HOUSING AUTHORITY OF KITTITAS COUNTY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, February 19, 2025

A regular meeting of the Housing Authority of Kittitas County Board of Commissioners was held Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 107 W 11th Ave, Ellensburg, WA 98926, held in person and by zoom conference call.

Commissioners Present:
Rob Perkins, Chairperson
Nicalee Smith, Commissioner
Carole Rhodes, Commissioner (via phone)

Absent:
John Littel, Vice Chairperson (excused)

Staff Present:
Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director (in at 7:12 a.m.)
Katie Haggin, Operations Supervisor

Guests:
Rich Larsen, CPA, Novogradac LLP
Juan Berber, State Auditor's Office
Phil Backlund

OPEN REGULAR MEETING AND INTRODUCTIONS

Rob Perkins, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7 a.m.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC AND GUESTS

There were no comments from the public or guests.

HAKC AUDIT EXIT CONFERENCE WITH RICH LARSEN, NOVOGRADAC

Rich Larsen, Novogradac, gave the exit interview for the HAKC 2023 audit. He noted Novogradac are independent auditors providing an unmodified opinion, utilizing the highest government standards as well as USDA RD. In review of the agency's internal controls, no deficiencies were noted. There were no instances of non-compliance, which is the highest finding. The audit was in accordance with uniform guidance and Novogradac gave an unmodified opinion on compliance, which is the highest and best result, with no findings. Novogradac also checked all processes of the agency and had no notes. HAKC is noted as the primary government with current assets of $6.5 million dollars and operating expenses of $84,000.00 per month.

MINUTES

Commissioner Smith moved to approve the January 15, 2025 minutes of the regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Rhodes. There being no additional questions, the motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Commissioners reviewed the January 2025 Vouchers and Project and Activity Status Reports and found no voucher irregularities or other irregularities. Commissioner Smith moved to approve the consent agenda, Commissioner Rhodes seconded. There being no additional questions, the motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Strategic Plan and Facilitation
  Chairperson Perkins introduced Phil Backlund, retired CWU Professor who works as a facilitator for strategic planning. Perkins noted that he wanted HAKC to adopt a strategic plan that would help lay the groundwork for the agency's forward motion and that Backlund had solid experience helping groups formulate these plans. Backlund then outlined his proposal for HAKC, noting the breakdown of goals into increments of 10 year, 3 year, 1 year and 90 day goals. He also noted

once in place, the plan would be reviewed quarterly and with the involvement of the Board and staff, everyone knows the goals, who is responsible for which goals and everyone is accountable to each other. Backlund noted that for an agency of HAKC's size, he would anticipate a meeting of 4 to 6 hours, he would also prepare the report utilizing the language from the meeting. He noted that the session could be split into two 3 hours sessions or three 2 hour sessions. There would also be some pre-meeting work Backlund would send out to the participants for completion to best utilize the time in the meeting. Commissioner Rhodes inquired if the plan would be a consistent agenda item for monthly review. Backlund agreed that while goals could be assessed quarterly, there could also be monthly check ins on the plan at the regular meetings. Chairperson Perkins noted that his hope was to have a plan ready by June or July for Board review. Commissioner Rhodes noted that the plan would need to be like a living document and wanted there to be full commitment to doing it and really staying on the goals. Haggin noted her support in formulating a plan and the engagement of staff in the process.

- Executive Director Report –

Financials

Ellis noted that there were no December financials for review as those would not be submitted for review to finalize until the completion of the partnership audits for 2024, given that there may be adjustments and changes made in response to the audit.

Operations and Maintenance Update

All documents are being submitted for the completion of the partnership audits and tax returns as those are due quickly after year end.

Haggin completed the WBARS reporting for WSHFC for the properties, getting those reports submitted timely.

Annual inspections are ongoing and maintenance staff are getting into units, utilizing specific criteria and making note of necessary repairs as well as any lease violation issues occurring. Haggin noted that inspections are happening with the NSPIRE standards in mind to be as thorough as possible. Commissioner Smith asked if the NSPIRE standards had been otherwise adopted. Ellis noted that WSHFC is utilizing NSPIRE even though the standards have not yet been formally adopted by HUD. Haggin noted that there will be no on-site inspections of the units through WSHFC this year.

Haggin noted that one of the maintenance staff was attending a hands on training in Arizona focusing on plumbing and electricity.

Haggin also noted that with the law change regarding smoke detectors, all units were being inspected to ensure compliance. The Board had a discussion on the types of systems utilized to streamline inventory and work within the units for subsequent reference. Commissioner Smith inquired if there was any technology that might be helpful with inventory or maintenance's work in the field. Haggin noted the current process and that there may be additional technology that could help make the process more efficient. Commissioner Rhodes noted the importance of utilizing technology, even if it takes significant adjustment.

HAKC is updating its server through its tech provider, Nuvodia. Haggin noted the process of updating and moving everything over will be roughly 72 hours of work, but that there should not be any interruptions to operations. Chairperson Perkins inquired as to the security of the update and Haggin confirmed security safeguards through both Nuvodia and Microsoft.

Pine Terrace

Work on the unit impacted by fire at Pine Terrace has continued, although a pipe froze in the extremely cold temperatures that may result in a second claim being filed as there was water damage in the lower unit. Ellis and Haggin have resumed monthly meetings with the new regional manager from Ad-West, to prioritize improvement projects for this next season and stay informed as to any unit vacancies.

Open Public Meeting Training
Ellis reminded Board of Open Public Meeting training, asking for Board members to complete the same and get information to her so the files could be updated.

AWHA Meeting
Quarterly AWHA meeting coming up and Ellis will attend virtually due to some scheduling conflicts. Ellis also noted an eviction round table event she would attend later in the day.

Volunteer Opportunities
Ellis noted that with spring she would be looking at local volunteer opportunities and asked if the Board had any suggestions to reach out.

The Board resumed its strategic plan discussion. Chairperson Perkins inquired into board engagement in the process moving forward and wanting Ellis to move forward with scheduling. Commissioner Smith inquired as to the status of the board vacancy in the context of having a full board to engage in plan development. Ellis noted that additional applicants should be considered. Chairperson Perkins noted that while it would be helpful to have a full board, he did not feel it was a prerequisite to moving forward with plan facilitation. Commissioner Smith also asked if the agency's procurement policy would require additional bids for the facilitator of the process. Ellis noted that she would confirm with the policy but believed it would fall under the micro purchase threshold that did not require additional bids. Chairperson Perkins asked if the procurement requirement was satisfied, if the Board was good at moving forward with the process and if staff had any additional input. Haggin noted that she supported a plan being created and put into place and expressed her desire that it be a full buy in by everyone involved in the process. Commissioner Smith noted that she wanted to make sure staff understood that the idea behind a plan is not to further burden staff, but to create a path forward for their benefit and the benefit of the agency. Haggin noted that she believed staff would be on board and appreciate direction. Chairperson Perkins directed Ellis to confirm with the procurement policy and if sufficient, to establish a meeting time.

Chairperson Perkins also wanted to formally recognize Commissioner Smith's tenure as Chair of the Board of Commissioners and expressed his appreciation for her dedicated work leading the Board during that time.

There being no more formal business to conduct or discussion, comments or questions, Chairperson Perkins asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn with Commissioner Rhodes seconding. Motion passed. Chairperson Perkins ADJOURNED the meeting at 8:12 a.m.

Next Meeting: March 19, 2025, 7 A.M. Regular Meeting
Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director

SEAL:

Rob Perkins, Chair

ATTEST

Jennifer Ellis, Secretary