
**SEATTLE HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR BOARD BRIEFING**

LOCATION Via Teleconference Line
(206) 257-3799 ; ID 745379382

DATE July 13, 2020 4:30pm - 6:00pm

BOARD ATTENDEES Paul Purcell, Board Chair
Dr. Paula Houston ,Vice-Chair
Robert Crutchfield
Michael Diaz
Twyla Minor
Gerald Smiley
Debbie Thiele

DISTRIBUTION SHA Board of Commissioners; Cabinet

Commissioner Roll Call

AGENDA:

Briefing Items

- **Resolution 5191**– Teamsters Contract
- COVID-19 Policy Modifications Update
- **Resolution 5192** – Admin Plan Changes

Informational Briefings

- SHA Staff COVID-19 Survey Overview

Commissioner roll call was given at 4:32 p.m. The Briefing was held solely via teleconference. Commissioners Purcell and Smiley were absent from the Briefing.

Review 7/20/20 Regular Board Meeting Agenda and Updates

Resolution No. 5191 – Teamsters Contract

Human Resources Director Marc Nilsen introduced SHA's new Labor Relations Negotiator, Amy Heller, and gave them a brief background of her job history. Ms. Heller then presented to the Board Resolution No. 5191, which authorizes the Executive Director to execute a new three-year contract with Teamsters Local 117, effective January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022. This contract contains: (1) amended contract language to comply with the Supreme Court ruling in the Janus v. AFSCME case; (2) indemnity language for dues deduction errors; (3) a change to the temporary employee timeframe (from 4 mo. to 6 mo.); (4) a change in holiday pay eligibility; and, (5) additional changes to sick leave rules to comply with Washington's new Paid Sick Leave Law, which took effect January 1, 2018.

Employees will receive a 2% wage adjustment for 2020 (retroactive to January 1), and a base wage increase for 2021 and 2022 equal to the CPI-W, with a minimum wage increase of 1.5% and a maximum of 3.75%.

COVID-19 Policy Modification Update

Policy & Strategic Initiatives Director Andria Lazaga briefed the Board on a number of modifications have made agency-wide, which serves in conjunction to the changes described for Resolution No. 5192 (HCV Administration Plan Changes).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected how SHA conducts many of its core business practices. In response, the agency has enacted a series of policy modifications designed to maintain SHA's core functions, enable participants to remain stably housed, support applicants in moving into housing and ensure the safety of participants, applicants, and employees, as well as the public.

SHA submitted a technical amendment to the 2020 Moving to Work Plan on March 26 to enable additional flexibilities granted us as an MTW agency. HUD approved this amendment on March 27. HUD has issued a series of PIH Notices (particularly **PIH 2020-05** and **PIH 2020-13**) and FAQs instituting and clarifying waivers and other flexibilities (many lasting through CY 2020.) In implementing the modifications, Resolution 5189: Omnibus Executive Authorization was passed by the Board in April 2020, which grants the Executive Director broad authority to enact necessary measures in response to the pandemic emergency and protect resident and employee safety. SHA staff have updated the ACOP to reflect policy changes we are using during this state of emergency, as well as HCV Admin Plan and HUD is requiring that the Board explicitly adopt Admin Plan changes due to waivers utilized from **PIH Notice 2020-05**. The following is a summary of areas of policy modification and a few examples of actions taken:

Issuance & leasing: SHA's approach to issuance and leasing has been to remove barriers for applicants and current tenants to maintain housing stability during the pandemic.

Actions taken include:

- Enabling remote briefings for voucher issuance.
- Allowing COVID-19 as an eligible good cause reason for refusal of unit offer in SHA owned/managed housing.

Income & eligibility verification: Income and eligibility verification policies and procedures have been amended both to support challenges by applicants, tenants and staff in completing third-party verification and the completion of required paperwork due to COVID-19.

Actions taken include:

- Treating all sources of income verification equally.
- Allowing residents to self-certify income over the phone, by email or other means in lieu of an in-person signature.
- Reducing the amount of paperwork required for tax credit new move-ins and annual certifications.

Rent certifications: SHA's approach to interims and regularly scheduled certifications has been to minimize the amount of paperwork required for both staff and participants, maximize the amount of work that can be done remotely and support families who may be facing economic hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Actions taken include:

- Deferring certifications scheduled to occur during the state of emergency until the next regularly scheduled certification (with related temporary hold-harmless policy for some under- or unreported income).
- Temporarily freezing interim reviews that result in total tenant payment increases for tenants/participants (residents may still request interims for a loss of income).
- Temporarily freezing contract rent increases in HCV.

Inspections: SHA has utilized our existing MTW authority to take a risk management approach to inspections in both owned/managed units and voucher-based units to protect the safety of participants and employees and to further housing stability for applicant households.

Actions taken include:

- Accepting owner/property manager self-certification in lieu of new lease inspections for TBV and PBV new move-ins.
- Deferring regularly scheduled inspections until the end of the crisis and/or the next regular inspection.

Other policies have also been implemented to further reduce administrative burden on SHA staff, enable continuity of housing for participants and minimize in-person contact.

Actions taken include:

- Delaying regularly scheduled resident council elections.
- Suspending HUD's Community Service & Self-Sufficiency Requirement.
- Suspending enforcement of repayment agreements and extending repayment terms beyond the state of emergency.
- Suspending lease enforcement and informal hearings on termination notices (households will continue to receive housing).

Resolution No. 5192 – HCV Administrative Plan Changes

Rental Assistance Programs Director Alice Kimbowa presented Resolution No. 5192 to the Board for consideration. This resolution authorizes SHA to adopt the referenced HUD COVID-19 waivers that were published by HUD in [PIH Notice 2020-05](#). The waivers will be appended to the Administrative Plan as the COVID-19 Response Policy and are as follows:

- **HCV Administrative Plan Approval** – PHAs can revise Admin Plans without board approval. PHAs should work with boards to approve changes between June 30 and July 31, 2020.
- **HCV EIV System Monitoring** – Waives the requirement to monitor EIV discrepancy reports.
- **HCV PHA Oral Briefing** - Waives the requirement for staff to orally brief families new to HCV or PBV, allows briefings by other means, e.g., video call, expanded info. packet, etc.
- **HCV PHA Approval of Assisted Tenancy** - Allows HAP contract to be executed 120 days after lease term begins vs. 60 days.
- **HCV Absence from unit** - Allows for PHA discretion on absences from units longer than 180 days
- **HCV Family Unification Program Eligibility** - Allows PHAs to increase eligibility age to 25 years at initial lease up.
- **HQS Self Certification for Newly Rehabilitated PBV Units**: Allows PHAs to accept owner self-certification of HQS. HCV is required to conduct an HQS inspection on the unit as soon as reasonably possible but no later than October 31, 2020.
- **HQS Space and Security** - Waives the requirement that each dwelling unit have at least 1 bedroom or living/sleeping room for each 2 persons. Enables families to add a household member(s) during COVID even if it causes unit to not meet space requirements. Does not apply to new or initial leases.

SHA Staff COVID-19 Survey Overview

Policy & Strategic Initiatives Director Andria Lazaga presented feedback on the COVID-19 Staff Survey and results from the effort. The survey was sent to staff via online distribution (email) from 5/19 – 5/22, with paper surveys distributed to staff with limited access to email from 5/19 – 5/29. The purpose of the survey was to gain some understanding how the coronavirus pandemic is impacting SHA staff, and inform of recovery planning. Topics included wellbeing, work environment, responsibilities & challenges, communications, recovery planning, leadership & management, RSJI, further support and demographic information. The survey was anonymous, and was primarily made up of close-ended questions with 4 open-ended questions.

Strong participation in completing the survey, as 492 (79%) staff completed the survey. Response rates closely aligned with SHA's staff distribution by department, race and gender, with 59% of staff were reported as working from a new location compared to pre-COVID-19. Analyses were completed in an iterative process to share overall results for close-ended (quantitative) questions, results and differences among key subgroups for close-ended questions, and a summary of key themes for open-ended questions.

Key Take-Aways:

- Overall staff are doing okay, but many are anxious or stressed due to COVID-19 and associated concerns about health or well-being.
- Overall satisfaction with communication, leadership and commitment to RSJI principles is high.
- Job responsibilities have shifted for many staff and almost half say that it is harder to complete their work responsibilities.
- Most staff, regardless of current work location, are at least somewhat worried about the next phase of COVID-19 recovery.
- Responses varied most by work location, especially for questions related to personal impact, current challenges, and support. Variance for these questions are included here.

- Some responses also varied by race and department. These variances will be further explored through staff engagement.

Next steps include a staff communication and engagement by facilitating department discussions and/or focus groups, as well as coordination with the Race and Social Justice Initiative, to delve deeper into key themes, sub-group variances and long-term solutions. In addition to staff engagement efforts, survey results are being used to inform recovery planning for all departments and more immediate actions.

Commissioner Diaz asked about the sources of information regarding COVID-19, and are they credible sources. Mr. Lofton explained that a weekly communication is sent to all SHA staff containing updated information regarding protocols, updates on any new virus information, especially how it effects SHA and staff. Commissioner Crutchfield suggested that due to the pandemic, there may be staff suffering from isolation and may like to participate in a town hall of their peers in order to connect and share experiences during this time. Mr. Diaz then expressed that there are different suggested protocols from government, different party lines, etc. and that there is a need for clarification as to what exactly what protocols are the most effective. After further discussion, which eventually led to a spirited, yet conflicted debate amongst the Commissioners in a heated discussion regarding Race. As a result, it was decided that the discussion would need to be tabled and Commissioner Houston then adjourned the meeting at 5:51 p.m.

Secretary-Treasurer