

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

Thursday, May 21, 2020  
12:30 p.m.

Held Electronically  
Via Zoom

On the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May 2020 at 12:30 p.m. the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of Kansas City, Kansas met in special session via Zoom due to the coronavirus pandemic. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Watkins, and upon roll call, the following members of the body were present:

Matthew T. Watkins, Chairman  
Rev. Jimmie L. Banks, Vice-Chairman  
Jacques Barber, Commissioner  
Broderick Crawford, Commissioner  
Rachel Jefferson, Commissioner  
P. Anne McDonald, Commissioner  
Denise Tomasic, Commissioner  
Linda Warner, Commissioner

ABSENT: Timothy J. Rhodes, Commissioner  
Cardelia Walker, Commissioner  
Charles Wilson, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT: Thomas M. Scott, Executive Director/CEO  
Cherrie Escobar, Director of Section 8  
Julio Marino, Jr., User Support/Inventory Coordinator  
Sharron Davis-Mays, Self-Sufficiency Coordinator  
Jacqueline D. Randle, Executive Services Manager  
Caroline Rogers, Director of Finance  
Anthony J. Shomin, Director of Facilities Management  
Elaine Stroud, Assistant Director of Housing Management  
Nebyu Tilahun, Assistant Director of Finance

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Chairman Watkins called the meeting to order and roll call was taken.

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Chairman Watkins called for the approval of the minutes. Commissioner Barber asked for a correction to the word *jester* on page 4. It should read *gesture*.

Vice-Chairman Banks made a motion to approve the minutes of April 21, 2020. Commissioner Crawford seconded the motion and the following vote was recorded:

AYES: Banks, Barber, Crawford, Jefferson, McDonald, Tomasic, Warner, Watkins

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rhodes, Walker, Wilson

ABSTAIN: None

Motion carried.

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

- Mr. Scott introduced Nebyu Tilahun as the new Assistant Director of Finance and re-introduced Elaine Stroud as the new Director of Housing Management.
- The Board was referred to the handout provided by Ms. Rogers. He advised that the deficit of \$755,698.25 was a procedural issue with the way the bank handled this transaction and we do not actually have a deficit.
- The demo disposition plan at Juniper Gardens had been put on hold due to the inability to meet with the residents in face-to-face meetings. We are proceeding with the plan and moving forward with the RFP for relocation specialists. We will communicate with residents via letter. With the vacancy rate at Juniper Gardens, no administration fees and the pressure from HUD is keeping us moving forward.
- CARES Act funding has come through for Public Housing and Section 8 programs. We are in the process of installing an ADA-compliant teller window, similar to a bank teller window with an intercom system. The payment window in the finance department has been closed and we do not anticipate reopening the payment window. Because agencies do not typically accept payment in this form, residents are encouraged to use other methods for making their rental payments. Rental collections for April to March were actually better.
- We are looking at cutting through the adjacent office, removing the partition wall and building an ADA accessible area for residents to meet with staff for private confidential meetings. There is no anticipation to reopen the main office due to contamination and security risks.
- We are doing a 90-day spray residual that is used at Delaware Highlands, and as advertised on television. All of the Administration, Modernization, Resident Selection and Section 8 departments will be sprayed this Saturday. Next week, we will spray all the common areas and elevators on every floor of the high-rises. This is a reimbursable expense under the CARES Act. The

spraying will be redone in 11 weeks. Staff will continue to de-contaminate as necessary.

- We are beginning to stockpile masks to make them available to residents once we have enough on hand. Masks will be put in zip lock bags and distributed. We are looking at hand sanitization stands for the entry way at high-rises, manager's offices and our office locations.
- We are looking to expand our Information Technology (IT). We migrated over to the Cloud. We left the previous provider on May 18, 2020 and are working the bugs out on this transition. The CARES Act provides for IT upgrades, too. We are looking at using a carrier to provide paperless processes. We hope to go paperless entirely for the agency. Residents will be able to apply for housing and communicate with their managers online using their cell phones or other electronic means. The CARE team will consist of the directors and Jerry Glavin, Jackie Randle, Julio Marino, Jr. and Nebyu Tilahan who will brainstorm on how to make folks safer.
- The new access window for Resident Selection and Elderly Services will be installed next week to include a tray, as well. We have not done move-ins due to the concerns with contamination. We will come up with a resolution to house everyone that is ready to be housed. This will be a one-stop shop for signing their lease, picking up keys and being able to do everything at one spot.
- Payroll upgrades are taking place. We are on a punch system that is handled by staff, supervisors, department heads and a payroll person. We hope to be online by the end of the month and fully operational by June.
- The two entrance doors, facing the north and east will be replaced with ADA compliant doors. Panic bars will be on the inside. There will be a swipe system installed that we hope to correlate with the payroll system and only certain individuals will be allowed to come in the building. Commissioner McDonald expressed these were all good ideas, some of which have been discussed. Scott indicated the funding is available under the CARES Act, and will set the agency up for the future. Chairman Banks piggybacked on what Commissioner McDonald stated. He indicated we are being prodded to do things that should have been done a while ago, but now we have the funding. Scott added that we will be looking at individual sites to make upgrades as well.
- We extended restrictions on visitors at the high-rises. Essential visitors are still allowed in and residents can go in and out. There are a couple of positives (for the virus) in the high-rises that are on quarantine. Scott indicated we are looking at food distribution to the high-rises, and would like to speak with Commissioner Crawford regarding this as he works with food distribution programs. Often high-rise residents do not have transportation and cannot make it to the food banks. Commissioner Crawford asked about the number of positives and what is the risk to employees. He noted that he could work with Mr. Scott on having food delivered to the high-rises. Mr. Scott indicated there are two positives and they both are quarantined. We are awaiting results on another one. The staff is all wearing PPE and they

know not to go into those units. We are only doing emergency work orders. The janitorial staff is doing sanitation in all the building. Work orders are being monitored and staff is doing work around the buildings. Mr. Scott noted he would schedule a meeting with Commissioner Crawford next week regarding the food distribution.

- Mr. Scott asked the Board to contact him with any ideas as we brainstorm. Funds from the CARES Act must be used by December 31, 2020 or they are gone. Capital Fund money can also be used under the CARES Act, but it would require amending the Five-Year Plan.
- Chairman Watkins asked for a timeline with Juniper Gardens. Mr. Scott noted we are looking at 30 days to put together our options. We can do the RFP for relocation at the same time. Relocation could take 18—24 months to do a phased relocation at Juniper Gardens. There are currently 100 vacant units out of 165. Ms. Stroud is looking at who is elderly and could be moved to an elderly development. Families will be given three options: 1) stay with public housing, 2) take a voucher through Section 8 and 3) go to private housing. Scattered sites would be an option or any property in the agency's housing stock. This will be a several year process. Mr. Scott indicated a concise letter would go out to the residents and there will be multiple meetings. Chairman Banks suggested we are headed in the right way with Juniper Gardens. The process will be easier than it would have been in the past. He sees this as a mutual gain for the residents and agency.
- The removal of Juniper Gardens will reduce our subsidy and affect the income line. It will reduce Capital Funds and there is a strong possibility that it will affect staffing. Hopefully this can take place through attrition. Commissioner Barber expressed appreciation for the details that Mr. Scott is providing. He shared that the disposition includes the land and its use. This would be a complete sale of everything. Mr. Scott noted disposing of the entire property would be the most economical for the agency, as demolition would be costly. However, we could potentially keep 44 units during this process. He indicated YouthBuild may not be funded next year. It has been discussed with Mr. Sparks that we may be able to do something with YouthBuild at the new maintenance facility.
- Commissioner McDonald asked for the status of the maintenance facility. Mr. Scott indicated there has been a delay because the insulated panels did not come in and some of it was due to COVID-19. The roof is being installed now. The interior work has continued. The May completion will not happen. Brick work has been done and the second garage is up. Mr. Scott noted it would probably be the end of July before we move into the facility. Vice-Chairman Banks advised that we should identify the building as the Thomas Scott facility as approved at last month's board meeting.
- Commissioner Crawford asked about the status of evictions. Mr. Scott indicated we are not doing late fees or evictions clear into July. This may be extended every further. We are still processing evictions for criminal and drug activities or things along that line. We are having hearings with a third party attorney and documenting activity. There has been some loss of occupancy.

Tenants are having difficulty with utilities and several tenants are on repayment agreements. We are looking at some type of utility program that would help tenants. We may go after CDBG funds to help with this. Several families are on minimum rents and they receive an URP check. Ms. Rogers indicated that daily collections are being monitored and collections are up for the month. Some may have made double payments due to having issues with the online system. Managers are calling residents and there was communication from the finance department regarding payment processes which may have contributed to improvements. Vice-Chairman Banks questioned how delinquent tenants would be handled when it comes to relocation. Mr. Scott noted he has to review the process and they could possibly enter into a repayment agreement. We could also look at third party sources to help with delinquent rent. This must be further investigated.

- Commissioner Barber noted that while Mr. Scott gave a description on the restrictions for a person entering the high-rises, he asked have there been any changes. He is concerned about contagion. Mr. Scott noted that 10 days ago we reposted to extend restrictions at the high-rises. We will continue this as long as we feel it is necessary. Most are following the rules, which is another reason to bring in food. Tenants are anxious to go out, but we will continue to keep the restrictions in place until we are comfortable with letting visitors into the building.
- Commissioner McDonald asked if the CARES Act allows for COVID-19 testing. Mr. Scott noted that he would suspect there could be asymptomatic folks and we could start a panic if we provided testing to everyone. We are recommending that folks go outside for testing. HUD has called about this and we told them no, because there are ample testing sites in Wyandotte County. Commissioner McDonald suggested that this might be a consideration for us in the fall. Commissioner Crawford mentioned there are multiple testing sights throughout the community. There have been pop-up sites daily in this community for the last two weeks. There is information on the Unified Government (UG) website listing the testing sites. This information can be made available to our residents. Commissioner Crawford suggested discussing this further with Mr. Scott when they meet next week. Vice-Chairman Banks questioned what would be the response to a positive test in the high-rises. Mr. Scott noted we can request 14-day quarantine. However, we cannot put restrictions on them. An uncooperative person could come and go as they please. We rely on the honesty of the residents. He then provided an example of a resident whose mother was at Riverbend and tested positive. He self-quarantined as a result. Commissioner Crawford suggested possibility quarantining folks to a hotel using money through the CARES Act if they are unable to quarantine at home. Chairman Watkins offered that the Homeless Coalition has opened up a facility with the Salvation Army in Independence to accommodate 40 people. Vice-Chairman Banks questioned if there was no action we could take against a person, in the high-rise, that tested positive and wanted to mingle with the population. Mr. Scott noted we are limited in what we can do, but we can reach out to the

police department, but they really do not want to get involved. We could see this as a social issue and evict, but it would take 30 days. Commissioner Barber requested that staff look into this more deeply and involve legal counsel. He believes lawsuits could be brought against the agency for not protecting the residents. He sees this as an assault for exposing others to the virus.

- Vice-Chairman Banks commended Mr. Scott and his staff for staying ahead of what is going on with the coronavirus. He believes we are modeling the correct behavior. Commissioner McDonald agreed. Mr. Scott thanked the Board and advised this is an ongoing process. Vice-Chairman Banks offered to assist and believes any member of the Board would be willing to do the same. Mr. Scott welcomed any suggestions the Board could provide.

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### **Committee Reports**

With the exception of CHIG, there were no other committee reports this month.


### **Community Housing Investment Group (CHIG)**

The CHIG board met two months in a row, April and May. Chairman Watkins thanked Mr. Scott and the staff at Delaware Highlands Assisted Living facility for the good job they are doing. He offered that a check was written yesterday to go back into the development account.

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Chairman Watkins then called for the meeting to adjourn and it passed unanimously.

  
Matthew T. Watkins, Chairman

  
Thomas M. Scott, Executive Director/CEO