



HOUSING CONNECT

MINUTES OF THE ELECTRONIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 18, 2020

PRESENT (video):

Jennifer Johnston – Chair
Mark Johnston – Vice Chair
Erin Litvack – Commissioner
Spencer Moffat – Commissioner
Christine Nguyen – Commissioner
Gwen White – Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT (video):

Janice Kimball – Chief Executive Officer
Andre Bartlome – Chief Finance Officer
Zach Bale – Chief Programs Officer
Mike Kienast – Chief Operations Officer
Jeremy Runia – Real Estate Development Director
Troy Hart – Real Estate Development Manager
Dan Pincock – Executive Administrator

EXCUSED:

Phil Bernal – Commissioner

COMMENCE

Chair Jennifer Johnston welcomed everyone, and the meeting commenced at 11:45 a.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one from the public in attendance.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

For the Consent Agenda, CEO Janice Kimball pointed out that after reviewing the October Board Meeting minutes it was discovered that the minutes were incomplete in regards to details of the Moving To Work (MTW) presentation section. Chair Jennifer Johnston asked that the October Board Meeting minutes be provided at the December Board Meeting and that the additional details should be redlined for the Board to read what had been added.

Resolution #1022 – Re-certification of Utah Nonprofits Association (UNA) Standards of Ethics: Included as part of the Consent Agenda was Resolution #1022. Commissioner Nguyen motioned to approve the re-certification, and Commissioner White seconded the motion. All Board members in attendance (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voted in favor, and Resolution #1022 was approved.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 11:48 a.m., Commissioner White motioned for the Board to enter Executive Session in order to discuss some real estate transactions and a personnel issue. Vice Chair Moffat seconded the motion, which passed with all Board members present (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voting in favor.

At 12:13 p.m., Commissioner White motioned for the Board to return to regular (open) session, and Commissioner Mark Johnston seconded the motion. All Board members in attendance (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) were in favor, and the Board returned to regular session.

4. ACTION ITEMS

Resolution #1021A – Authorization of Section 8 preference (amendment): Housing Connect CEO Janice Kimball explained that the preference which the Board approved earlier this year (and later extended) inadvertently added age to the preference and that Housing Connect wanted to broaden it to meet the criteria for those who are at risk of COVID complications via this amendment, as well as to extend the deadline to June 30, 2021. Housing Connect Chief Programs Officer (CPO) Zach Bale added that the community is doing a great job of coordinating this preference (and the 25 vouchers from Move On) and that the amendment is needed for the vouchers to be implemented effectively.

Chair Jennifer Johnston clarified that this is the same resolution as approved last month, except that the age limitation (55 and older) has been removed in order to expand the preference and that the date has been extended to June 30.

Commissioner Mark Johnston asked whether the Coordinated Entry group is using the current CDC guidelines for the COVID-related provisions. CPO Zach Bale was able to look up the Coordinated Entry Standards for meeting this condition: 1) households containing a person who is 60 years of age or older who has an underlying health condition, as outlined by the CDC and health departments; 2) households containing a person who is 60 years of age or older; or 3) households containing a person with an underlying health condition as outlined by CDC and health departments.

Commissioner Mark Johnston expressed his concern that if age is taken out of the provision for prioritizing these vouchers that it seemed to him that the agency would then not be following what the CDC suggests, which is that age is one of the two primary reasons for hospitalization and death due to COVID (the other being underlying conditions). CEO Janice Kimball remarked that age is being removed from Housing Connect's requirements and that the agency will defer to what the CDC and health departments recommend, which, as Chair Jennifer Johnston pointed out, includes age as part of their criteria. CEO Janice Kimball pointed out that the amended resolution is broader so that someone could be younger and have the risk factors and qualify but that age is still taken into account.

Commissioner Litvack motioned for the Board to approve amended Resolution #1021, and Commissioner White seconded, with all Board members present (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voting in favor.

Calendar-Year Budgets: Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Andre Bartlome presented the budgets for the two entities owned by Housing Connect which operate on a calendar-year budget: Villa Charmant and Frontier. Both properties are owned 100% by Housing Connect, as the investor partners were unwound earlier this year. He said that there was no significant difference from what was budgeted and that Frontier is expected to make a \$13,000 profit, while it is anticipated that Villa Charmant will make \$35,000 in profits. He further explained that there with the re-financing of Villa Charmant earlier this year, the agency plans to use the funds from the re-finance savings for capital items, which is budgeted to be \$133,000.

Vice Chair Moffat motioned to approve the calendar-year budgets, and Commissioner Nguyen seconded the motion. All of the Board members in attendance (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voted affirmatively, and the calendar-year budgets were approved.

Resolution #1023 – Sunset Gardens: Having discussed this resolution during the Housing Opportunities, Inc. (HOI) Board meeting, Commissioner Nguyen motioned to approve this resolution, and Vice Chair Moffat seconded the motion, with all of the Board members in attendance (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voting affirmatively, and Resolution #1023 was approved.

Housing Connect audit report: This action was moved to the December Board meeting.

Staff holiday gift: As discussed in the Executive Session, it was proposed that a holiday bonus be given to Housing Connect employees and partners. CFO Andre Bartlome clarified that all of the bonus money would come out of the Employee Support Fund, which would diminish this account further, and this will need to be re-visited again next year. Commissioner Litvack motioned for the Board to approve the proposed bonus (\$125), and Commissioner Nguyen seconded the motion, which received favorable support from all of the Board members in attendance (Chair Jennifer Johnston, Vice Chair Moffat, Commissioners Mark Johnston, Litvack, Nguyen, and White).

5. CEO'S REPORT

Housing Connect CEO Janice Kimball provided an update to the Board on the New City Plaza project. Presently, the goal is to figure out how to bring both buildings together and to have a central entry point/corridor (Building C) between the two properties. She invited Housing Connect Real Estate Development Manager Troy Hart to present the architectural drawings and other information. Troy Hart gave some background on the property and provided an aerial map, an artist's rendering of the new addition, and additional drawings showing layout, office, storage, and leased spaces. For the relocation of tenants, CEO Janice Kimball explained that Housing Connect is still working through the process, and once a construction partner has been identified, the agency will have an idea of how the construction partner wants to stage the relocation process and will proceed accordingly. She pointed out that both Housing Connect and

the Housing Authority of Salt Lake City have paused on leasing because of the disruption and costs associated with relocating so many people.

CEO Janice Kimball provided brief updates on other agency activities:

- 50th year anniversary: Unfortunately, due to COVID, the activities around the anniversary have taken a back seat. There is a video being worked on. The official anniversary date is the day after the Board meeting: Thursday, November 19.

- Housing inspections: Inspections have been done to make sure Housing Connect is addressing health and safety issues. Inspectors have been in all of Housing Connect's physical units to change out filters, check smoke and CO2 detectors, look for leaks, and address any housekeeping issues. She noted there were some minor issues but no major issues, and that, most importantly, staff were kept safe.

- Housing Connect has been notified that it will receive 75 new Mainstream vouchers (for non-elderly and disabled households).

- The agency is watching closely the continuing resolution budget issue (the budget is set to expire on December 11), and it is uncertain whether Congress will pass new budgets, although housing is considered to be an essential service.

- CDC's eviction moratorium will lapse on December 31. It is unlikely any action under the new administration will take place until February 1. On the state level, the Utah Housing Affordability Commission has made a request to Governor Herbert and Governor-elect Cox to extend the rent eviction moratorium and also to find funding to bridge the gap for rent assistance on both sides (relief for tenants and relief for property owners/landlords).

- Moving To Work (MTW): CEO Janice Kimball discussed and presented Housing Connect's views regarding Moving To Work. She presented the following slides and information:

Housing Connect's vision

- 1) To preserve and expand affordable housing options and to leverage the platform of housing for the greater good;
- 2) Access to affordable housing is a game changer, and the benefits to residents, if access to supportive services is included, can be amplified.

MTW's statutory objectives

The three areas that Housing Connect has to focus on:

- 1) Using federal dollars more efficiently;
- 2) Increasing housing choices for low-income families;
- 3) Helping residents to become self-sufficient with employment services (i.e., promoting self-sufficiency)

How Housing Connect plans to use federal dollars more efficiently

- 1) Reduce functions that are labor intensive and overly complicated. The biggest one is how rent and income are calculated. The rent study will help with that.
- 2) Streamline documentation, policies, and inspections by converting public housing to Project-Based Section 8. Housing Connect would look to merge its public housing into Project-Based Section 8. By doing so, the agency would be able to standardize all of the processes and procedures.
- 3) Implement site-based waiting lists. This will allow Housing Connect to manage more like a market property for its public housing properties.
- 4) Allow residents to self-certify assets under \$50,000. Housing Connect tenants do not have those assets, and obtaining the verification is really cumbersome.
- 5) Implement risk-based assessments for HQS. Allow for use of inspection from other entities and schedule HQS by location instead of by time.

Increase housing choices for low-income families

- 1) Convert public housing units to Project-Based Section 8. This is a game changer and will allow Housing Connect to preserve those properties long-term and to layer in services where appropriate. Under Project-Based Vouchers, Housing Connect would have the money to take care of the property and to manage it well and contract or bring in needed services.
- 2) Housing Connect would use Project-Based Vouchers to spur development of properties, increase Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units, and access to the southern part of Salt Lake County/areas of opportunity.
- 3) Work with landlords to remove barriers and increase and incentivize the use of (HCV) vouchers. Housing Connect would look to

what other MTW agencies have done and implement best practices.

Promote self-sufficiency

1) Improve outcomes for all households by increasing services offered to residents with immediate focus on health, education, and employment. Housing Connect feels that the rent study promotes self-sufficiency because it keeps more of the tenants' income in their pockets when their income increases, but Housing Connect wants to improve outcomes for all families, understanding that self-sufficiency varies by household.

2) Implement a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program that incentivizes education, financial well-being, and better employment opportunities. Housing Connect knows that its FSS program would change with the rent study (because of income changes), and so, there is a placeholder in the application for Housing Connect to re-design its FSS program.

Upcoming approvals and deadlines include the following: A draft MTW Plan is available for the public; the Public Hearing will be November 30; more focus groups will be held with tenants; key partners/organizations and advocates meetings are planned. CEO Janice Kimball told the Board that it needs to be comfortable enough with Housing Connect's MTW plans to adopt the application at the December Board Meeting. The application is due January 8, 2021. Board members have been sent a document with general information and asked the Board for its feedback, especially on the opportunities and challenges sections. She added that pushback (if any) from the community will be on how the rent study works because it does increase, initially, what a household will pay for rent. Housing Connect will hold a meeting for Board members (planned for December 9) to ask questions and talk through any issues.

Commissioner Litvack asked about matching escrow to incentivize savings for participants (perhaps through the agency's fundraising entity). CEO Janice Kimball responded that it was a good idea to consider, noting that Housing Connect has partnered with AAA Credit in the past, which has an individual development account that matches savings.

6. QUARTERLY REPORTS

Chair Jennifer Johnston wanted more information on the financial report and asked that the report be discussed in more detail at the December Board Meeting with a forecast for the rest of the year.

7. COMMISSIONERS INPUT

Commissioner Litvack said that the County is involved with Utah Community Action and the rental assistance program, and it is aware that rental assistance funds are being depleted and is looking at that and considering options to support the efforts. She also said that there are a lot of busy staff working on the homelessness situation and, generally, the overall health response. She noted that the health system is hosting about 150 people in the quarantine and isolation facility, and the County is seeing upticks across the board.

Commissioner White informed the Board that at the last Resident Advisory Board (RAB) meeting Housing Connect's Supportive Housing and Services Director Russell Opatz introduced the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) framework and went into the next steps and how Housing Connect envisions working with the RAB. The RAB approved the framework.

Commissioner Mark Johnston noted that the Kem Gardner Center has reported looking at ways to strengthen how homelessness is looked at by the state, including having a lead homelessness person directing things (whereas in the past, there has been a coordinating committee). He was encouraged that it might really formalize structures around the state and give the state more direction and be more intentional on reducing homelessness.

Commissioner Nguyen participated in the NAHRO conference and said she is really enjoying it and that the presenters have been really focused. She, too, is encouraged by what she is seeing on homelessness.

Vice Chair Moffat told the Board that on the real estate front, things are about the same as they have been over the last few months.

ADJOURN

No other items were discussed, and at 1:13 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Pincock
Executive Administrator