



## HOUSING CONNECT

### MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2023 REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 15, 2023

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**PRESENT:**

Spencer Moffat – Chair  
Phil Bernal – Vice Chair  
Kat Johnson – Commissioner  
Erin Litvack – Commissioner (virtual)  
Christine Nguyen – Commissioner  
Gwen White – Commissioner

**EXCUSED:**

Wendy Leonelli – Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Janice Kimball – Chief Executive Officer  
Andre Bartlome – Chief Financial Officer  
Mike Kienast – Chief Operations Officer  
Marni Timmerman – Chief Administrative Officer  
Kirk Moorhead – Real Estate Development Director  
Zach Bale – Chief Programs Officer (virtual)  
Jarín Blackham – Information Technology Director  
Paul Rooker – Human Resources Director  
Dan Pincock – Executive Administrator

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**COMMENCE**

The Housing Connect November 2023 Board of Commissioners Meeting was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, and commenced at 11:38 a.m. Chair Spencer Moffat facilitated and led the meeting.

**1. GUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no guests or members of the public in attendance.

**2. BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Andre Bartlome mentioned to the Board that the Finance Committee Meeting was held on Thursday, November 9. He reviewed the Housing Connect Summary Budget for 2024 and various other points from the meeting, which included: Central Office and Central Maintenance, Public Housing (operating and capital funding), other properties, the Housing Choice Voucher program (including Moving To Work's funding of barrier removal and landlord incentives), Mainstream and Emergency Housing Vouchers, other voucher programs (such as, supportive housing), Resident Services set-aside funds, the development fund, etc.

Housing Connect anticipates a \$1.6 million net income for the 2024 budget. Minus the resident services and the development fund, the real bottom line is expected to have a \$852,000 net income. Including the \$17 million from the 30 different entities which Housing Connect oversees, there is a \$78 million (umbrella) budget.

The agency anticipates budgeting for 141 positions, resulting in \$8.5 million in salaries. There are just under \$12 million budgeted for salaries and benefits. This includes a 2% increase in salaries for the 6 months ending December 31, 2023, as recommended by management.

The benefits package is still on a June 30 budget year-end schedule. Housing Connect is anticipating an 8% increase in medical insurance starting next July. Utah Retirement Systems (URS) contributions, though, will decrease by 1%.

There are 4 new positions in the 2024 budget: First Step House properties maintenance tech, financial wellness case manager, East 72/The Hub service coordinator, and a grant coordinator position.

There was a Request for Proposals (RFP) for new software which was sent out in the summer. Housing Connect received 3 bids. A decision on the selection of the vendor will be forthcoming in the next few weeks. The 2024 budget assumes that Housing Connect will stay with the current software vendor (Emphasys). CFO Bartlome summarized the proposals and reviewed the financial and budget implications and scenarios. If a change in vendors is made, management is proposing to hire 4 full-time staff to help with the transition. There would be a one-time \$375,000 cost to the agency if it changes software and a \$450,000 reduction to the overall 2024 budget.

Both Chief Executive Officer Janice Kimball and Chair Moffat expressed their thanks to CFO Bartlome and his team for the work they have done to prepare for the 2024 budget, which will be voted on in the December 2023 Board meeting.

### **3. REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Real Estate Development Director Kirk Moorhead provided a real estate update to the Board.

- New City Plaza (NCP): When the written report was submitted, Housing Connect was still awaiting approval from the City Fire Department to occupy Building A. Tentative approval has been received; the agency is now waiting on approval from the Building Department. The construction for Building A is essentially complete. Improvements to the fire alarm system (within each unit) are needed. Funding applications have been submitted to the State of Utah for additional private activity money (this is short-term), which helps to preserve tax credits. Housing Connect is waiting for confirmation of a commitment of money from Salt Lake City and will be submitting an application to Salt Lake County. Overall, construction is 48.42% complete.

- East 72: Substantial construction completion has been reached, and the project is 98% complete. There are two vital components which are missing: the elevators are not yet installed, and the electrical switch gear has been pushed back to arrive the first week of December (possibly later). Housing Connect, however, has authorized the acquisition of temporary switch gear to electrify the building so that it can get the temporary Certificate of Occupancy and start filling units (this will need to be approved by Rocky Mountain Power and the City of Midvale). Chair Moffat recommended holding on to the temporary switch gear for re-use in the future.

- Granger: Housing Connect has given its notice to the contractors to proceed, and the selective demolition of Phase A is pretty much done. A groundbreaking celebration was held on Wednesday, November 1. A finance closing date is anticipated to take place in the next two weeks. The construction contract has been executed.

Kearns property: Housing Connect has closed on the area next to the Kearns Mountain View property. It is a 3-acre parcel, which is appropriately zoned for 15 units per acre (allowing for an additional 45 units to be built). Daycare is an eligible use of the property for now.

44 North: This 67-unit project is still in the running for Low Income Housing Tax Credits for 2024, and there are high hopes that it will get funded.

Frontier: A meeting was held with the South Salt Lake Community Development Director. Hesitations and concerns were expressed and raised by the officials and others, and South Salt Lake is currently working to convert a motel into a homeless shelter.

### **4. CLOSED MEETING**

At 12:37 p.m., Commissioner Johnson motioned for the Board to enter Closed Meeting to discuss real estate and personnel issues. Commissioner White seconded the motion, and all Board members present (Chair Moffat, Vice Chair Bernal, and Commissioners Johnson, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voted in support, and the Board entered Closed Meeting.

At 12:43 p.m., Commissioner Johnson made a motion for the Board to return to regular (open) session, with Commissioner Litvack seconding the motion. All Board members present (Chair Moffat, Vice Chair Bernal, and Commissioners Johnson, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voted favorably, and the Board returned to regular session.

### **5. ACTION ITEMS**

The following items were discussed and voted on by the Board:

- Housing Connect Board of Commissioners Meeting minutes for October 18, 2023: Commissioner Litvack motioned to accept the minutes, and Commissioner Nguyen seconded the motion. All Board members present (Chair Moffat, Vice Chair Bernal, and Commissioners Johnson, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voted in support of the motion, and the Board Meeting minutes for October 18, 2023, were approved.

- G2 Strategies contract modification: G2 Strategies has been contracted to do the NCP owner representative services, as well as the TerraCon contract. Because the services have been expanded, the modified contract is above the \$250,000 threshold limit for the CEO to

sign and must be approved by the Board (the revised contract value is \$261,855). Commissioner Nguyen motioned to approve the contract modification. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion, with all Board members present (Chair Moffat, Vice Chair Bernal, and Commissioners Johnson, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voting in favor of the motion. The G2 Strategies contract modification was approved.

- Human Resources (HR) policy changes: Housing Connect HR Director Paul Rooker informed the Board that the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee approached the management team regarding two different policies:

- 1) Paid parental leave: Currently, Housing Connect does not offer this type of leave, but he noted that some of the advantages to paid parental leave include an increase in retention of employees, new employee recruitment, and an increase in employee productivity and morale. He added that it can reduce racial disparities in wage loss. The cost per employee would be between \$6,500 and \$13,000 (depending on how many weeks off are offered). Management is recommending 6 weeks of leave with no disparity between the birth-giving parent and the non-birth-giving parent to eligible staff (those who have worked at Housing Connect for at least one year or more).
- 2) Paid holidays: Presently, Housing Connect provides 11 standard paid holidays and 1 floating holiday. For the past 3 years, Juneteenth was designated as the floating holiday. The DEI Committee has proposed making Juneteenth (June 19) a permanent holiday, and, in addition, adding one personal preference day to the paid holiday benefit, with the guideline that a personal preference day must be a day off of work (and not split into hours) and that it must be approved in advance by the staff member's supervisor with at least one-week advance notice given.

Vice Chair Bernal motioned to approve the HR policy changes, and Commissioner Nguyen seconded the motion. All Board members (Chair Moffat, Vice Chair Bernal, and Commissioners Johnson, Litvack, Nguyen, and White) voted affirmatively in support of the motion. The HR policies (6 weeks of paid parental leave; designating Juneteenth as a permanent holiday; adding a personal preference day holiday) were approved.

## **6. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

CFO Bartlome briefly informed the Board that the financials are looking good and that the total reserves (unrestricted and restricted) have increased.

## **7. COMMISSIONERS INPUT**

Commissioners provided the following input:

- Commissioner White: She discussed the recent Resident Advisory Board meeting (held on Wednesday, November 8) and provided a handout of the RAB's 2023 highlights and accomplishments. She also said the CEO Kimball reviewed the proposed Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher changes. There were also property reports from RAB members. In addition, Housing Connect Family Services Coordinator Braidee Kolendrianos worked on a RAB recruitment flyer to be posted at all the properties. The 2024 RAB budget was also approved at its meeting. CEO Kimball remarked that it was enjoyable to celebrate the RAB's accomplishments and thanked Commissioner White for her leadership.

- Vice Chair Bernal: He reminded everyone of the upcoming PHADA (Public Housing Authorities Directors Association) 2024 Commissioners Conference, January 7-10, in San Diego, California. Other upcoming conferences include the Mountain Plains NAHRO Conference (in May) and the Utah NAHRO Conference in April, as well as the NAHRO legislators conference in Washington, D.C. (April 8-10). The legislators conference is an opportunity for NAHRO members to meet with their elected representatives.

- Commissioner Nguyen: She remarked that the Granger renovation kickoff celebration was a good event and thanked Family Services Coordinator Braidee Kolendrianos and the others for their efforts.

- Commissioner Litvack: She informed the Board that the County is in the middle of its budget process. She also encouraged Housing Connect's engagement on some of the proposed budget considerations.

## **8. OTHER**

CEO Kimball briefly informed the Board that some Housing Connect staff attended a "boot camp" for the Veterans Administration (VA) programs, where they were asked to increase the VASH voucher payment standards. As a result, Housing Connect will increase the VASH voucher payment standards to 120% of the Fair Market Rent (FMR).

**ADJOURN**

At 1:11 p.m., Board Chair Moffat adjourned the meeting without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Pincock  
Executive Administrator