	In-Person
Herb Porter – Commissioner	In Person
HACC STAFF PRESENT	
Danita W. Childers, Executive Director	In Person
Zellores Harrison, Executive Assistant	In Person
Kathleen Grady-Peralta, Comptroller/Treasurer	In Person
Deborah O'Donnell, Director of Procurement	In Person
Sheryl Seiling, Director of Rent Assistance	In Person
Raquel Burnette, Director of Human Resources	In Person
Ernest Lofton, Director of Information Technology	In Person
Chalone Liddell, Regional Director, South	In Person
Darrick Shafer, Regional Director, North	In Person
Maria Reyes-Collins, Director of Occupancy & Compliance	In Person
Legal Counsel	
Jon A. Duncan, General Counsel	In Person

Public Attendees	
Bruce Schiff, Rubin Brown	In Person
Lauren Mack, Reyes Kurson	In Person
Lizzy Bortoto, SEIU Local 73	In Person
Daniel Webb, HACC Housing Specialist	In Person
Donnell Dubose, HACC Housing Specialist	In Person
Lizzie Kane, Chicago Tribune	In Person

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair Wendy Walker Williams called to order the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners at approximately 12:00 p.m.

- II. **Roll Call:** Zellores Harrison called the roll. Commissioners Walker-Williams, Kuehl, Soler, Salleh-Barone, Kroll, Slaughter and Porter attended the meeting in person and were present for the roll call. 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. Lizzy Bortoto, Director of the Cook County Division for SEIU Local 73, addressed the Board of Commissioners. Local 73 represents the administrative, clerical, and maintenance staff of the Housing Authority. Lizzy shared the union’s bargaining goals, which include raising pay for the lowest-paid workers, recognizing seniority and longevity, and improving overall wages. Daniel Webb, a Housing Specialist at the HACC Chicago Heights CMO location, also expressed concerns to the Board, highlighting that employees' wages are not keeping up with rising inflation and are not competitive with salaries offered by other companies. He asked the Authority to consider exploring an increase in staff cost of living adjustments. Donnell Dubose, a Housing Specialist at the HACC Downtown location, raised concerns about salary discrepancies, which lead to employee vacancies for Housing Specialists and an increased workload when those positions remain unfilled. He requested that the Authority conduct a wage discrepancy evaluation to improve employee retention and gain new hires. Chair Walker Williams expressed thanks to each individual that spoke.

- IV. **Approval of the Consent Agenda:** Vice Chair Polly Kuehl presented a Motion to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2024 Regular Board Meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

- V. **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 Comptroller/Treasurer Kathleen Grady-Peralta's presentation, the following topics were discussed: Commissioner Slaughter inquired about the sources used by HACC to develop the Travel Policy. Comptroller/Treasurer Grady-Peralta explained that the information was gathered from multiple sources, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Illinois Local Government Act, as these are the guidelines required by HUD and the State of Illinois. Commissioner Slaughter also asked if there was a difference between the guidelines for HUD-related travel and training and those for non-HUD-related activities. Comptroller/Treasurer Grady-Peralta clarified that there is no difference, as the agency is funded by HUD, and all travel and training must adhere to HUD's policies and guidelines. Grady-Peralta also explained the budget and approval process for training and travel within the authority to the Commissioners. Commissioner Slaughter requested that Board Resolution 2024 – HACC 19, a resolution to adopt a Travel Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County, be tabled to allow all Commissioners sufficient time to review it before making a final decision. Vice Chair Polly Kuehl suggested that the policy be discussed at the upcoming Finance Committee meeting in November to gain a better understanding. She proposed bringing it before the Commissioners at the November board meeting for a vote.

Commissioner Eric Slaughter made a Motion to authorize the Housing Authority of Cook County to table adopting Board Resolution 2024 – HACC 19 A Resolution to Adopt a Travel Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County. Commissioner Herb Porter seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

Motion: Motion to Approve Commissioners' Previous Travel Expenses: this Motion requested the Commissioners to approve and vote on Commissioners' Previous Travel Expenses of \$5,403.15 for Nashville Training. All travel expenses by Board Members will be approved by a roll call vote at an open meeting as required by Section 15 of the Illinois Local Government Travel Expense Control Act. The Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) Travel Policy includes the official procedures for Board members, employees, residents and other authorized individuals traveling on official HACC business.

Commissioner Eric Slaughter made a Motion to Approve Commissioners' Previous Travel Expenses authorizing the approval and vote on Commissioners' Previous Travel Expenses of \$5,403.15 for Nashville Training. Commissioner Nilda Soler seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

Motion: Motion to Approve Commissioners' Upcoming Travel Expenses: this Motion is asking the Commissioners to approve and vote on Commissioners' Pending Travel Expenses of \$3,323.60 for Houston Training. All travel expenses by Board Members will be approved by a roll call vote at an open meeting as required by Section 15 of the Illinois Local Government Travel Expense Control Act. The Housing Authority of Cook County of Cook County (HACC) Travel Policy includes the official procedures for Board members, employees, residents and other authorized individuals traveling on official HACC business.

After the presentation, the following topic was discussed: Vice Chair Polly Kuehl questioned the limit on how many Commissioners could attend a meeting. Vice Chair Kuehl also requested that Commissioners who attend conferences and training share the information with the other board members. General Counsel Jon Duncan explained that, under the Open Meetings Act, a majority of a quorum cannot attend. Commissioner Herb Porter questioned this interpretation and requested his disagreement be noted. Both Commissioner Porter and Commissioner Slaughter asked General Counsel Jon Duncan to provide, at the next Board Meeting, the specific guidelines from the Open Meetings Act regarding the limitation on Commissioners attending conferences where authority business might be discussed.

Commissioner Nilda Soler made a Motion to Approve Commissioners' Previous Travel Expenses authorizing the approval and vote on Commissioners' Previous Travel Expenses of \$3,323.60 for Houston Training. Commissioner Eric Slaughter seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all "ayes."

Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 20 A Resolution Setting the Regular Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule for the Calendar Year 2025: Resolution 2024-HACC-20 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to Setting the Regular Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule for the Calendar Year 2025. Adoption and publication of an annual schedule of public meetings for each calendar year is required by Section 2.02(a) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act [5ILCS 120/2.02(a)]. The proposed regular public meeting schedule for 2025 contemplates that the Board of Commissioners meetings will be held on the second Thursdays of each month at 12:00 Noon on the 3rd floor conference facility at 10 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, IL. In the event that scheduling changes later become necessary, the HACC By-Laws authorize the Board of Commissioners to adopt a change in the meeting schedule with proper public notice.

After the presentation by General Counsel Jon Duncan, no matters were discussed.

Vice Chair Polly Kuehl made a Motion to authorize the Housing Authority of Cook County to Adopt the Resolution Setting the Regular Housing Authority of Cook County

Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule for the Calendar Year 2025. Commissioner Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 21 A Resolution to Adopting a New Whistleblower Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County: Resolution 2024 - HACC-21 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to Adopt a New Whistleblower Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County. The Illinois General Assembly has recently adopted the Public Act 103-867, which made significant statutory amendments to the Illinois Whistleblower Act [740ILCS 174/1, et seq.]; and the Governor of Illinois approved the statutory amendments to the Illinois Whistleblower Act on August 9, 2024; and the Housing Authority of Cook County’s previous Whistleblower Policy does not satisfy all of the requirements of the Illinois Whistleblower Act amendments which will go into effect on January 1, 2025; and the Housing Authority of Cook County must adopt a new Whistleblower Policy on or before January 1, 2025; in order to satisfy the requirements of the Illinois Whistleblower Act amendments which will go into effect on that date; and the Housing Authority’s staff has proposed a new Whistleblower Policy which will satisfy the amendments to the Illinois Whistleblower Act which will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

After General Counsel Jon Duncan’s presentation, the following matters were discussed: Jon Duncan noted that the Housing Authority of Cook County's Whistleblower Policy includes an optional protection for vendors, residents, and program participants who report misconduct in good faith. Commissioner Herb Porter requested that Jon Duncan explain the rationale behind this additional protection by which he offered both hypothetical examples and real-life situations that have occurred in other Housing Authorities. General Counsel Jon Duncan also mentioned that the Housing Authority of Cook County is preparing an RFP to hire outside Ethics counsel to investigate complaints from vendors, residents, and program participants, as well as to appoint an Inspector General. Vice Chair Polly Kuehl suggested adding a provision to the policy requiring that the Board Chair or Board members be notified whenever a report is made as well as the process and procedures of making a report.

Vice Chair Polly Kuehl made a Motion to Adopting a New Whistleblower Policy for the Housing Authority of Cook County. Commissioner Dr. Normah Salleh-Barone seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 22 A Resolution to Authorize Adopting the 2025 Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher Program: Resolution 2024 - HACC-22 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to Adopt the 2025 Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. HAAC is required to review its payment standards annually based on the new Small Area Fair Market Rents (SAFMRS) set by HUD to determine if an adjustment is needed. Pursuant to 24 CFR Part 982.503(b), the payment standards set by the PHA must fall within the basic range of 90% - 110% of the HUD approved SAFMR. The SAFMRs are set at the zip code level and are

based solely on gross rent paid in the open market. No other demographic or economic information is used in the calculation of the SAFMRs.

After Director of Rent Assistance Sheryl Seiling presentation, the following matters were discussed: Commissioner Eric Slaughter raised concerns about rising property taxes for landlords and how that impacts residents and their rent portions. Director of Rent Assistance Seiling explained that when a landlord requests a rent increase for a tenant, HACC will review the current reasonable rent in the area. If the rent is deemed reasonable and does not affect the tenant's portion, the increase will be approved.

Vice Chair Polly Kuehl made a Motion to Authorize Adopting the 2025 Payment Standards for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Commissioner Eric Slaughter seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 23 A Resolution to Authorize an Amendment to the Annual Plan to Incorporate Changes Related to the Housing Opportunity Through Opportunity Act (HOTMA): Resolution 2024 - HACC-23 authorizes the Housing Authority of Cook County to Authorize an Amendment to the Annual Plan to Incorporate Changes Related to the Housing Opportunity Through Opportunity Act (HOTMA). Anytime the HACC wishes to make a significant amendment to its Annual Plan, the proposed amendments must be released for public comment and a public hearing must be held. In order to comply with the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act (HOTMA), specifically Sections 102 and 104 of the Act, the Housing Authority of Cook County (HACC) must amend its 2024 Annual Plan. The HACC’s Implementation date of Sections 102 and 104 of HOTMA and the effective date of the Amendment to the Plan was scheduled for January 1, 2025. The U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) is experiencing technical issues with the implementation that will affect the implementation of some, but not all, provisions of the HOTMA. HUD requires the HACC to seek approval from its Board of Commissioners to amend its Annual Plan.

Following Director of Rent Assistance Sheryl Seiling's presentation, the following matters were discussed: Director Seiling informed the Commissioners about potential changes that can be implemented, despite HUD facing technical issues for the January 1, 2025 implementation. HACC can still adjust the Annual Plan, including changes related to assets, income, self-certification and reexamination processes. Additionally, HACC held a public comment session and a public hearing on Thursday, September 19, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. Three people attended remotely, via Zoom, and no comments were made.

Commissioner Nilda Soler made a Motion to Authorize an Amendment to the Annual Plan to Incorporate Changes Related to the Housing Opportunity Through Opportunity Act (HOTMA). Commissioner Herb Porter seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes.”

Resolution: Board Resolution 2024 – HACC – 24 A Resolution to Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with Respect to the Acquisition and Renovation of Affordable Housing in Calumet City, Illinois and Park Forest, Illinois. (CLOSED SESSION)

- VI. Open Meeting Reconvenes:** Following the Executive Session, the Board returned to Public Session at approximately 2:07 p.m. Chair Walker Williams noted for the record that no votes were taken during the Executive Session other than to conclude the Executive Session and to return to Public Session.

Commissioner Nilda Soler made a Motion to Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with Respect to the Acquisition and Renovation of Affordable Housing in Calumet City, Illinois and Park Forest, Illinois. Commissioner Elaine Kroll seconded the Motion. The motion carried with six “ayes” and one “abstention” by Commissioner Kuehl.

- VII. Motion to move to Executive Session in order to discuss the purchase, sale and lease of real estate and litigation [Open Meetings Act Exemptions 2(c)(5), and 2(c)(11)]:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Exemptions 2(c)(5), and 2(c)(11), Chair Wendy Walker Williams moved to convene in Closed Session in order to discuss the purchase, sale and lease of real estate and litigation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Eric Slaughter. The motion carried with all “ayes.” The Board moved into Executive Session at approximately 1:23 p.m., for which minutes are kept separately.

- VIII. Executive Director’s Report:** In an effort to keep Commissioners, staff and the public informed, the Executive Director Childers provided a brief overview of significant activities at the agency, upon which the Board took no official actions.

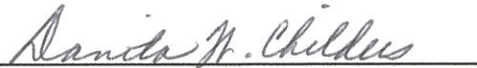
- IX. Update to the Financial Statements:** Executive Director Danita W. Childers provided the Commissioners with an update to the Financial Summary of the South Suburban and North Suburban properties. The Executive Director pointed out that the South Suburban properties are struggling more than the North Suburban properties. HACC plans to address this with the \$1.5 million federal appropriation that Senator Duckworth has secured for the South Suburban properties. HACC received notification from HUD regarding the grant. HACC has been in conversation with outside counsel, Rod Solomon, regarding requesting relief from HUD for some of these properties that have very low rents. HACC plans to pursue seeking relief from HUD to enable the authority to increase rents for such properties.

- X. **Adjournment:** Seeing that there was no further business, Chair Walker-Williams made a Motion to adjourn. Commissioner Slaughter seconded the Motion. The motion carried with all “ayes,” and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:15 p.m.



Wendy Walker-Williams
Chair

November 14, 2024



Danita W. Childers
Executive Directory and Secretary

November 14, 2024