Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Board of Commissioners of the
Housing Authority of the City of Everett

February 24, 2025

Meeting Called to Order

The Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Everett was called to order by Chair Koren Smith at 12:01 p.m. on Monday, February 24, 2025. This meeting was held as a hybrid meeting, with participants attending in person at the Colby Administrative Office at 3107 Colby Avenue in Everett and via Zoom video conference.

Commissioners Present at Roll Call:

Chair Koren Smith (*in person*)	Commissioner George Perez, Jr. (*in person*)
Commissioner Chip Burgess (*virtual*)	Commissioner John Traynor (*virtual*)

Absent:

Vice-Chair Cynthia Andrews	Commissioner Paul Manselle

Also in attendance were:

Staff:

Mary Swenson	Executive Director
Shannon Atkins	Aging & Disability Services Program Manager
Janinna Attick	Director of Policy & Innovation
Linda Baines	Deputy Director of Property Management
Kristen Cane	Director of Asset Management
Cal Cuellar	Deputy Director of Asset Management
Erica Dias	Director of Property Management
Donelle Kienholz	Family Services Program Manager
Kelly King	Interim Director of Human Resources
Melanie Pilkenton	Director of Rental Assistance
Kimberly Wilson	Interim Chief Financial Officer
Jaysen Witt	Executive Assistant & Communications Coordinator
Steve Yago	Interim Director of Development
Sandy Langdon	Consultant

Non-Staff:

Jimmy Castro	EHA Program Participant
Jean Carillo	Delta Neighborhood Association
Jim Carroll	BDO USA
Jonathan Marks	BDO USA

Public Comment

None

Communications

None

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Mary Swenson began the report introducing Erica Dias, the new Director of Property Management at EHA. Director Dias had previously worked at EHA and the organization is excited to welcome her back in this Director role.

Executive Director Swenson continued her report, sharing that a lot is happening at HUD, but EHA and contacts at HUD have no answers as to how changes will affect both clients and staff at this time. The agency is also monitoring a potential government shutdown. Executive Director Swenson felt assured we would have a few months of funding after asking staff to determine what funding would be available if EHA did not have a stream of funding coming from the federal government. She made a comparison to a moving target and reiterated that her word for the year is "pivot." She has put a hold on a variety of things to reign in spending, specifically around development, mentioning that EHA is not putting them on hold but rather delaying them as more information is provided around budgets.

An update on the Baker Heights demolition was provided, with Executive Director Swenson sharing that work is being done to secure bids, but EHA will be very cautious moving forward with the project as it is expensive and there is uncertainty where federal budgets will be in the coming months. Commissioner Burgess asked if bidding was being reopened for the entire Park District project or only the demolition. Executive Director Swenson clarified that it was just the demolition that was out for bid. She shared that the site has been utilized by the City of Everett Police and Fire departments for training purposes in the interim, which has been good for community building.

Executive Director Swenson concluded her update, sharing that several individuals from EHA will be attending the NAHRO conference in Washington DC in March, including herself – Commissioner Andrews, Director Dias, and Director Kristen Cane. She has retained a lobbyist who is scheduling meetings for EHA and that she expects it to be an interesting time to be in DC because of the continuing resolution.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Smith asked for a single motion to approve minutes from:

Annual Meeting held on November 12, 2024
Special Meeting held on January 13, 2025
Special Meeting held on February 3, 2025

Commissioner Perez moved for approval and Commissioner Burgess seconded. The resolution passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Chair Smith called for a single motion to approve the Consent Agenda, containing the following items:

1. Section 8 Payments for the Months of November 2024-January 2025
2. Summary of Vouchers for the Months of November 2024-January 2025

Commissioner Perez moved for approval and Commissioner Burgess seconded. The resolution passed unanimously.

Items for Individual Consideration

Resolution No. 1608 Updating EHA's Public Records Policy

This resolution was presented by Director of Policy and Innovation, Janinna Attick. An update to the current public records policy was needed to generalize the contact information, as previously it was tied to a specific person.

Chair Smith asked for a motion, Commissioner Burgess moved for approval and Commissioner Traynor seconded. The resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 1609 Approving and Ratifying Contract Expenditures Exceeding $500,000

EHA Consultant Sandy Langdon introduced this resolution. During a review of procurements, several contracts were identified as nearing or exceeding the $500,000 limit. These services, such as legal services, tend to be larger than what we can plan for, such as individual agreements.

Chair Smith asked for a motion, Commissioner Perez moved for approval and Commissioner Burgess seconded. The resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 1610 Adopting an Updated Mission Statement

Executive Director Swenson introduced this resolution. She shared that this resolution came about due to President Trump's executive orders around eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion, or "DEI", language within the federal government. This affects EHA because as an agency with government programs, EHA receives federal funding. Executive Director Swenson has asked EHA staff to "reword" language and remove the three letters, DEI, and put it into different wording. That process has started, and because it has been entwined within EHA,

including EHA's mission statement, there is a need to have the Board of Commissioners adopt a new or revised mission statement. The original mission statement involved a lot of conversation at all staff levels about how this affects the organization, and how much time was spent developing the mission statement. Executive Director Swenson asked the Board of Commissioners to make the adjustments in this resolution at this time but believes we will need to go through a more inclusive process later on. Executive Director Swenson referenced an email she sent to all staff and had included Commissioners. She shared that she plans to meet with all departments and have a conversation with all employees about how we treat and respect each other. She added that with the upcoming budget process, everyone has a role to play and would like to get that input before initiating the budget process.

Chair Smith asked for a motion, Commissioner Perez moved for approval, with the caveat regarding the future process for revising the mission statement, and Commissioner Burgess seconded. Commissioner Traynor voted "nay," with Commissioners Burgess and Perez voting "aye." The motion passed, with 2 votes in favor and 1 vote against.

Board Training

Executive Director Swenson introduced representatives from BDO USA Forensic Services, Jim Carroll and Jonathan Marks. She shared that EHA had been working with them over the last several months. The training covered the best and leading practices for Boards overseeing organizations of EHA's size, as well as case studies from other Public Housing Authorities and industries. The training had just begun after introductions before Commissioner Traynor needed to leave due to a conflicting meeting.

Adjournment

Due to a lack of a quorum, Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m. The training with BDO USA continued with less than a quorum.

ATTEST:

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Chair, Board of Commissioners

_____
Secretary