

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF KANSAS CITY, KANSAS**

Thursday, November 16, 2017  
12 noon

Administrative Bldg.  
1124 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street

On the 16th day of November 2017 at 12 noon the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Kansas City, Kansas met in regular session. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Watkins, and upon roll call, the following members of the body were present:

Matt Watkins, Chairman  
Rev. Jimmie L. Banks, Vice-Chairman  
Jacques Barber, Commissioner  
Robert Frey, Commissioner  
Rachel Jefferson, Commissioner  
Timothy J. Rhodes, Commissioner  
Alvin Sykes, Commissioner  
Denise Tomasic, Commissioner  
Linda Warner, Commissioner  
Charles Wilson, Commissioner

ABSENT: John Breitenstein, Commissioner  
P. Anne McDonald, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT: Milton Scott, Executive Director  
Paula K. Draves, Director of Section 8  
Cherrie Escobar, Section 8 Coordinator  
Gerald Glavin, Superintendent  
Melinda L. Linnell, Director of Housing Management  
Sharron Davis-Mays, Self-Sufficiency Coordinator  
Benice Meeks, Director of Finance  
Jacqueline D. Randle, Executive Services Manager  
Anthony J. Shomin, Director of Facilities Management  
John Jefferson, Maintenance Mechanic  
Loretta Heath, Douglas Heights President  
Kenneth Heath, Douglas Heights

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Chairman Watkins asked for roll call. After which, he called for the approval of the minutes. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the minutes of October 19, 2017. Vice-Chairman Banks seconded the motion and the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Banks, Barber, Frey, Jefferson, Rhodes, Sykes, Tomasic, Warner, Watkins, Wilson

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Breitenstein, McDonald

ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried.

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### **Executive Director's Report**

- Mr. Scott indicated that the written report could be found on pages 8—25 of the board packet.
- Mr. Scott apologized to Commissioner Warner and noted the board agenda is discussed with the Chair of the committee(s) and then gone over monthly with the Board Chair.
- Mr. Scott noted that revisions to the Personnel Policy were sent out to the Board electronically and in color. The board packet was also mailed out. He noted that Commissioner Tomasic has suggested just sending the board packet electronically next month. The residency requirement will be discussed under new business.
- Our health insurance premiums went up 9.5 percent if we did not go out to bid. CBIZ (our insurance broker) looked at our vision plan and suggested we switch plans to be a richer benefit. Aetna reduced our healthcare plan by \$12,000 when we selected them for our vision plan. This puts us at a 9.3 percent health insurance increase. Our health insurance committee (made up of staff members) looked at all the options and believes this puts us in a good position with our insurance. In addition to this, CBIZ informed us that Aetna was providing us with a premium holiday for the month of December which means that no premiums will be due for December. This is a savings of \$383 for an employee plus one and a \$540 savings for a family.

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### **Committee Reports**

#### Finance

Chairman Watkins noted the Finance committee report was included in the handouts. In Commissioner McDonald's absence, he asked if anyone had anything to add and Commissioner Rhodes noted that Commissioner McDonald summed it up well. Chairman Watkins made note that the year-end audit is

complete. Mrs. Meeks added that all Board members were provided with a copy of the audit report and she was available to answer questions.

#### Inclusion and Public Information

Commissioner Warner explained that the Inclusion and Public Information Committee meets quarterly and they met last month.

#### Personnel

Vice-Chair Banks noted that the substance of his report would be contained in Resolution No. 3353 and 3355. These resolutions are the result of meetings that have taken place with the Executive Director and staff. These changes will provide for greater efficiency of operations. He then gave the page numbers for the resolutions that would be discussed later in the board meeting.

Vice-Chairman Banks explained that the residency requirement came up and it was determined that this matter should be taken up by the entire board. He shared that other housing authorities in this area do not have a residency requirement. In his experience (and he noted that staff was encouraged to speak) you must try to find the talent necessary in your area to run the business. Once this is exhausted, you have to go to wherever you need to go. He noted that after the local pool is exhausted you need to expand the source. Some skills sets are available locally as noted under the Department of Labor or you may need to expand the source. He understands that some believe it is detrimental to this local community to lift the residency requirement. He asked that other members of the Personnel Committee and staff that were there during the discussion offer their opinion at this time. Chairman Watkins asked that this discussion be held until we get to the resolution.

#### Development and Improvement

Chairman Watkins, again noted, a report was included with the board handouts. Commissioner Rhodes indicated it was a thorough report showing the actions that have taken place. The Development and Improvement Committee will meet again within the next month.

#### Resident Participation

Commissioner Wilson noted that on November 16, 2017 the Resident Participation Committee held its first meeting and five items were discussed: 1) jurisdiction-wide resident council, 2) public statement by Housing Authority concerning sexual harassment, 3) the non-smoking ban, 4) Section 3 and 5) public safety. Time did not permit discussing item no. 5. Ms. Sharron Mays conducted the meeting and provided two speakers. One discussed services for residents and the other discussed providing food to low-income residents. Those

in attendance were Chairman Watkins, Ms. Sharron Mays, Commissioners Sykes, Jefferson and Rhodes. Oliver Singleton, President of the United Resident's Council was also present. One of their concerns was to come up with a jurisdiction-wide resident council in compliance with CFR 964-105. The resident council at Glanville Towers sponsored a card party and 19 people attended. Food and beverages were provided. Commissioner Wilson added there have been three break ends of vending machines at Glanville Towers and the machines may be removed due to the break-ins. The same M.O. (*modus operandi*) was used at another high-rise. New machines may be provided that utilizes credit cards. The resident councils receive a small percentage from the vending machines. He further noted that people in the parking lot are stealing catalytic converters. The manager a Glanville cannot access the video. He thanked everyone who attended the meeting. Commissioner Barber suggested the theft issues need to be addressed as quickly as possible or be placed on the agenda as a future item of discussion. He understands that everything costs money and there are budgetary restrictions. However, we must take direct action on this matter. He shared that he was at Glanville over a week ago and learned about the break-ins. Commissioner Barber emphasized that this requires immediate attention. He suggested having an armed guard on site when the manager is not present and more effective surveillance or a consultation with the local police department. He noted that we should do what we can to mitigate this kind of activity. Mr. Shomin noted that the camera upgrade is in the five-year plan. Commissioner Sykes added to the discussion, the need for cameras in the units for the security of the building. He indicated that residents do not feel safe without the ability to see what is going on from their units. The activity gets worst on Friday and Saturday nights. He noted that he would like to let the residents know that this matter is being taken seriously. Chairman Watkins noted that the Dot Program was moving the issue of the food dessert closer. A meeting will be held on December 4, 2017 at City Hall at 5 p.m. Commissioner Jefferson offered that the Neighborhood and Community Development was sponsoring this event.

Chairman Watkins noted that CHIG has met twice this month and will be included in the report for next month.

The following committees did not provide a report: Bylaws, Executive, Finance, and Inclusion and Public Information.

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### Public Comments

Chairman Watkins called for comments. Ms. Loretta Heath, President of Douglas Heights Resident Association, offered the following comments: They are noticing strange cars on Perry Square and around the bend. These cars do not belong to the residents and strangers are coming on the property. She noted these people are not in partnership with us. Mrs. Heath explained that she has

been entrusted with the keys to the community center and has not violated that trust. She asked that she be notified of who is coming on property if the housing authority is provided with that information.

Commissioner Sykes brought up the issue of residents bearing firearms on housing authority property. Chairman Watkins indicated he would get some information to Commissioner Sykes.

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### **New Business Consent Item**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve Resolution No. 3353. Vice-Chairman Banks seconded the motion and the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Banks, Barber, Frey, Jefferson, Rhodes, Sykes, Tomasic, Warner, Watkins, Wilson

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Breitenstein, McDonald

ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried.

Resolution No. 3353, authorizing revisions to the Personnel Policy.

The Personnel Policy is updated periodically. The last major revision took place in 2014. An agency-wide meeting was held for staff to review and discuss changes to the Personnel Policy. HAIG (Housing Authority Insurance Group) encouraged the agency to review the policy. The Executive Director proposed revisions to the Personnel Committee. After two meetings and discussion with Housing Authority Directors, the Personnel Committee accepted the revisions as outlined in the memorandum prepared for the Board.

Resolution No. 3353—AUTHORIZE REVISIONS TO THE PERSONNEL POLICY.

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### **New Business Discussion Items**

Resolution No. 3354, approving the Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures, and the Hearing Appeals Policy and Procedures, was introduced.

Mr. Scott noted that this is the draft that will be presented to the DOJ (Department of Justice) by December 29, 2017 in response to the lawsuit. The DOJ will make the final suggestions and we will need to implement those

changes in 30 days and present them to our staff in 60 days for staff to sign off on. He noted that page 37 starts the Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedures. We have extended the policy to our vendors and Section 8 landlords. Any training for the vendors and landlords will be their responsibility and they will have to provide proof to the agency. Mr. Scott explained it was a comprehensive plan. Commissioner Barber agreed that this policy is very comprehensive as he has handled drafting similar policies. Mr. Scott noted that we requested a template, but were told there was no template. The Chair commended Mr. Scott on his work in creating the template and it sends the right message. Vice-Chairman Banks noted that similar matters have been in the news and we should take this very seriously as this is occurring in our culture. Commissioner Warner suggested that the name of the current Executive Service Manager's name, Ms. Jackie Randle, be listed on the cover. It will give the public the connection to a person and make the process better. Mr. Scott agreed to make that change and add Ms. Randle's name to the memo that will be sent out to the residents.

Commissioner Sykes noted that people should be confident that something will be done if they have a complaint. He suggested that the Housing Authority give an apology and make a public statement encouraging people to come forward that have information. He believes this will cause people to feel comfortable coming forward. He suggested that there have been statements from HUD and other bodies but not from the Housing Authority. Mr. Scott explained that a statement was sent out to the board and staff to position ourselves for public inquiries. Chairman Watkins said that he doesn't agree that statements are always made. He believes that we have done what needs to be done as an agency and people are aware of what has taken place. Commissioner Sykes indicated the awareness has come from other entities and not the Housing Authority. Mr. Scott explained that the letter (on page 38 of the board packet) is the statement that will go out to every resident, applicant and vendor. It will include our policy that will show what will happen if this occurs again. It will assure the public that we have something in place to address this matter. Commissioner Warner suggested it was not in the best interest to keep bringing this up. Commissioner Sykes suggested this is indicative of what has been going on. He explained that people want to know what the Housing Authority is going to do about it. Mr. Scott noted this letter is going out to a large number of people, but can be expanded beyond our tenants and vendors. Vice-Chairman Banks noted we are being responsive by getting this out, but like Commissioner Warner, does not believe it is in our best interest to keep bringing this up. He noted we are addressing this matter and taking corrective actions when necessary. Commissioner Sykes asked to go on record asking the Housing Authority to make a statement apologizing for what has occurred and to give assurances that it will not happen again. If the goal is to put this behind us, then what you are saying is fine, but if the goal is to make people feel comfortable coming forward, a statement needs to be made. However, Commissioner Sykes said he would not belabor the point, but rather put his comments in writing. Chairman Watkins stated this was duly noted and thanked Commissioner Sykes.

Mr. Scott noted that the next part is the Hearing and Appeals Policy and Procedures. Commissioner Tomasic questioned how the appeals officer would be selected. Mr. Scott noted that an attorney and former Executive Director would hear the appeals. He further noted the agreement is for three years, but we will keep it beyond what the DOJ is asking us to do. Chairman Watkins noted that the DOJ will be checking up on us and doing site visits. Pending the modification of adding Ms. Randle's contact information, he called for a motion to approve the resolution.

Commissioner Frey made a motion to approve Resolution No. 3354. Commissioner Barber seconded the motion and the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Barber, Frey, Jefferson, Rhodes, Sykes, Tomasic, Warner, Watkins, Wilson

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Banks, Breitenstein, McDonald

ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 3353—APPROVE THE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES, AND THE HEARING APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES.

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Resolution No. 3354, amending the Personnel Policy to remove the residency requirement, was introduced.

Chairman Watkins noted that Vice-Chairman Banks gave a history of what got us to this point. Commissioner Warner noted she was on the Personnel Committee and was clear that she disagrees with removing the residency requirement and this is partly due to there being subtle differences between someone who lives in the community they serve and someone who doesn't live in the community. This is her emotional opinion. After discussing this with others the median income in this community is low and therefore retailers do not want to come to this area. It would not serve the agency to have these incomes move out of the county. She believes there is potential to develop our own workers by partnering with the community college. Her preference would be to hash this out in committee. Commissioner Barber echoed Commissioner Warner's feelings. He understands the difficulties of staffing and doing what is in the best interest of the Housing Authority. Changing this policy will make our jobs more difficult. We currently suffer from people taking the money out of the county. He believes it is in all our best interest to require staff to live in Wyandotte County and is against removing the residency requirement. He suggested offering a moving allowance if that would be helpful. Commissioner Sykes agreed with Commissioners Warner and

Barber. He noted if you are good enough to work here, it should be good enough to live here. Commissioner Frye remembers there being a big debate in the state legislature about living in Wyandotte County. He questioned if this would change that requirement. Chairman Watkins indicated it would not as this is only for this agency. He noted this was about attracting the brightest and the best to work here. Vice-Chairman Banks agreed that we are looking at the best way to fill the staffing needs. While some positions can be filled locally, others cannot. We are competing with General Motors and other top businesses in this area. He suggested that operating out of parochialism is not the best business response, as parochialism will not sustain the bottom line. Commissioner Rhodes noted that he lives in Wyandotte County and works in Johnson County. He indicated the populations are moving south and west; and more talent is located in those areas. He questioned why we would make someone live in the county if there was nothing sexy (*a phrase he picked up at another meeting*) about living in this county. He suggested casting a wider net to attract the talent we need. Chairman Watkins noted that as we rebrand ourselves, doing away with the residency requirement is the path we need to take in order to compete with other businesses in our community. This policy change will allow us to make a step in that direction. Commissioner Jefferson suggested that on first blush she would agree with Commissioner Warner as your heart is where your home is. However, she wanted to garner staff's input on the subject and asked what we have done to form partnerships to groom people. Mr. Scott noted that he and Mr. Glavin are on the advisory board (Technical Education Center) with the KCKCC and they have some of the same issues that we have in terms of how to fill positions. He indicated this is not a new item for the agency as we have been dealing with the issue for sometime. He noted it has been difficult to find applicants for certain positions. He asked for staff input. Ms. Escobar noted that people do not want to relocate for the salaries we are willing to pay. Skilled applicants often leave once they advance their skills. Mrs. Draves noted there are so many dynamics that go along with this. Mr. Glavin explained that he has a difficult time filling maintenance positions as he does not get enough people with technical skills to apply due to the residency requirement. They do not want to uproot their families for \$20 an hour for example. Ms. Mays noted she has worked at three agencies and she had to negotiate her salary to come to this agency. The two other PHAs that she worked for did not have a residency requirement. She noted that she had the same commitment at all three housing authorities. She agrees with doing away with the residency requirement to attract the best people. Commissioner Rhodes noted people will drive here and will spend their money here. Ms. Meeks noted that she has worked at Sprint, Hallmark Cards and Payless in Topeka and always lived and spent her money in this community. She noted that she has been able to grow by going outside of this community to work and we can do the same for people coming to work in this community from the outside. Ms. Linnell asked what makes us think people will not move to this county. She suggested reaching out to people outside of this community and may be they will want to live here. Mr. Scott noted that he moved here to be closer to his ailing mother in St. Louis. He noted that he is excited to



live here, because you can be anywhere within 15 minutes. He noted that we need to highlight this community more. He expressed his happiness with his decision to move to Wyandotte County and he is happy to share this with others. Commissioner Rhodes suggested a middle ground where there is a senior level residency requirement and they live in the community. We could still attract outside talent for the other positions. Mr. Scott indicated this would be a board decision. Commissioner Sykes indicated he likes the idea. He asked would a moving allowance have a positive impact. Mr. Scott noted that it is not currently offered to all staff. It is, however, offered at the director's level. Commissioner Barber indicated he was in favor of a compromise. He understands the need to do what is necessary to maximize efficiencies. He asked that a preference be given to people living in the county. Vice-Chairman Banks noted that he drove 75 miles daily for 34 years while working in Missouri at Bendix. He paid taxes in both states. People drove even farther. He noted that people have the same commitment regardless of where they live. Commissioner Jefferson noted the frustration is with money going outside of the community. She noted that Kansas City, Missouri has an earnings tax, but this is not the place for this discussion. She would like to see what the compromise looks like. Commissioner Watkins noted that there seems to be a move toward compromise and that may need to go back to the Personnel Committee before it is voted on. Commissioner Tomasic noted that she is not parochial, but is pro-Wyandotte County. To take this policy out is inconsistent with what our community at-large has decided to do. We expect our police, fire and UG employees to work here. Commissioner Tomasic noted that she has checked with her appointing commissioner who does not want us to remove this policy, nor does the commissioner in the district in which she lives want us to remove this policy. Our mayor-elect feels the same. She is not against a compromise, but suggested that each board member check with their commissioner.

Chairman Watkins suggested tabling Resolution No. 3355 and revisiting this at a later date.

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Commissioner Sykes read from the agenda item no. V, *Receive Comments from Tenants and Public*. He then noted that President Loretta Heath had a comment and he interprets that to mean that she can speak after each item. He noted that he would like to allow Mrs. Heath to make her comments. Chairman Watkins explained that we set aside a specific amount of time to hear comments, but Mrs. Heath was certainly welcome to provide additional comments at this time.

Mrs. Heath indicated she would go back to the comments on sexual harassment. She noted that if the agency went public with an apology it would have more of an impact. She further stated that residents do not trust the housing authority at all and some residents fear the housing authority. She indicated this was no surprise and residents fear repercussions. She offered that she raised three

children in housing and they all have degrees. Mrs. Heath said that residents do not care about letters. They are only concerned about rent and maintenance charges. She stated again that they do not trust the housing authority. She asked that the CEO go public and apologize for the violations.

With nothing further, Chairman Watkins called for adjournment. It passed unanimously.

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Matt Watkins, Chairman

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Milton Scott, Executive Director