

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE
MARCH 15, 2021

The Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle (“Seattle Housing Authority” or “SHA”) met in Regular Session on March 15, 2021, via teleconference. Board Chair Paul Purcell called the meeting to order at 5:21 p.m. Kimberly Garrett performed a roll call for Board Commissioners in attendance. Commissioners present and absent were as follows:

Present: Paul Purcell, Chair
Robert Crutchfield
Rita Howard
Gerald Smiley
Debbie Thiele

Absent: Dr. Paula Houston, Vice-chair
Twyla Minor

Public Comment

Julie Sahlberg
Summer Gray, Capitol Park

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Purcell presented the Consent Agenda, which included approval of minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of February 16, 2021; approval of minutes for the Regular Board Briefing of March 8, 2021; and, approval of the Expenditure Certification Report (Authorization to Pay Outstanding Obligations of Salaries and Claims for the Period of February 1 to February 28, 2021.)

Commissioner Crutchfield moved to approve the Consent Agenda and the motion was then seconded by Commissioner Smiley. Hearing no questions or comments, Commissioner Purcell called for a vote. The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously among the members of the Board present at that time (5 yes; 0 no).

Regular Agenda

Resolution No. 5209 – SHA 2020 Write Offs of Delinquent Accounts

Commissioner Thiele moved for consideration of Resolution No. 5209; Commissioner Crutchfield seconded the motion. CFO Shelly Yapp presented Resolution No. 5209 to the Board and recommended adoption of the resolution.

This annual resolution authorizes write-offs of tenant and participant accounts deemed uncollectible. The amount written off for fiscal year 2020 totals \$307,891 for the LIPH/NF housing portfolios, HOPE VI, and HCV/Section 8.

Hearing no further discussion, Commissioner Purcell called for a vote. Resolution No. 5209 was approved unanimously among the members of the Board present at the time (5 yes; 0 no).

Resolution No. 5211 – SHA 2020 Committed Funds

Commissioner Crutchfield moved for consideration of Resolution No. 5211; Commissioner Howard seconded the motion. CFO Shelly Yapp presented Resolution No. 5211 to the Board and recommended adoption of the resolution.

Resolution No. 5211 adopts the document “Exhibit 1 YE 2020 Committed Funds” which reports the total Committed Funds amount of \$68.2 M (in comparison to the current year totals of \$70.2 M) and itemizes all committed items and purposes. The resolution also confirms in Exhibit 2 \$8.5M in 2021 budgeted funds that will become Committed Funds in 2021 as funds are received from HUD. Projects that will go on in 2021 is the Jefferson Terrace Rehab project, for an \$8.5M contribution toward the financing.

Hearing no further discussion, Commissioner Purcell called for a vote. Resolution No. 5211 was approved unanimously among the members of the Board present at the time (5 yes; 0 no).

Federal Budget Update

Mr. Lofton introduced Intergovernmental Relations Director Lisa Wolters, who presented the Federal Budget to the Board.

Ms. Wolters began her presentation with the American Rescue Plan, which President Biden signed one of the biggest bills yet, totaling \$1.9T, which key features include up to \$1,400-per-person stimulus payments that will send money to about 90% of households, a \$300 federal boost to weekly jobless benefits, and an expansion of the child

tax credit of up to \$3,600 per child. \$350B is designated in state and local aid, and approximately \$40B for housing aid.

The Stimulus checks (an initial point of contention with the bill) are direct payments up to \$1,400 per person that will reach about 90% of households, with families receiving an additional \$1,400 per child. The full amount goes to individuals earning less than \$75,000 (adjusted gross income), heads of households (like single parents) earning less than \$112,500 and married couples earning less than \$150,000. The first \$10,200 worth of benefits payments tax-free for households with annual incomes less than \$150,000. Unemployment assistance includes a \$300 federal boost to weekly jobless payments and extending two key pandemic unemployment benefits programs through September 6. Aid to states and municipalities, a piece of the bill where there was much negotiation that took place, include \$350B to states, local governments, territories and tribes; \$10B to the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund for 'critical capital projects directly enabling work, education and health monitoring, including remote options' that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic (but it's unclear as to specifically what these funds will cover.) Nutrition assistance, which many of our residents receive, extends the 15% increase in food stamp benefits through September, with \$880M for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). It allows states to continue the Pandemic-EBT, which provides families whose children's schools are closed with funding to replace free- and reduced-price meals the kids would have received, through the summer. Because many of our residents are experience food insecurity during the pandemic, especially due to kids homeschooling, these funds extensions helps SHA residents and households out greatly.

Housing aid includes \$20B to state and local governments to help low-income households cover back rent, \$10B to help struggling homeowners pay their mortgages, \$5B to help states and localities assist those at risk of experiencing homelessness and \$5B goes to emergency housing vouchers for those who are homeless. It is estimated the one in five adult renters are behind in their rent, with quite a bit of disparity; 33% of Black households, 22% of Multi-racial households, 20% of Latino/Latinx households, 16% Asian households, and 13% White households. The emergency rental assistance will again be administered by the Treasury, and will be similar to those funds that came out in December. The homeowners' assistance funds will be geared toward foreclosures to

prevent eviction and the \$5B for emergency vouchers will target those people that have experience of, and risk of homelessness.

Tax Credits for families and workers is one of the biggest increases for tax credits, expanding the child tax credit to \$3,600 for each child under age 6 and \$3,000 for each child under age 18. The enhanced portion of the credit will be available for single parents with annual incomes up to \$75,000 and joint filers making up to \$150,000. The other difference is it may be received monthly, versus in a lump sum. It also enhances the earned income tax credit for workers without children by nearly tripling the maximum credit and extending eligibility to more people. The minimum age to claim the childless credit will be reduced to 19, from 25, and the upper age limit will be eliminated.

Education funding, \$125B to public K-12 schools to help students return to the classroom, to be used for the purposes such as updating ventilation systems, reducing class sizes, purchasing PPE and hiring support staff. Another \$2.75B would go to private schools, and \$40B will go to colleges. The bill also provides about \$39 billion to childcare providers.

Health subsidies and Medicaid for low income enrollees will eliminate their premiums completely for two years and will do the same for those collecting unemployment benefits in 2021. The legislation also provides a full premium subsidy for laid-off workers who want to remain on their employer health insurance plans through COBRA. The assistance runs from April through September. This makes federal premium subsidies for Affordable Care Act policies more generous and eliminates the maximum income cap for two years.

Vaccines and testing is a top priority in the Biden Administration, which we've seen in the State of Washington, with the President stating that any and all that wish to be vaccinated should be able to by May 1. This is reflected in the \$14B allocated for researching, developing, distributing, administering and strengthening confidence in vaccines, with another \$47.8B allocated toward testing, contact tracing and mitigation. \$7.7B is geared toward hiring 100,000 public health workers to support coronavirus response. Our local public health workers have reported feeling overworked, burned out and need more resources. As vaccines and testing continue to roll out, it helps to have community health workers to be resources for questions, and information.

Commissioner Thiele gave kudos for such a thorough and comprehensive legislative briefing and how much she appreciated the information, especially how it affects SHA residents; the rest of the commissioners concurred the sentiment.

Streamlined Certifications

Mr. Lofton introduced HCV Administrator Dave Wellings (Housing Choice Voucher Department) and Compliance & Admissions Administrator (Housing Operations Department) Jodi Speer presented to the Board about Streamlined (re)Certifications, a joint pilot project that was launched in response to the extended COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and State of Emergency, SHA adopted several policy and procedural modifications to maintain the health and safety of staff and residents, and increase staff capacity to conduct COVID-19 related activities. Annual Income Recertification were deferred for one year across HUD funded programs; after a full year, we are resuming Income Recertification, however the pandemic is not conducive to resuming standard processes for annual reviews. The guiding principles for the streamlined recertification process were to fully utilize electronic sources of income verification (which we are able to use as a check against paper verifications), utilizations of our MTW authorizations, as well as utilization of the current environment to test flexibilities in the process and be much better set up in the future for other events.

Back in March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SHA was able to implement MTW strategies: 10.H.10 & 10.P.03: SHA may defer regular rent reviews for all household types during this time until the agency has recovered from the crisis or the next regular rent review is due. Residents will retain the opportunity to have an interim review. Also, MTW Strategy 10.A.01: SHA's implementation of this strategy may include further streamlining income verification requirements by treating all sources of income verification equally and allowing residents to self-certify income over the phone, by email or other means in lieu of a signature.

For the Streamlined Recertification, staff will run EIV and UIV reports (DSHS and Child Support) for each household and if nothing is inconsistent with the information on file, staff will key a certification. Staff will notify the family what income/composition SHA is using to calculate their rent and the family will be notified by phone to have the opportunity to inform of us discrepancies. No forms will be required from the resident (except as required for tax credit).

A comparison of Streamlined Annual Recertification to the pre-COVID process is listed below:

Pre-COVID Processes	Streamlined Recertifications	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AR Paperwork is mailed out 90-120 days prior to due date (HCV) -Notice of Annual Review is mailed out 90-120 days prior to due date (HOPs) 	<p>This step is not needed under the Streamlined Process</p>	<p>Time savings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AR Paperwork is received via mail or drop off and reviewed for completeness (HCV) -Staff meet with families face to face to complete AR paperwork (HOPs) 	<p>Residents do not need to complete Annual Review paperwork</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Less burden on residents -Time savings in trying to get complete and accurate paperwork -No face to face interactions needed
<p>Obtain 3rd party and tenant supplied verifications in addition to electronic sources of income verification</p>	<p>Rely on electronic sources of income verification and tenant certification when needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Electronic sources of income verification are highly reliable -Tenant certification along with review of historical documents saves time and burden
<p>Conduct AR using AR paperwork and all sources of verification</p>	<p>Conduct review using verifications as long there is not a discrepancy compared to certification of record</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Streamlined process saves staff time and resident burden -Reviewing current circumstances and historical information ensures relative accuracy

This is an untested process, so there is a risk of issues and challenges that may arise; non-response from residents/participants when information is required could be problematic, as well. But, we are mitigating this through wellness calls, more direct contact and engagement with residents and there is a lot of potential to build out these relationships in a positive way. We think that we have found a balance between full-blown recertification, or none at all; the pandemic environment has given us an opportunity to test this process, while still adhering to HUD requirements.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Lofton notified the Board of the retraction of Resolution No. 5210 for action; after further discussion among staff, it was decided that this was not a critical piece needed for action by the Board, and no longer warranted the authorization priority.

Commissioner Purcell complimented Cabinet on their incredible monthly departmental reports and commented that the volume of work being done in every department was remarkable. He specifically called out the tracking in the FUP completion of Resolution No. 4899 (adopted in 2008) had been accomplished and he gave his congratulations. He also mentioned that a date had been set to hold the final Executive Director interviews and the Board will be in position for the April meetings to give a recommendation.

Mr. Purcell then asked for any questions, or comments from the Board. Hearing none, it was moved by Commissioner Thiele and seconded by Commissioner Crutchfield that the March 15, 2021 Regular Session of the Board be adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer