

Commissioner roll call was given at 4:33 p.m. The Briefing was held via teleconference, with an in-person option at the SHA Central office. Commissioner Minor was absent from the Briefing.

Resolution No. 5306: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Admin Plan Updates

Executive Director Rod Brandon introduced the HCV Administrative Plan update at hand. Updates occur regularly, whether annually or a little less often, and the plan described the policy and procedures followed by the HCV program and staff. Director of Rental Assistance Programs Alice Kimbowa introduced Compliance and Policy Manager Mark LaBrayere who shared specific details. Mr. LaBrayere explained that the HCV Administrative Plan also includes the agency's MTW (Moving to Work) activities within the context of the HCV program. This year, there are a small number of changes to the plan—some clarifications and non-substantive changes, general policy changes proposed by HCV, and some significant impact changes.

Mr. LaBrayere described the HCV proposed policy changes, which would alter timelines included in the older version of the plan. One request is to change the response timeline for accommodation requests from 30 days to “in a timely manner.” Another request was to eliminate the stated response time for moves with continued assistance. He explained the reasons for the proposed changes. Commissioner Ryan asked Mr. LaBrayere to explain the difference between a response to a communication versus the timing of a response that brings a resolution to a request. Mr. LaBrayere replied that both of these changes regard a response that brings a resolution to a request. Commissioner Clark commented that she is concerned about changing the plan from stating a certain number of days to making it more vague. Commissioner Purcell added that there should be a timeline for a written response to a request or a 60-, or a 90-day timeframe that gives a resident some trigger by which they can assert the agency is not being responsive. Mr. Brandon signaled that he understood the commissioner's desire for more reliability for tenants.

General Counsel Chuck Lind provided some background, stating that these proposed policy changes reflect reality; once a tenant initiates an accommodation request, there are multiple back-and-forth communications between the agency, the tenant, the tenant's medical provider(s), etc. He added that there are roughly 80 requests each month from tenants. Commissioner Purcell asked if the request could be responded to or resolved within 30-60 days from the moment that all required documentation is in the agency's hands? Mr. Brandon replied that this may be doable but would like to give it more thought before bringing this change back to the Board. Commissioner Ryan added onto Commissioner Purcell's comment, stating that providing timelines to tenants for communication in multiple steps along the way may also work. Ms. Kimbowa offered that a revised proposal would be brought to the next board meeting.

Mr. LaBrayere continued his presentation and described the significant impact changes. One change would expand Executive Director discretion to offer vouchers to households with “very low” income (50% Area Median Income (AMI)) rather than to only “extremely low” income households (30% AMI). Another change would improve the

HCV's Emergency Transfer Plan's definition of the conditions under which a household requesting an emergency transfer might obtain a Tenant-Based voucher. Commissioner Ryan asked if the section regarding emergency transfers could be shared with her, and Mr. LaBrayere confirmed it would be shared. Commissioner Howard asked what constitutes an emergency under this plan. Mr. LaBrayere stated it is fairly specific to the VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) requirements. Those requirements mean SHA must have a transfer plan in place for those who are covered by VAWA. Additionally, Commissioner Howard asked if people could lobby Mr. Brandon directly in order to get a voucher and stated that this seems odd. What scenario would prompt the Executive Director to exercise this power? Mr. LaBrayere replied that this discretion was used for some relocations of tenants from the Northgate site that SHA acquired. He added that it is also connected to the emergency housing voucher planning, so to those who are losing this funding due to changes at the federal level, SHA may be able to offer this alternative.

Commissioner Clark asked—in the instances Mr. LaBrayere just mentioned, aren't all these tenants already in the SHA system? In effect, isn't this Executive Director power a way of maintaining tenants' pre-existing housing? Mr. LaBrayere replied that it is not limited to existing tenants. Ms. Kimbowa added that this power is not one that has been commonly used. Commissioner Purcell stated that it may be helpful to keep track of how many times this power is exercised and report to the Board once annually so they can ensure it is not used irresponsibly. Mr. Brandon replied that he sees no problem with tracking and reporting annually to the board on this, and this may have been done informally in the past. Commissioner Clark encouraged commissioners to flag any additional questions they may have in the next two days to provide staff with enough time to provide an answer prior to next week's Board Meeting.

Resolution No. 5307: Potential Litigation Authorization

Mr. Brandon introduced the topic briefly before handing it off to Mr. Lind. Mr. Lind stated that next week, commissioners would be asked to approve potential litigation authorization. Things nationally are very fluid at the federal level with many changes that happen very abruptly and suddenly. A large variety of public agencies receive federal funding and have initiated lawsuits on different theories challenging things like the withholding of funds. The problem with this is the window to join litigation or initiate it is very small. Mr. Brandon added that many of his colleagues across the country have found themselves in a position where they need flexibility to be able to consider joining litigation. King County Housing Authority is moving forward with their board to pass this kind of time-limited resolution, and Tacoma Housing Authority also did the same, recently.

Commissioner Ryan supports the nimbleness this would provide and asked if this would include a requirement that the agency circle back with the full Board following the decision to join a lawsuit in a timely manner. Commissioner Purcell echoed Commissioner Ryan's support of the resolution, adding that having the Board sign on as a community of representatives strengthens the agency's actions. Commissioner Howard stated that she wants to know about the litigation the agency decides *not* to

sign onto and the reasoning behind that, as well. Keeping communication about potential litigation flowing would be appreciated. Mr. Brandon agreed that he would be happy to do this as a way to keep the Board apprised of the general landscape and decisions the agency faces. Commissioner Clark wondered if limiting this resolution to two years is too long or too short and decided ultimately that the timeframe makes sense and it can always be extended if needed.

Commissioner Clark encouraged commissioners to flag any additional questions they may have in the next two days to provide staff with enough time to provide an answer prior to next week's board meeting.

Elected Officials' Priorities Review

Intergovernmental Relations Director Lisa Wolters began by providing an overview of the new Seattle City Mayor Katie Wilson who began her term on January 2nd, as well as Mayor Wilson's key staff. The mayor is in favor of increasing the number of housing units as well as social housing. Additionally, transportation and mobility, public safety with a community-minded approach, working families being able to afford childcare, and environmental justice are key topics. Regarding homelessness, the mayor has talked about providing 4,000 more emergency housing and shelter options, and substance use and behavioral health treatment. She has also talked about creating a housing stabilization fund and an eviction prevention initiative. Specifically, building social housing and pursuing a \$1B bond for union-built affordable housing, as well as strengthening and enforcing renters' rights, increasing density and supporting anti-displacement, and discouraging rent increases greater than 5% have all been talked about as priorities.

Ms. Wolters continued, sharing information about new Seattle City Councilmembers. Position 8 is held by Alexis Mercedes-Rinck who provided some money in her budget to mitigate the impacts of the loss of Emergency Housing Voucher funds from the federal government. Dionne Foster in Position 9 will be the Chair of the Housing and Human Rights committee, and Eddie Lin in District 2 will be the Vice Chair of the Housing committee. SHA's focus is to share that over 40% of people coming into SHA housing are homeless, and that the agency is the largest landlord within the city of Seattle.

At the county level, Girmay Zahilay is the new King County Executive; his term began on November 25, 2025. Ms. Wolters shared information about the key staff under Executive Zahilay, and added that his priorities are homelessness, public safety, and economic opportunity. There is also a new King County Councilmember, Rhonda Lewis, who has extensive experience; her term will end in November of 2026.

Commissioner Purcell asked what is happening with the Regional Homelessness Authority. Ms. Wolters replied that there has been some controversy around this agency, but there have been no definitive decisions that Ms. Wolters is aware of. Part of the problem is that the Trump Administration is attempting to change the criteria for supportive housing which would affect funding, and there will be more information coming out about that as time goes on. Mr. Brandon added that SHA is not in charge of

the Regional Homelessness Authority. Commissioner Crutchfield stated that the local National Public Radio station KUOW reported this morning that HUD is rolling back proposals on supportive housing while it is being litigated. Ms. Wolters added that some work is happening at the congressional level to try and bridge the funding gap through the end of this year.

Executive Session: Potential Litigation

Recess for this session began at 5:29 p.m. with the Board scheduled to return back to Regular Session at 5:49 p.m. At 5:47 p.m., an extension was requested for the session to end at 5:54 p.m.

Meeting Close

Commissioner Clark reminded the Board that the next Regular Board Meeting will occur on Tuesday, January 20, due to Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday observance on Monday, January 19. After hearing no further comments, Commissioner Clark called for adjournment of the briefing. Commissioner Purcell motioned, Commissioner Howard seconded. The January 12, 2026, Regular Board Briefing was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer